

Red River Residents circulated petitions to end the career of ferryman Macdougall

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halfpennies of the poor and never refused credit to a friend.

"The upshot generally was that the bold interloped voluntarily resigned, after a short tenure in office, leaving the way clear for the triumphant return of the inevitable Duncan."

There was one individual who managed to last an entire season as ferryman. Hargrave wrote that James Mulligan became the ferryman in May 1865, "and had, in defiance of French intimidation, manfully done his duty throughout the whole season."

Still, the residents of St. Boniface, as periodically reported in *Le Mâtis*, considered the ferry a nuisance because of frequent interruptions in service and its lack of proper accommodations for passengers.

Interruptions in ferry service meant that those wanting to cross the river were at the mercy of row-boat owners, who charged 30-cents, which was 15 times the regular fee charged to ride the ferry.

In the spring of 1873, the ferry landing on the Winnipeg side of the Red River had been moved from Broadway Street (Broadway then ran across Main Street to the foot of the river) to Notre Dame East (which also then ran to the foot of the Red River — today's Pioneer Avenue). The explanation given for the relocation was that it was more convenient for Winnipeegers. The ferry landing at St. Boniface stayed the same, where today's Provencher Bridge meets Provencher Boulevard on the east bank of the Red River.

At the time, James Ryan operated the ferry under a contract he obtained from the provincial govern-

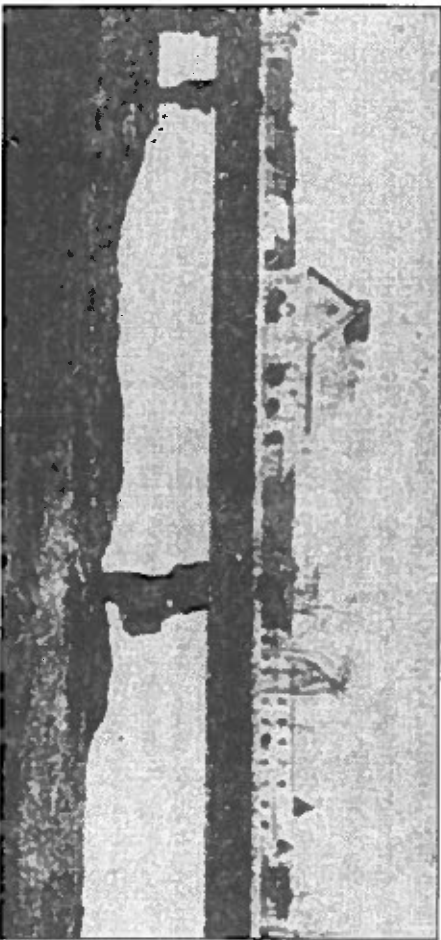
ment's department of public works. This was a point of contention among Winnipeegers, who resented that their city council had no say in how the ferry was operated.

In reporting about the landing's relocation, the *Manitoban* said it probably wouldn't result in any change in the number of daily complaints about the ferry service which had been noted in the previous year.

In fact, a reporter for the *Manitoban* wrote a June 28, 1873, article about his own experiences with the ferry.

"Immediate business requiring our presence on the other side of the river," he wrote, "we proceeded to the ferry house on the full belief that we should find some means of getting across. The ferry-boat was on the opposite side (St. Boniface), and we sat in a broiling sun to wait for its advent in company with some others, also patiently waiting for the contingency."

The reporter said they observed the ferryman on the opposite "indulging in the luxury of a pipe." The ferryman was in no hurry to heed the hails of the



Ferry landing sometime after 1860, looking toward St. Boniface (Archives of Manitoba).

people waiting for the conveyance on the Winnipeg side of the Red River. Instead, they received the reply that "we must wait."

Unfortunately for the individuals who waited for the ferry's return, it failed to arrive and they had to leave without getting across the river.

"The man at present in charge of the ferry," continued the reporter, "who receives wages to the extent of three dollars per day for the performance of his duties, is simply unfit for the post when he tells people who want to cross, to wait his leisure — and no time should be lost in finding a more active man for the place."

(Next week: part 2)