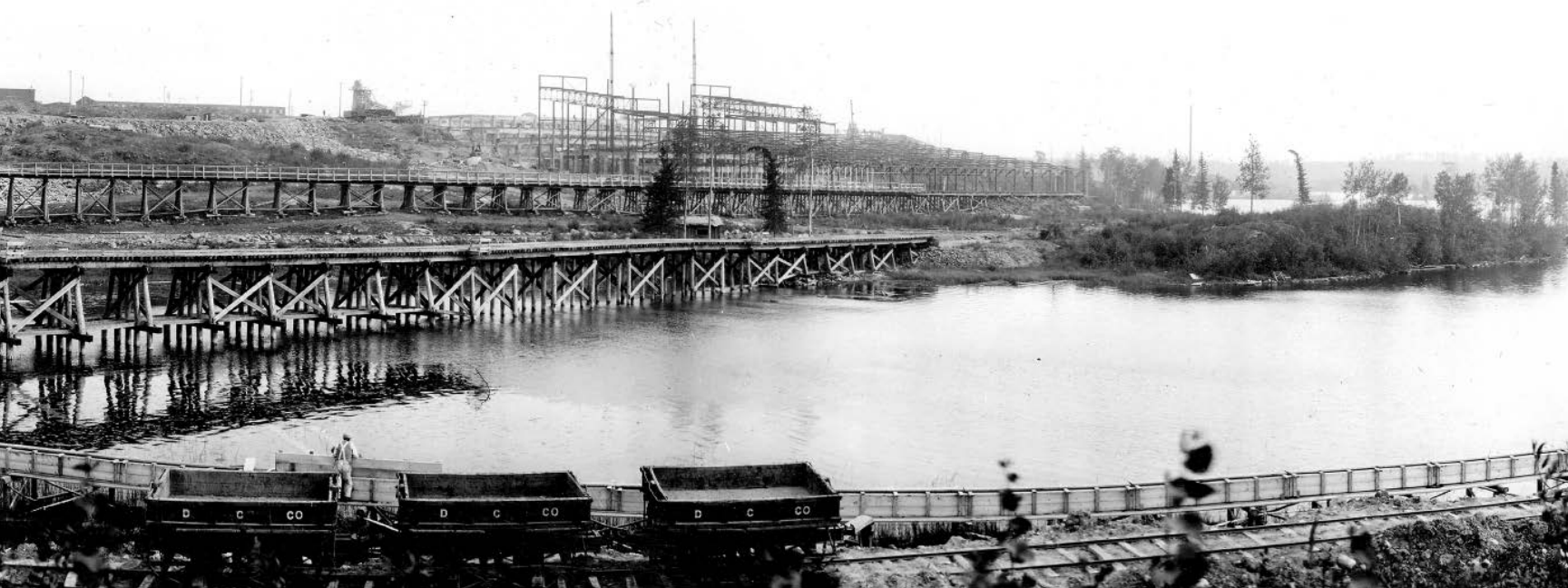




# FLIN FLON 100

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE DISCOVERY  
OF THE FLIN FLON DEPOSIT





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Panoramic view of the Flin Flon mine,  
June 20, 1929.

I am a history buff. I particularly like the novels of Edward Rutherfurd, who creates fictional families and weaves their generations through great historical events and settings. One of the reasons I feel an affinity for Flin Flon and the people of northern Manitoba is because so many real-life generations of families weave through its history. It is a point of pride to me that in Hudson Bay we can point to generations of several families who have worked with us all these years. Not many companies can say that today.

In that context, the centennial of the Flin Flon deposit is a great occasion and Hudson Bay is honoured to commemorate it. We hope this book illustrates the ingenuity, inventiveness and plain determination of the people who built this community and region over these hundred years. My parents were immigrants who came to Canada to build a new life and a family, and so I identify immediately with the proud family and cultural traditions that run long and deep through your communities. In the hundred years since 1915, it is only scratching the surface to recall that we've seen two world wars, a legendary Depression, dramatic shifts in social views and astounding advances in technology. These advances include the evolution of modern mining, and of how we balance the interests of the world around us as we go about our business.

