

**New Bell Farm Discovery # 001:**

**1883 Harvest Scene Photograph**

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**Item:** A mounted sepia photograph, measuring 10.8 x 18 cm

**Photographers:** Hall and Lowe, Main Street, Winnipeg, Manitoba

**Date:** 1883

**Caption:** “Reaping at the Bell Farm, Indian Head. *They have over 7000 acres of grain this year and employ 25 self binders in cutting it.*” (see Image # 1 below)

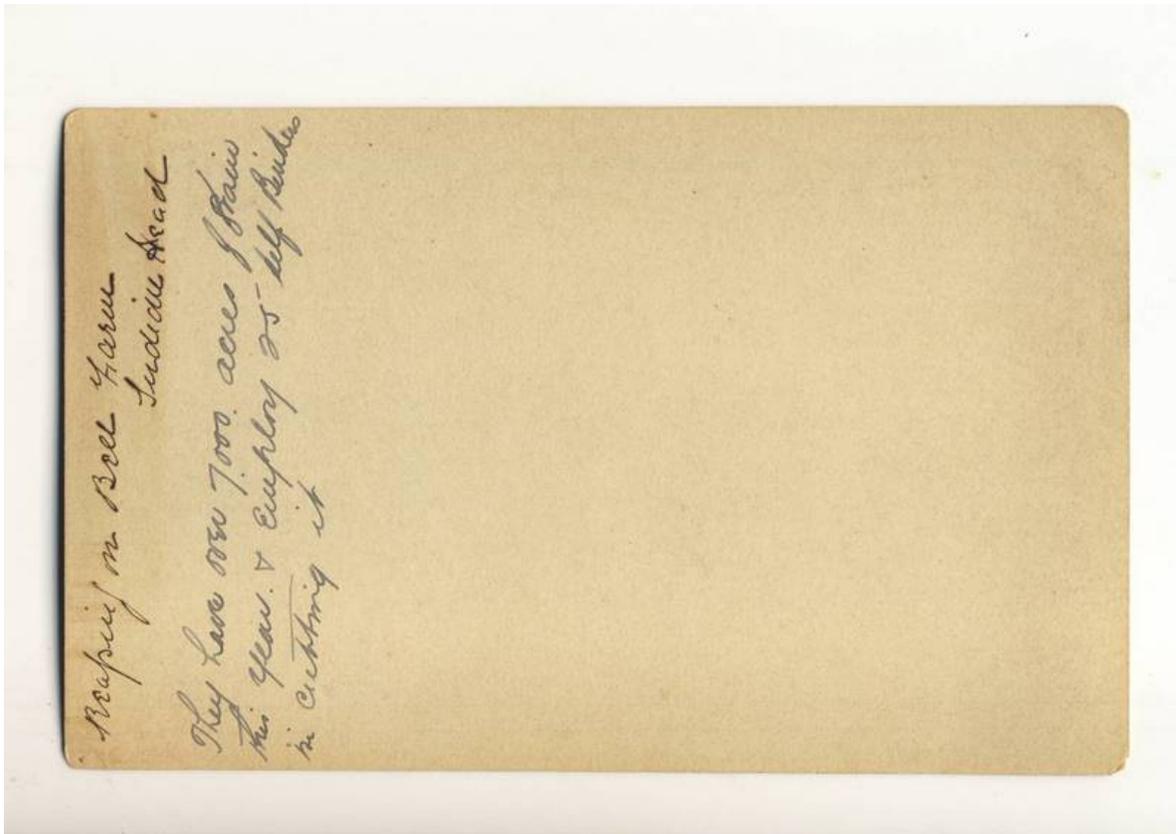


Image # 1: Text on the back of the mounted photograph



Image #2: Front of the mounted photograph



Image # 3: Photograph on file at the Saskatchewan Archives Board:  
Note the slight difference in details on the far left and right sides of the two images.

**Background:** This sepia photograph was found among a batch of post cards acquired by Spafford Books, of Regina. There is no further information relating to the item.

**Comments:** The photo shows at least 16 horse-drawn binders, each unit pulled by three horses and driven by a single person. The men and boys standing in the field are probably hired to place the cut and bound wheat sheaves in stooks. Two small buildings on the horizon (arrow) are likely one of the 27 Bell Farm Cottage & Barn complexes erected in 1882-83.

This photograph is basically the same as one on file with the Saskatchewan Archives Board. However, it includes the name of the photographers on the front and a caption on the back, and shows more detail on the right side, and less on the left side of the picture.

James D. Hall and Skene Lowe, two Winnipeg-based photographers, visited the Bell Farm in the fall of 1883, en route to and from British Columbia. Although this photo is not dated, other images of the Farm clearly date to 1883, and this photograph may have been part of the series of images taken at that time. (More information on Hall and Lowe can be seen at: <http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/photographers/halllowe.shtml>)

As well, the reference on the back of the photograph to 7,000 acres of cultivated fields corresponds to the Dec. 31, 1883 report by the federal government's Dominion Lands Agent, John McDonald Gordon, who confirmed that this number of acres had been broken on the Bell Farm. It is therefore concluded that the photograph dates to that year.

**Importance of the Discovery:** This photograph confirms who the photographers were, and the date that the image was taken. As such, it displays the first harvest scene on the Bell Farm, in the late summer or early fall of 1883. This is also one of the earliest photographically documented harvest scenes in Saskatchewan. This original photograph will be donated by the Bell Barn Society to the Saskatchewan Archives Board.

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