

## That's Where I Come From

By Haylan Jackson

The Inglis Elevators are infamous. Visitors from all over Manitoba, Canada, and the rest of the world stop and admire the huge and awesome prairie giants. There used to be over 6000 elevators standing tall along the Canadian Prairie horizon, and now that there are less than 1000 left, visitors come to see the largest standing row; the five elevators proudly guarding the town of Inglis. My summer working at the elevators has given me the opportunity to show these famous beings off to the tourists that come to stare.

Growing up in Inglis, I often took advantage of the little town I called home. The welcoming people, the quaint and the quiet atmosphere, and the Elevators that I saw when I looked out my bedroom window are all descriptions of what made Inglis the friendly place to be, and now, more than ever before, I realize the truth behind that statement. Now that I have left home for school, coming home is exciting and nostalgic. I have fallen in love with the drive up the two mile corner where I am greeted by the little village and the giants, all lit up.

In May I was hired as the Summer Site Manager, which for the most part was a fancy name for "tour guide". I was expected to know the workings of a Standard Plan Prairie Grain Elevator, especially the ones situated in Inglis. However, on the first day I knew absolutely nothing about the giants I was to supervise. On my first day, as my tour trainer, Curt Koss, was walking out the door my first tour group was walking in. Needless to say, I quickly studied and learned how to give a thorough and informative tour. I soon discovered that as much as I knew, I definitely didn't know everything about the elevators, and so, when tough questions were asked, my coach, Grandpa Earl, was there to prepare me for my next tour.

My responsibilities at the site did not just include giving tours. I also assisted in interviewing another student to work in part with the Manitoba Green Team, and Marianne Holovach was hired for the position. Other responsibilities included small banking records, picking up cleaning supplies at the general store, and getting the mail often leading to conversations with Mr. Klimack - a regular passer-by, checking on daily grain prices while on his morning or afternoon walks

Another part of my job was to organize fundraisers to raise money for the Inglis Area Heritage Committee so they can continue to maintain the site and provide tour guides during the summer. The Inglis Elevators were hosts to a "Concert in the Annex" where Sarah Skinner and I performed two sets of prairie folk music to an audience of 65 people. The amazing acoustics in the annex and the cozy atmosphere lit with Christmas lights and antique lamps, wine, and delicious desserts donated by board members made the concert a success. This event made \$800.00 in profits.

The second fundraiser was the lunchtime BBQ where 100 people filled the Annex. A special thank-you goes to Nelson and Jill Daneluk for their time and amazing meal. With the \$740.00 made at the BBQ, the total fundraising profits are an exciting \$1540.00. This money will be used for maintenance and upkeep costs. Although money fundraised is greatly appreciated and is much needed, more

funding is required to continue restoration. The project needing immediate funding is painting the Paterson elevator. There are many ways to contribute to this project and others that the I.A.H.C is undertaking. Becoming a member will keep you informed on all happenings at the site, making a monetary donation directly to the Inglis Area Heritage Committee, or by making a monetary donation to the Endowment Fund. For any further information or to have any questions answered, please contact the I.A.H.C. (Tel. 564-2243 or [iahc@mts.net](mailto:iahc@mts.net) )

This summer, tours came from every direction on the map and it was always interesting learning how to alter the tour information for those who came to visit. With the guests who didn't know what wheat was, I had to start from the very beginning, but retired agents and farmers could usually teach me a thing or two. I loved listening to all their stories. Although many farmers in the area have been around a lot longer than I have (and probably have a few more stories to tell about the giants than I), there are still some memories that make the elevators special for me. I am just barely old enough to remember the train coming through, and the whistle that woke me up in time for school, or going for a sleigh ride with my sisters in Grandpa's sleigh – the same sleigh that is on display at the site now, or playing on the hill behind the tracks in the winter and unfortunately breaking Bomback's toboggan, or having a town wide game of sardines and hiding in the shadows of the elevators.

I am a history major studying at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. Last semester I took a class called "Canadian Cultural Landscapes". One day in class while sleepily taking notes, I was quickly woken up when I saw a picture of 'my' elevators on the presentation screen. My professor was commenting on prairie culture and I enthusiastically piped up claiming the Inglis Elevators as my hometown heroes. After a bit of talking, my professor and I decided that a research project on the Inglis Elevators might be a good honors thesis and so, this Saturday I am looking forward to a meeting of the local retired farmers, coffee, cookies and a tape recorder to get started on my project.

My experience working at the elevators has not only been an incredible educational one but also has increased my appreciation for my community. I loved being able to share all of my knowledge with the visitors curious about the prairie giants. I will always be proud of Inglis and the work that the community has put into this extraordinary site. I hope that it will remain here for many generations to see so that when people ask me "where are you from?" and I tell them "Inglis," they will say "oh, where the elevators are?" I will proudly respond "yes, that's where I come from."