Through it all, northern Manitobans have kept pace while remaining themselves. All along, Hudson Bay has played a part in the story. We've helped you get to where you are today and we'll help you get to where you're going next.

Congratulations for all you've achieved and will achieve still in the years ahead.



**DAVID A. GAROFALO**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**T**he prospectors and adventurers who came to our community after the discovery of the Flin Flon deposit would probably be surprised by how much still seems familiar to them a hundred years on. Yet we who live here today know how much has changed. While we still mine ore, could they have imagined the depth we travel beneath the surface to access it today, or the amount we can now bring back to the surface in a single skip? While we still produce the same metals, could they have imagined the use of zinc in creating solar energy or of copper in a smartphone?

Change and continuity are both part of Hudbay's story. We have grown on our strengths and will continue to grow on them. Exploration potential still exists in the Flin Flon Greenstone Belt, and we are pursuing it in all directions. In this new century, exploration has produced Reed, proof of the innovation that is central to modern mining, and Lalor, a long-life mine that will contribute to the story of Snow Lake, as did dozens of earlier mines built over ten decades in and around Flin Flon. Now, in addition to our work here at home, the operational excellence fostered and refined in Manitoba has produced a skilled and talented team that is helping Hudbay grow internationally at our sites in Peru and Arizona.

I congratulate the people of Flin Flon and Manitoba and Hudbay – who are so often one and the same – on their achievements, their perseverance and their capacity to invent and reinvent, whatever the challenge, the opportunity or even just the weather.

Here's to the next hundred years!



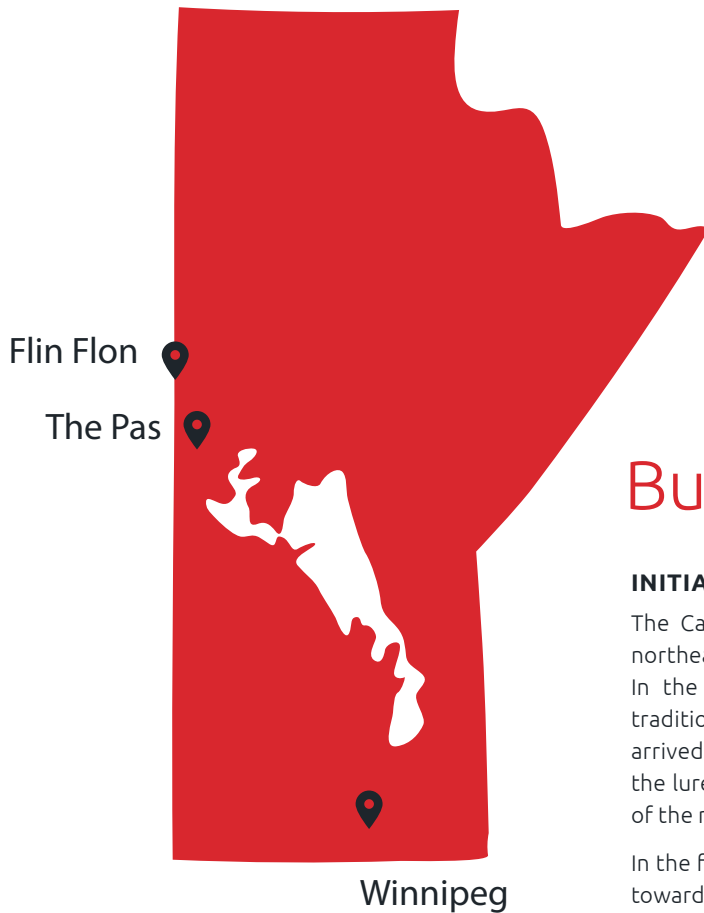
**ROBERT WINTON**

Vice President, Manitoba Business Unit

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Mrs. Harry McLean holds the ceremonial golden spike for Manitoba Premier John Bracken at the completion of the rail line to Flin Flon in 1928. (Flin Flon Community Archives)





## Built from the Rock

### INITIAL DISCOVERY

The Canadian Shield is rugged, rocky Precambrian land stretching from northeast Saskatchewan through Manitoba and into northwestern Ontario. In the early 1900s, the Manitoba mineral belt was accessible only by traditional water routes established for the fur trade. Before a railway arrived in 1911, few ventured here – it was simply too difficult to reach. But the lure of minerals in the granite, and the volcanic and sedimentary rocks of the region, brought prospectors.

