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# IN MEMORIAM

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## WALDEMIR YANCHINSKI

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Waldemir Yanchinski became the seventh president of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society when he was elected to that office for the year 1955-56. He had been a director since the organization of the Society in 1949. At that time, Yanchinski lived in Naicam, where he was a successful farmer and a leader in his community; as well, he was an ardent conservationist, naturalist and nature photographer. For years he had been an enthusiastic supporter of *The Blue Jay*, contributing to it from the beginning when it was published by the Yorkton Natural History Society. His first message as President of the Provincial Society concerned *The Blue Jay*. "Nature is a subject that has universal appeal and conservation is something everyone talks about," he said. "The SNHS and *The Blue Jay* give everybody a chance to do something about it."

Waldemir Yanchinski was born 20 December 1907 in the Ukraine. In 1910 he came with his mother to the Preeceville area of Saskatchewan where his father had gone earlier to file a homestead. Their house on the homestead was the typical one-room shack, built of logs with a roof of prairie sod. Yanchinski remembered fondly those days when, in spite of the hard life on the homestead, they always seemed to have adequate food and clothing; they lived off the farm instead of out of the grocery store. In 1927, the Yanchinskis

moved to better land in the Naicam district.

During the Depression, Yanchinski taught school and also managed to get his B.A. from the University of Manitoba. Then, in 1941, upon the death of his father, he took over the family farm. Retiring from farming in 1977, he moved into the town of Naicam. He died 8 November 1993, predeceased by his parents, brother and sister.

Yanchinski's love of nature and accompanying conservation ethic were deeply rooted in his early childhood experiences. When *The Blue Jay* published its tenth anniversary issue in 1952, Yanchinski looked back on his childhood:

"When I was a young lad it was part of my daily chores, during the summer, to bring the cows in from the open range for the evening milking. Often it involved tedious wandering through miles of wilderness, but what made a lasting impression on my mind were the seemingly endless chains of sloughs and streams that stretched from horizon to horizon, and the variety and multitude of wildlife in their vicinity."

He lamented that "hardly more than a quarter of a century later, the landscape is barely recognizable; the sloughs ... have all but disappeared and with them the wild things that flourished there." This should be

of deep concern, he felt, to every citizen, but especially to such groups as the Natural History Societies.

As President of the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Yanchinski did not spare himself. He came down regularly from Naicam to the executive meetings, all held in Regina. We must have been rather crowded in my faculty office at Regina College where we met, because there was usually a good turnout of

Regina members. Almost 20 years later, Yanchinski invited the Society to Naicam for its annual summer meet, held 13-15 June 1975. The program theme of this enjoyable meeting was "Agriculture and Nature." As host, Yanchinski was assisted by Ron Jensen, one of the young people who had learned to appreciate nature on outings with him. Today, after the death of their mentor, these people are carrying his message to *their* public.



*Storm at Kronau*

*Fred Lahrman*