

## The Wonder Wood-Whittling Wow!

by Gwendolyn P. Clarke  
in the Family Herald

Campbellville is a lovely little village in Halton County, Ontario. But it has more than beautiful scenery to attract attention. It has an octogenarian for whom hobbies began at 80!

Most visitors drive through the village slowly — to enjoy the wooded slopes — and so, in driving slowly, many a person has noticed, and been attracted by, this odd signboard over the double door of an otherwise ordinary looking shed. Here is what the signboard says:

"John I. Routledge — Wonder Wood-Whittling Wow. Chronic knocker and wood-butcher anything inside the timber limit!" Yes, this notice tells you some of the things that John Routledge can do—but it doesn't tell you that he was 83 in December, and that for the past three years he has been doing decorative wood-carving as a hobby. "A wonder wood carving wow" describes John I. exactly — known to many in the village as "Uncle John."

Uncle John has been pretty busy most of his life in just earning a living, but when he got to be 80 he figured he might take a bit of time out for a few hobbies. Wood-carving was one of the things he had always wanted to do. He didn't know of anyone who could teach him so he bought an instruction book and a set of tools — and went to work.

Now, in a big glass case over ten feet high, and specially made for the purpose — John Routledge has on display a wonderful collection of his own carvings — interesting, odd, original and artistic. This collection was exhibited at the 1950 fair and attracted considerable attention.

Outstanding among the articles in the cabinet is a three-dimensional picture of the interior of a country kitchen, inset in a carved cedar frame. The furnishings, the fireplace, the logs on the hearth, even the open casement window — are all done in relief carving. A magnificent piece of work — and almost incredible that, with ordin-

ary hand tools, so much detail could be gouged and carved from a plain piece of bass wood board. There are also two extraordinary walking sticks in this collection. One is cherry wood, inlaid with ivory on the handle. Below the handle it is carved to represent a rattlesnake twining itself around the stick.

The other cane has a "ball-in-a-cage" design, carved below the handle — a most intricate piece of work. The wood is a combination of sumach, black cherry and maple knot, Uncle John declares he would not take \$100 for that stick.

There are vases of basswood in open carving; a copy of an 18th century mantel-board, beadshelves, a picture of a pair of fighting cocks — done in chip carving — and another of a whole fish on a platter. There are pictures of flowers, carved in relief, and then painted. There is also a collection of puzzles and wooden blocks for children.

All this beautiful carving would be a credit anyone but to think it is the first attempt of an octogenarian is almost incredible. And all done with a jack-knife, a Western rancher's knife and a set of five small carving tools!

Uncle John's workshop is a two-story building with his original signboard at the front. He has been the local handyman for years and can do almost anything from building birdhouses to saw setting and filling — and all with hand tools. His only concession to our modern age is the use of electric light. He has many original slogans — one of them is — "You break 'em — I fix 'em!" He is also an adept at signboard painting.

The most commonly used door to Uncle John's workshop is at the back. Here you find some more of his unique work — painted right on the door itself.

"Saws filed to a finish. Handsaws and hand saws. Cross cuts and other saws. Little saws and big saws. Good saws and "out-of-lucks." Bucks and anti-bucks. Ice-saws and nice saws. Drag and dragheads. Hollow backs and hump backs. Stiff backs and comebacks. Double-tooth and toothless. Ripper and buzzers. Keyhole and others. What have you got?"

The door opens on to the first floor which is used mainly for storing lumber. A flight of stairs leads to the workshop proper. Here, Uncle John can usually be found at his bench surrounded by tools of every description, all neatly arranged and in perfect condition. Most of them are over forty years old. Uncle John claims they are the best set of hand tools in North America.