In the fall of 1914, Tom Creighton had a trap line that ran through the bush towards Athapapuskow Lake. On a trip to check the line, Creighton arrived at David Collins' camp near Baker's Narrows, east of present-day Flin Flon. Collins showed Creighton pieces of rock he had picked up from an area ten miles away.

Creighton, one of Canada's pioneer prospectors, recognized the potential of the oxidized surface. The deposit proved to be the largest copper-zinc orebody found to date in Manitoba (estimated at the time to be 18 million tonnes). In September 1915, he staked his first claims in the area. It was the region's most significant discovery, and eventually become known as the "Flin Flon deposit".

Extensive drilling was necessary to determine the true value. Outside capital was needed. Prominent mining executives came to see the site for themselves, while samples of the deposit were sent to Toronto for testing, which produced favourable results. Still, it wasn't until 1920 that development began.



Panoramic view of the Flin Flon mine. Winter 1930.

### THE MANDY MINE

News of the Flin Flon deposit discovery was quickly followed by the discovery of the Mandy mine just a few miles south. With its rich 20 per cent copper ore, the Mandy mine became the first producing copper field in Manitoba, mined from 1916–1920.

The Manitoba Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources describes the longest-lasting impact of Mandy mine as the aura of excitement it created about the prospects for the Flin Flon region.

**Source:** The Mandy mine, Manitoba Department of Cultural Affairs and Historical Resources

Tom Creighton with Leon J. Dion, Dan Mosher, Jack Mosher and Jack Hammell on the banks of The Pas River where it meets the Saskatchewan River. 1917.





Workers posing outside the cookhouse in Camp #3 at Mandy mine. 1920.



### THE WHITNEY FAMILY

In 1925, Tom Creighton and his partners optioned their stake to a group backed by the Harry Payne Whitney interests of New York. The Whitneys were a prominent and wealthy American family, known for their extensive business holdings and philanthropy.

An extensive diamond-drilling program proved the existence of an orebody at least 2,600 feet long and 900 feet deep.

After feasibility testing and building a pilot mill in Flin Flon, an investment group made up of the Whitney family, Newmont Mining Corp. of New York and Mining Corp. of Canada Ltd. incorporated Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting (HBM&S) in 1927.

In the next few years, HBM&S subsequently sunk a number of mine shafts and built a concentrator, copper smelter and zinc refinery. According to some sources, it was one of the largest industrial development projects in the Western Hemisphere, second only to the Panama Canal in terms of scale.

Production began in Flin Flon in June 1930. Eight years later, the company was listed on the New York Stock Exchange under the symbol HBM.

The Whitneys took a personal interest in Flin Flon and made direct contributions to quality of life in the town. Today the Whitney Forum is the local arena, and is central to life in Flin Flon. Home to activities from curling to hockey, the Whitney Forum hosts Hudbay's annual hockey tournament each year.

**Source:** The Donaldson Document and company records

HBM&S miners (night shift). May 1938.



*"MINERS" (NIGHT S  
HUDSON BAY MINING & SMELTING  
MAY 1938. FLIN FLON*



SHIFT)  
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MAN.

BUTCHER & RUNNALLS  
PHOTOGRAPHERS  
REGINA & FLIN FLON.



## Early Days of Mining

Like many other orebodies in northern Canada, the bulk of the Flin Flon ore-bearing rock lay under a lake. The greater part of the orebody was covered by 12 to 15 feet of water, and from 15 to 90 feet of mud and clay.

Because the orebody was relatively near the surface, Hudbay mined the top 300 feet as an open pit and the remaining ore using underground methods. Each, however, required building a dam.

Safety considerations were paramount throughout the drilling, blasting, loading and “tramming” (done with 10-tonne-capacity train cars) phases of the mine’s development. A safety inspector examined the mine and operations daily to ensure that all safety protocols were being followed. And because flying rocks presented a danger to the site and the town during blasting, methods were developed to warn townspeople in advance that a blast was imminent.

