



Chuck Guarino



The Large three-storey, old wooden Grand Beach Hotel (1941)

Most people, when thinking of the early or golden days of Grand Beach, think of the large Dance Pavilion, which was extensively advertised as the largest Dance Pavilion in Western Canada at the time. However, there was another large wooden building that existed concomitantly with the Dance Pavilion. It was the stately Grand Beach Hotel.

Actually, The Grand Beach Hotel was built prior to the Dance Pavilion. Originally, the trains ran past the Railway station and stopped directly beside the hotel. The walk way that presently exists along the shoreline toward the point, was the right of way for the old rail line. It was abandoned and shortened when the station was completed.

The old hotel was constantly booked, mainly by American travellers. Reservations were made years in advance, and for several weeks in duration. The choice weeks were the first two week of July. While the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR) constructed the rail line and all the surrounding buildings, they contracted the operation of the entire area to the Canada Railway News Co. This company operated concessions on all the passenger trains operated by CNoR at the time.



What was it like, Papa?

The Superintendent of Grand Beach was usually the Winnipeg Manager for the Canada Railway News Co. The most beloved of all was Mr. Philip Jones, who the superintendent for many years. He began his tenure as Superintendent of Grand Beach in the mid-thirties, and continued on until the railway line was abandoned. I had the privilege of working for him as a lifeguard for four years, from 1941 to 1944.

Mr. & Mrs. Jones had the entire south suite of rooms in the hotel. They maintained a beautiful flower garden area at the south end of the hotel, that was much admired and "showpiece" for the entire area.

Mr. Jones also developed the original sundial clock which was just adjacent to his beautiful flower garden. The parks people have tried to replicate it, but it lacks the original simplicity and handcraft of the origiha "hand-made" one made by Superintendent Jones.

Times have changed. But, are they for the better? I leave that up to you. To me, Grand Beach has lost a lot of the dignity and charm that it once pssessed.

See you again, in our next issue.

"Papa Chuck" Guarino