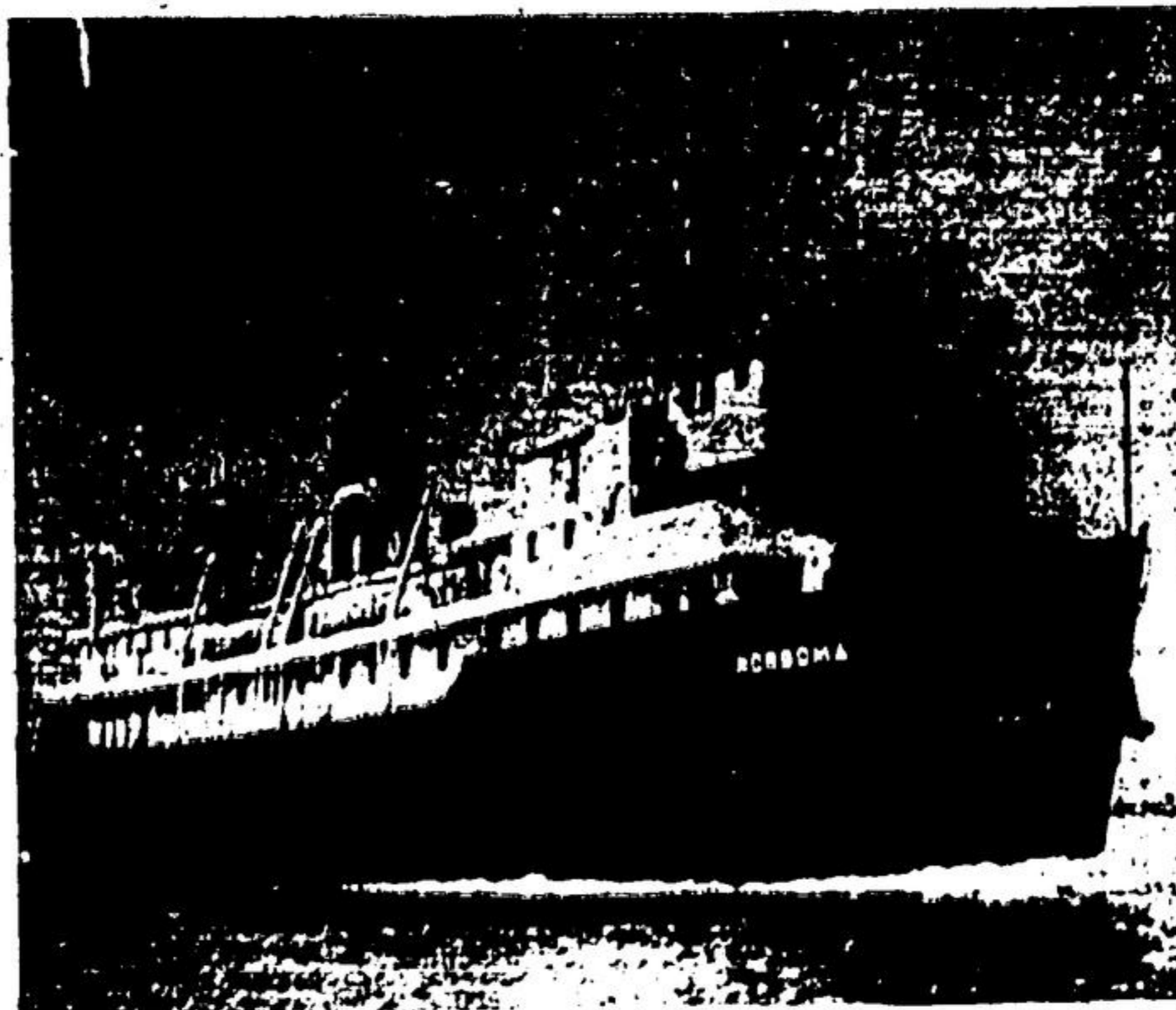
John Routledge is a clean-shaven, well-built, rugged-looking man. You might take him to be around 70. He is of English descent but was born in Kent County, Ontario, in 1868, the son of a farmer.

As a young man he was apprenticed to a good carpenter in Arizona. Later he worked in partnership with a first class cabinet maker. He moved to Campbellville about twenty-one years ago.

Whatever job he is doing John Routledge puts all he has into it. He is never satisfied until he is sure his work is the best he can do — he wants it as nearly perfect as possible. His aim is not only to improve "on the other fellow's work" but also on his own — to do each job a little better than the one before.