The open pit mine was in operation for nearly eleven years, with an estimated 5½ million tonnes of ore removed.

**Source:** Jim Mochoruk, *Mining’s Early Years: An Historic Look at Flin Flon’s Mining Pioneers. The Beginnings: 1926–1930*

**Source:** The Open Pit/Mining Processes: *Northroots* magazine, August/September 2009

### HOW FLIN FLON GOT ITS NAME

While prospecting near the Churchill River, Tom Creighton and his team came across a dime novel: *The Sunless City*—the story of Josiah Flintabbatey Flonatin, a grocer turned explorer, who journeyed in a submarine (of his own design) down a subterranean river. Everyone on Creighton’s team took their turn reading the novel.

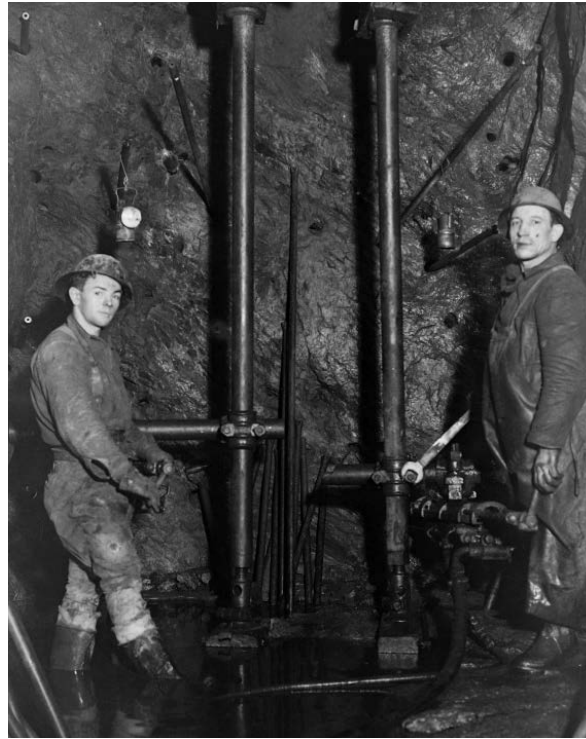
When the time came to record the name for the new orebody, the nickname of the novel’s hero – Flin Flon – came to mind.

To honour the literary provenance of the town’s name, a 24-foot statue of Josiah Flintabbatey Flonatin, designed by renowned cartoonist Al Capp, was erected in 1962 and still stands at the entrance to the city.



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Group of miners pose for a photo at Schist Lake. 1930s.



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Drifters hard at work, 1,690 feet underground. 1930s. (Photo courtesy of Frank Fieber)



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The converter furnace in the copper smelter, HBM&S.



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Aerial view of the mining site close to a decade after development began. 1937.

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Aerial view of Main Street.  
Summer, 1930s. (Flin Flon  
Community Archives)



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Eaton's storefront opens in Flin Flon on Main Street  
on November 1, 1940.



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Taking a stroll along Third Avenue in Flin Flon. 1930s.  
(Flin Flon Community Archives)

# Building a Community

**“One day, there is nothing but a tiny mining camp surrounded by miles of wilderness and rock then suddenly a whole town seems to spring to life.”**

– Jim Mochoruk, *Mining’s Early Years*

In 1926, the mining camp at the edge of Flin Flon’s lake was so small it was not even listed in the official census. As late as March 1928, 270 people were living there. Eleven years later, the population was in excess of 2,000; in 1946, it was 7,400.

Most of the families that came to this rugged country had no idea what life had in store for them. But by 1929-30, Flin Flon was a burgeoning mining community with a voluntary school board, a school building, and a local taxation scheme. During construction between 1928 and 1930, the newly formed Hudson Bay Mining and Smelting Company invested \$27 million into the development at Flin Flon.

Businesses began to open, starting with Flin Flon’s first general store, along with two banks. With the construction of Main Street, a bakery, grocery stores, and the town’s first hotel soon opened. By 1933, Flin Flon was incorporated as a Municipal District to be governed by its own mayor and council.

