



Lunchtime conversation and a bicycle wheel drive residents to create East St. Paul's house numbering system

George Mulder was born in East St. Paul in 1927 on Lot 74 (Henderson Hwy 2 miles north of Hoddinott Road) and remained in the community until 2017. He married Edna Peterson in 1951 and together they raised four children, Kathy, Laurie, Kevin and Lynne. George worked for Imperial Oil at the East St. Paul refinery as a lab technician conducting research chemistry for 32 years. Besides his birthplace, he had several residences within East St. Paul including Lot 81, Valerie Place, and the Country Villas. In 2017, he and Edna wanted to downsize and for the first time in his life, George moved outside East St. Paul to an apartment in Concordia Village in Winnipeg.

By East St. Paul resident
author – George Mulder

Did you know or ever wonder how the house numbering system came to be in East St. Paul?

Up until the late 1950s every person that lived on Hoddinott Road lived at the same postal address.

Under the old Provincial river lot system, everyone who lived on Hoddinott lived on Lot 94 RR3 East St. Paul. This made life quite interesting for the Postmaster and those that lived there.

The original river lot system was laid out in chain measurements, (a chain is 66 feet) and these lots ran from the Red River to the eastern boundary of East St. Paul (Waugh Road).

This subject came to light one day when myself, Al Lyons and two other fellows that lived on Hoddinott Road sat around the lunch table at Imperial Oil. At that time, it was suggested that a house numbering system would be beneficial.

As we discussed the matter it was initially thought that the house numbering system could retain some connection to the River Lot Chain system, but we quickly realized there were several issues. I informed my colleagues that my property at Lot 81 consisted of 2 chains in perpendicular width being 132 feet, but the frontage width on Henderson Hwy. was 142 feet due to the angle that the lot lines intersected with the Highway.

Another matter that didn't fit with our initial numbering system was that with the River Lot chain system the lot numbers started at Lot 60 at the north end of our municipality and progressed upward to Lot 117 at the south boundary.

We realized all we needed was



George Mulder, his wife Edna and friend Al Lyons converted a bicycle wheel into a measuring device to establish East St. Paul's house numbering system.

a numbering system that was a continuation of the North Kildonan system. After checking with North Kildonan I was informed their lot system was simply a number for every 50 feet of frontage. It was actually two numbers for every 50 feet, an even number on the west side and an odd number on the east side of the highway or street.

We next had to devise a method to measure off the distances. Al Lyons was employed in the Instrument Department at Imperial Oil and suggested all we needed was to install a counter on a bicycle wheel. Rather than riding a bicycle down the highway I suggested if he put a handle on the wheel we could pull it behind my car. This was done and with a bit of luck we found that six turns, which was recorded on the counter of the wheel, covered 50 feet.

On our initial test run, I had my wife Edna drive slowly down Henderson starting at Glenway Avenue. Al and myself sat on the tailgate, me with the bike wheel between my knees and Al with a note pad. When we were adjacent to a home I read out the counter number and Al would record it along side the name of the homeowner.

The entire municipality was covered in this manner. At that time there were no housing developments and the Village of Birds Hill had its own numbering, so we only had to cover Henderson Hwy. Glenway, Foxgrove, Wallace, Pritchard, Hoddinott and Isbister (later renamed Bowen), McGregor, Bricker, Garven,

Bray and the Two Mile Road (later named Rebeck Road and Birds Hill Road). I would estimate there were only about 150 homes at that time.

After the calculations were done and a number assigned to every existing home, it was presented to Council. As I recall it presented some interest but Council never took the necessary action to adopt the system at that time.

I believe it was the following year that the Metropolitan Corporation of Greater Winnipeg was formed, which included

the 12 cities and 5 surrounding municipalities, including East St. Paul. Word had it that the Planning Department of Metro Winnipeg suggested to the East St. Paul Council that it should have a house numbering system. This was when our system was retrieved from the files. It is my understanding that the Planning Department of the Metro Corporation provided the legislation to adopt the house numbering system for East St. Paul

And as Paul Harvey would say "And now you know the rest of the story."