Uncle John is a well read man and well versed in the affairs of the day. His philosophy of life is kindly and sound, and he is a trusted friend to those who seek his help and counsel. As might be expected, he has a delightful sense of humour. Asked how many hours a day he spends at his bench he replied with a twinkle in his eye — "Well, now — it's hard to say... sometimes only an hour or two, sometimes all day. I work 'til I'm tired... and then I quit!" Maybe the hardest work Uncle John ever

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### Percy Reed Maintains Dairy Industry Contacts

by Gordon Sisson  
in the Regina Leader Post

"Almost everyone connected with agriculture in Saskatchewan knows Percy Reed."

During his more than 30 years of service with the Saskatchewan department of agriculture, the genial, witty, likable personality of this hard-working figure made him an unforgettable figure in agricultural circles throughout all parts of the province.

Percy Reed retired as provincial dairy commissioner in 1947 but his keen interest in the welfare of the dairy industry in western Canada is as strong as ever.

During his 33 years of active service to the dairy industry in Saskatchewan, in addition to being dairy commissioner for 20 years, acting deputy minister of agriculture for 10 years and secretary of the Saskatchewan Dairy Association for 28 years, he achieved an honored place in the history of Canadian dairying and won himself a host of friends throughout Canada.

did was last year when he posed for a well-known artist who was passing through the village and was attracted by his unusual sign. Uncle John isn't used to sitting still.

Whatever his working hours of one thing there can be little doubt — John I. Routledge is most certainly a wow — a wonder wood-whittling wow!

In the service of the dairy division, Mr. Reed travelled thousands of miles of Saskatchewan roads visiting creameries and dairy farms to discuss their problems. His expert knowledge of dairying, his natural ability to understand and get along with people and his fine sense of humour made him popular wherever he went.

During his term with the dairy division, he saw the tremendous increase in production from a bare domestic supply to a great surplus. He has seen the development of quality to the point where Saskatchewan dairy products are among the best in the world.

He has been a director of the Regina exhibition board for the past 28 years and as chairman of the junior activities committee has directed the program of the farm boys' and farm girls' camps. He was connected with the organization of the first dairy club in 1927 in the Moose Jaw district. Since then he has taken a keen interest in junior club work. At the

present time there are 11 dairy calf clubs among the rural youth of this province.

While Saskatchewan dairy commissioner, Percy Reed addressed farm meetings in all parts of the province and he has spoken to dairy conventions in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Ontario. His sharp wit and ability to rhyme off an appropriate verse to suit any occasion have made him a popular speaker at any meeting.

Mr. Reed was born and raised on a dairy farm a mile and a half south of Georgetown. (This 8th Line farm is now owned by Thomas Giffen.) He farmed for a few years and after a two year course received his diploma from the Ont. Agricultural College, Guelph, in 1903. In 1906 he attended the Guelph dairy school.

In the spring of 1913 he was attracted by the magnetism of adventure and responded to the popular cry "go west young man," which enthusiastically voiced throughout the east at that time, was carrying young men by the thousands toward the prairie west.

Soon after arriving in Regina, it was recognized that he had an advanced knowledge of dairying and he was appointed dairy inspector with the dairy branch of the Saskatchewan department of agriculture in 1914.

After working as a dairy inspector for a few years, Mr. Reed took a creamery course at Iowa State college, Ames, Iowa, in the winter of 1917 and 1918.

In September, 1918, he was appointed provincial dairy commissioner. In those days Saskatchewan

dairy production was comparatively small and a good deal of the work of the dairy department was the promotion of greater dairy production. As production increased, the finding of outside markets became essential and improvement of the quality of the finished dairy product became an important task of the dairy division.

#### To Write History

Since his retirement, Mr. Reed has taken a couple of summer jobs and has devoted his winter hours to "thank you" jobs, to Rotary and to Masonry and to visiting dairy meetings and conventions in the four western provinces.

The Saskatchewan Dairy Association has asked him to write a history of Saskatchewan dairying. In the summers of 1950 and 1951 he did inspection work for the Interprovincial Pipeline company along the 80-foot right of way of the pipeline. He also made financial settlements with the farmers for surface damage done in laying the pipeline. He came to an agreement with the farmer and wrote a check for the amount of loss on the spot. Farmers like this way of doing business.