The new mine and growing population demanded a local source of energy. To fill this need, the Island Falls Powerhouse was built 60 miles northwest of Flin Flon on the Churchill River in Saskatchewan.

Constructed between 1928 and 1930, it was the first hydroelectric power plant built in Saskatchewan. Considered to be the most ambitious winter hauling enterprise ever undertaken in Canada, freighting began in December 1928, and was completed in March 1929.

The No. 1 unit began supplying power to Island Falls on June 8, 1930, and to Flin Flon on June 12, 1930. By 1967, new technology permitted the power plant to be run by remote control, and in 1981 the plant was acquired by SaskPower, which still operates it today.

**Source:** *Northroots* magazine, December 2006/January 2007



Construction at the Island Falls Powerhouse (left) and the Main Dam (right). 1929. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



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By the 1930s, city services and Main Street's development were coming along, with an established dirt road, power lines and a honey wagon making its rounds.



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A freight of beer barrels tips and a rescue mission ensues for one of Flin Flon's most precious commodities. 1931. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



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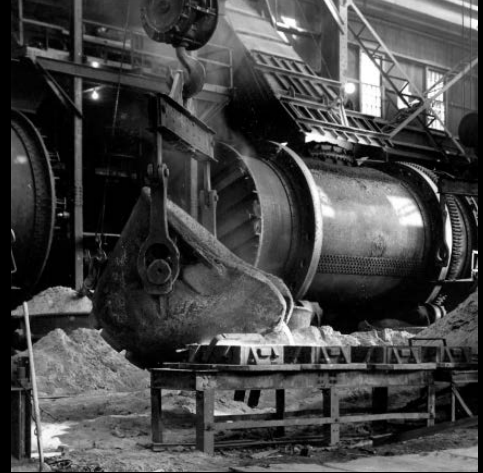
Flin Flon's first group of Girl Guides attending an outdoor meeting. 1935. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



The Marion electric shovel (shown here hard at work in the open ore pit) was used in a variety of different locations of the mine. 1930s.



Flin Flon's very first airport, built by HBM&S.



Pouring molds into the copper smelter, HBM&S.



Day shift workers taking a break. 1930s.  
(Flin Flon Community Archives)



Aerial view of the HBM&S mine site in the winter of 1929.

# Community Life in Flin Flon

People in the new town of Flin Flon were unashamedly community minded. They came from a wide variety of backgrounds, but they had one thing in common – they were in the north, living a new life while hard times had fallen on most of the country during the Great Depression.

They built more than just a place to live. Some said that the company had a policy of favouring candidates who could bring something extra to town: if Flin Flon needed a ballet teacher or golf pro, for example, a role at the mine was given to someone who could do it.

Recognizing the importance of education, mine workers and their families set up informal schools in empty buildings and church basements. Volunteer

teachers canvassed local businesses with a brown paper bag, collecting money to keep the schools funded.

HBM&S's backing was instrumental in the evolution of the isolated town. Tradesmen, heavy equipment, and materials were often supplied to support community projects.

For a small town, Flin Flon has bred an inordinate number of men who made it to the top tier of the hockey world in the National Hockey League (NHL). Residents attribute their skill development to the quality of the town's own hockey team, The Bombers. Notable hockey stars include Gerry Hart, Ken Baumgartner and Bobby Clarke.

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One of Flin Flon's earliest hockey teams posing during practice. 1928. (Flin Flon Community Archives)





Flin Flon paid a hearty welcome to more than two hundred and fifty members of the Chamber of Commerce. The party consisted of three provincial premiers from Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba, senators and cabinet ministers, and leading men of organizations from all over the entire Dominion. September 1, 1931.

