

In the southwest corner of Manitoba, close to the US and Saskatchewan borders, is the town of Waskada. The first European Settlers arrived in Waskada as early as 1883. Their local museum depicts what life looked like during those years.

One day in the summer of 1997, Waskada resident, Hilt Wallace, was enjoying a beautiful July day at his favourite summertime hangout, the Waskada Museum, when a couple arrived to tour the buildings and view the artifacts. They were accompanied by an elderly gentleman, who carried with him a small diary. Over the next few hours Hilt Wallace was to learn an intriguing story of the gentleman, and a nugget of Waskada history, nearly 100 years old.



*The Waskada Museum*

The man's name was Arthur Ledsham Jr and he had found the diary after his mother had passed away. It had been written by a man he had never met – his father, Arthur Theadore Ledsham Sr. Arthur Jr was currently visiting Canada from his home in Wales. While staying with his daughter and her husband in Ontario, Arthur had convinced them to travel west to the little town of Waskada, a place he had read about in his father's diary.

According to the diary, Arthur Sr. arrived in Waskada with his brother Amos in 1910. They found work with farmers in the area. Arthur Sr worked on the Donald Radcliffe farm, and brother Amos worked with Ernie Lowes.

Two years later in 1912 Arthur Sr went back to Wales to find a bride. After his wedding, he was

drafted into the British army and was killed. Arthur Jr. was born several months later.

Now 85 years old, Arthur Jr. stood in the town of Waskada, where his father once lived. He asked Hilt Wallace about the Radcliffe farm, and Hilt offered to take him there to meet Bob Radcliffe, the current landowner. Then they drove to the Lowes farm.

Later Hilt did some investigation on his own to see if there was any record of Arthur Sr. being in Waskada. Apparently, Donald Radcliffe, the owner of the farm that the father worked at, had been a meticulous bookkeeper. His daughter-in-law Muriel had inherited his books and so Hilt paid her a visit and shared the story of the special visitors who came to the Waskada Museum. Muriel advised him to visit Mary Radcliffe McGregor, Donald Radcliffe's daughter, and she remembered Arthur Sr working at her father's farm in Waskada.

How fascinating it is that an unknown father could cause such a burning curiosity in his son, that at 85 years old, that son would visit the place where his father worked, an ocean, a continent and a lifetime away!

And that unbeknownst to the father, despite only living for two years in Waskada, he would leave behind a memory and a story for us to enjoy today!

*Vantage Points Flashbacks were written by David Neufeld with help from Betty Sawatzky. They were originally aired on CJRB Radio out of Boissevain, Manitoba in the early 2020s.*