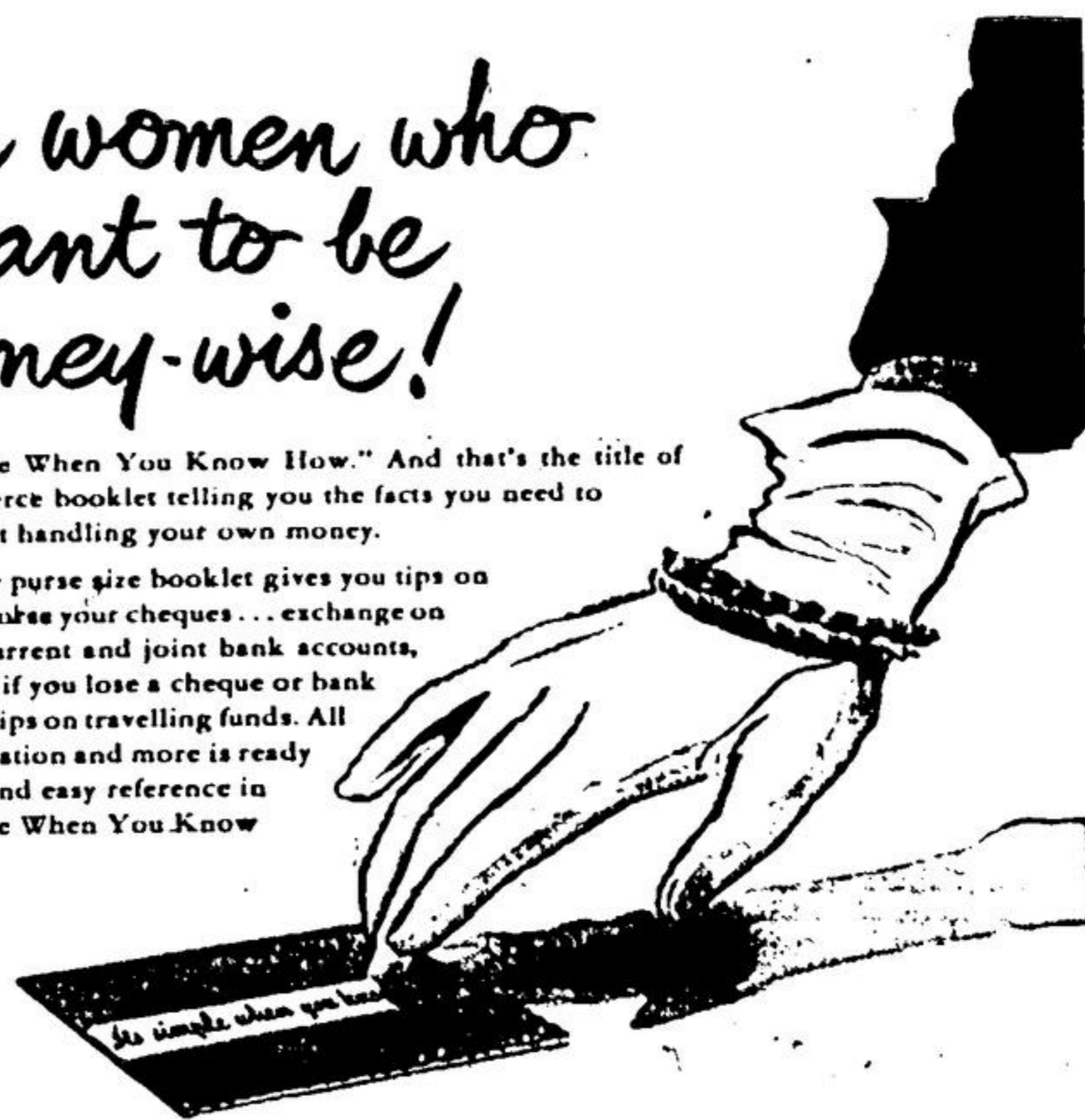
Mr. Reed is a Shriner, a member of the Agricultural Institute of Canada, the Saskatchewan Institute of Agriologists, the Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba dairy associations, the Saskatchewan Light Horse Breeders' Association, Regina Rotary Club, the board of trade, and the Men's Canadian Club and he is a director of the YMCA.

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