Pioneer school on Hapnot Street, grades 1 and 2, and 7 to 11. (Flin Flon Community Archives)

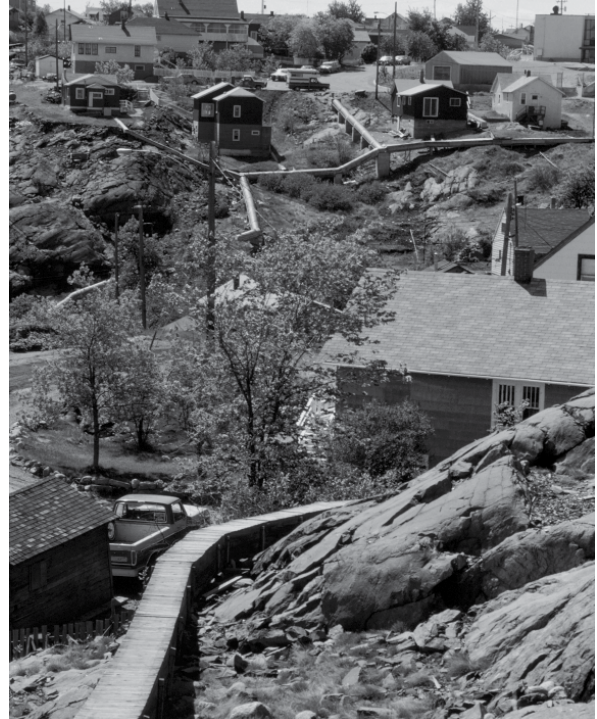


Branch #73 of Canada's drum and bugle band. 1936. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



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Flin Flon's famous "Hundred Stairs" connecting Third Avenue.



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Flin Flon's above-ground sewer boxes line the city's back streets. 1980. (Photo courtesy of Frank Fieber)



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Track gang hard at work on the Flin Flon railroad, 1928. (Flin Flon Community Archives)

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Sled dogs were also a popular way of travelling during Manitoba's lengthy winters. (Photo courtesy of Frank Fieber)



# Ingenuity of Flin Flonners

Built on nearly impenetrable rock, Flin Flon is the only city in the world to locate its water and sewage lines above ground. Early inhabitants encased the lines in wood, which snaked through the town, becoming the first “sidewalks”. Some are still used today.

For children growing up in Flin Flon, the sewer boxes acted as their highways, town boundaries and protective walls.

## THE HUNDRED STAIRS

In 1935, a large flight of stairs was built as a shortcut to get to Main Street from Third Avenue.

In 1947, local politicians conceived a 140-metre tunnel for pedestrians, to save climbing the hundred stairs.

Builders got within four metres of completion when enthusiasm waned and the dimensions shrank to the point the tunnel became a storm sewer outlet.

During the Cold War, when nervous neighbours further south were building bomb shelters in their basements, Flin Flonners figured that if worse came to worst, they could hide in the tunnel.

**Source:** Flin Flon City website

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Families enjoying the day along Phantom Beach during its heyday. July 1936.  
(Photo courtesy of Frank Fieber)

## PHANTOM LAKE

As the population of Flin Flon grew, the town needed an outdoor space for young families to congregate and socialize. HBM&S built a workers’ “resort” at nearby Phantom Lake with a constructed beach, restaurant, tennis courts, picnic areas and a model train. Phantom Lake is where early Flin Flonners spent the bulk of their summer, and is still remembered fondly by those who spent time there.

## TRANSPORTATION

Before the railway reached Flin Flon, locals had to be creative in getting materials and people to town. Everything that was needed to build the giant HBM&S project was hauled in winter by teams of horses and sleighs, or brought by barge in summer.

Sled dogs were also a popular mode of transportation during Manitoba’s lengthy winters. This is why you’ll notice an abundance of dogs roaming the streets in many photographs taken during Flin Flon’s early days.

**Source:** *Northroots* magazine, February/March 2014





The Dutch group poses in front of the Stag Bowling & Pool Room during the Silver Jubilee parade. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



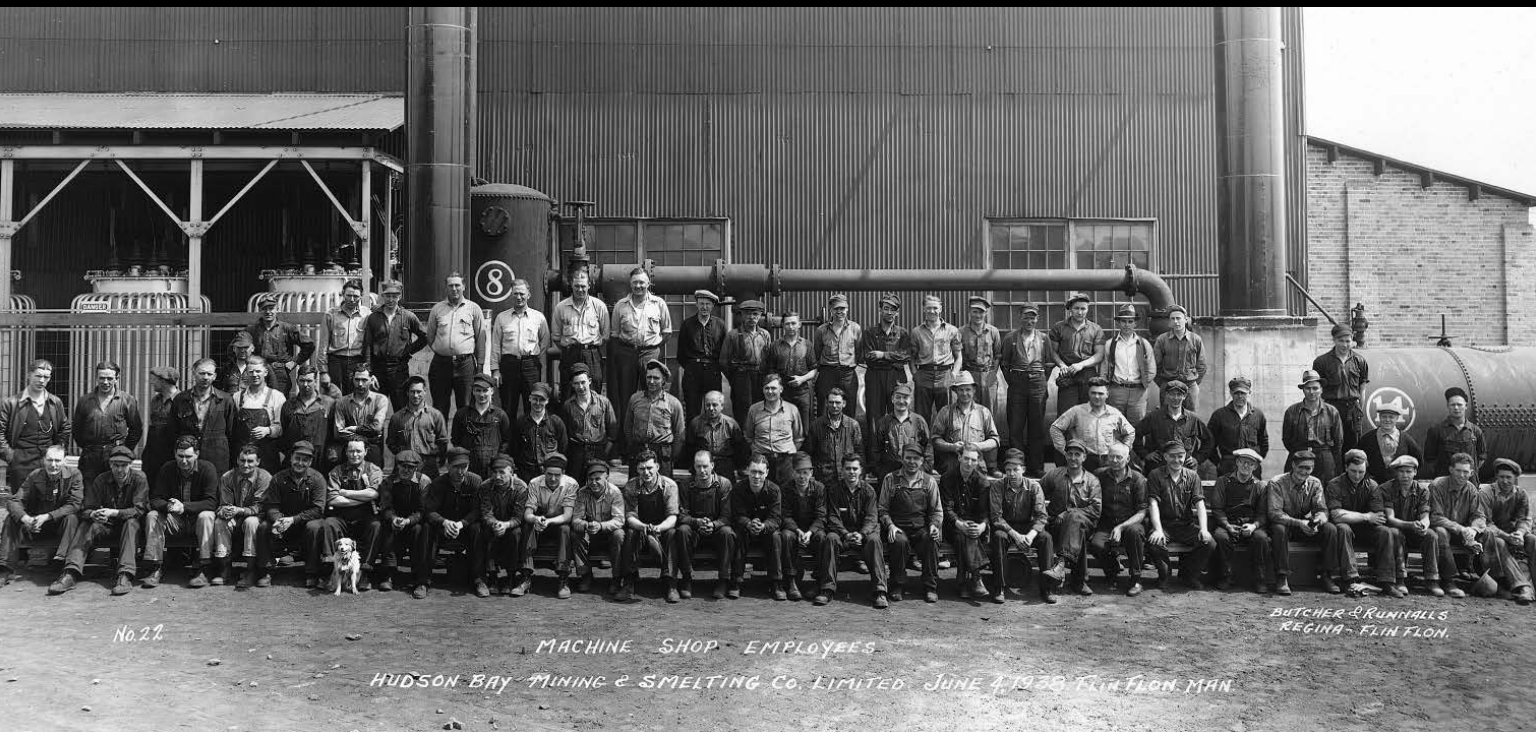
A group photo of the "Machine Shop Girls" taken in the early 1940s. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



Flin Flon General Hospital, opened in 1938. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



The Flin Flon mine site open pit (looking west). 1933.



HBM&S machine shop employees group photo.  
June 4, 1938.



Aerial view of the Zinc Plant stack and tankhouse, HBM&S. 1930.

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The Hungarian Cultural Society poses for a group photo during the Silver Jubilee parade. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



## 1935 Jubilee

In 1935, to mark 25 years since the coronation of George V, Flin Flon planned a spectacular festival, with dozens of parade floats, tableaux, people marching in their national dress, booths, music and dances. It was an event of which the town was – and still is – justly proud.

At the time, Flin Flon's population of 7,000 was composed of people from more than 20 nationalities; they used the Jubilee celebrations as a chance to celebrate their own heritage. Just about everyone in town pitched in to make the Jubilee parade a success.

A permanent steel archway decorated with evergreen boughs was erected on a concrete base next to the railway tracks. It features prominently in the many photographs from that day.

**Source:** *Northroots* magazine, February/March 2010



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Old neighbours Ernie Foster and William Rhinehart as John Bull and Uncle Sam during the Silver Jubilee parade. (Flin Flon Community Archives)

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Flin Flonners gather on May 6, 1935 to watch the Silver Jubilee parade honouring King George V. This steel archway was erected for the celebrations. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



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The Denmark float in the Silver Jubilee parade. May 6, 1935. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



1. RONDEAU, ALBEE	6. PHILIPOWICH, M.	11. ZELL, MADELINE	16. ALBERTSON, FRANCES	21. BIRD, VIOLA	26. SMITH, LILLIAN	31. RON, STELLA	36. THOMPSON, ALLA	41. FITZPATRICK, M	46. NEWSON, THELMA	51. BOYKO, DORIS
2. MENTANCO, ANN	7. STERMA, JEAN	12. CASSIDY, JESSIE	17. ARIKO, MARY	22. BILDPELL, ELIN	27. LORNTSEN, JEAN	32. LABA, JEAN	37. TENYCKE, EMMA	42. STARANCHUK, S.	47. DINSE, ANNALEE	52. TIHOR BARBARA
3. KULCHER, ANN	8. OUAL, SADIE	13. HANSON, MINNIE	18. HAWKINS, WELIE	23. ROMMEL, CLARA	28. RASMUSSEN, ORKE	33. GULKA, STELLA	38. BANFORD, FRANCIS	43. ESSINGTON, MAY	48. STUART, EDNA	53. LYSOHIKKA, OLGA
4. MALYNYK, MARY	9. OHRYN, ANNE	14. PFNAB, JESSIE	19. HOWE, OLGA	24. LUCIW, PAULINE	29. GREGORY, JUSTIE	34. GOYER, VIVIAN	39. JARVIS, RUTH	44. STRAND, VIOLET	49. POPESCU, PEARL	
5. MALYNYK, ELSIE	10. PETERSON, ETHEL	15. CASSIDY, DORA	20. MATTHEWS, META	25. SLOBODZIAN, OLGA	30. GREGORY, ANNE	35. GOSTROW, ANN	40. STRAND, ADELINE	45. MATSALLA, HELEN	50. GROSE, SUSAN	

A group photo of enterprising Canadian female zinc plant workers during a day shift. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



A group photo of the "Machine Shop Girls". 1943. (Flin Flon Community Archives)



# Women Workers

During WWII, women across the country stepped forward to fill roles traditionally filled by men. 1,380 citizens of Flin Flon joined the war effort. The women of Flin Flon joined the workforce.

The town's wives, mothers and daughters kept production going at the local zinc plant while their husbands, sons and fathers fought in Europe and the Pacific. In fact, the women produced a record output of zinc in 1943. They are remembered today as local heroes.



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Mrs. Dorothy Linden in the Assay Lab, 1943.  
(Flin Flon Community Archives)



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Betty Smith (centre) and her colleagues  
working hard at the HBM&S Rubber Plant.  
(Flin Flon Community Archives)

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A popular winter pastime in the early days was skating and playing hockey on Frozen Flin Flon Lake. 1928/29. (Flin Flon Community Archives)

*The content in this book originally appeared in the online museum flinflon100.com, created for the deposit centenary. It is adapted, edited, quoted and sourced here from materials as identified and the individuals mentioned below.*

*Hudbay would like to thank the following for their generous contributions in the development of the online museum and this book, in particular: The Flin Flon Heritage Project, Tom Burbidge, Gerry Clarke, Vince Dodds, Doug Evans, Frank Fieber, Brenda Niedermaier, Don Peake, Cindy Lahone, the Flin Flon Library staff, and the people of Flin Flon.*

*We couldn't have completed this project without the help of many people.*





# HUDBAY

To view the entire digital museum, please visit:

[www.hudbayminerals.com](http://www.hudbayminerals.com)

