A Story for Every Mile:

An Illustrated History of the Boundary Trail National Heritage Region of Southern Manitoba

~

by

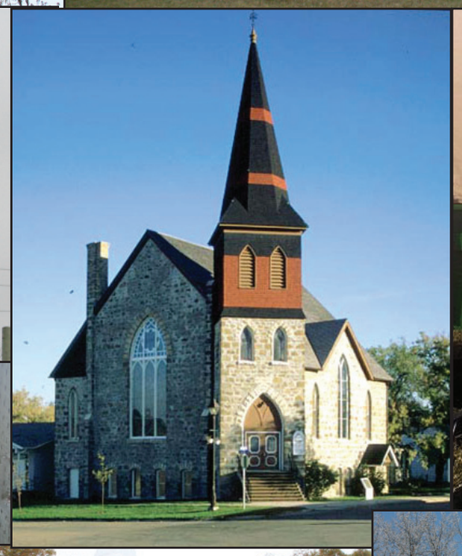
Edward M. Ledohowski

2022

WELCOME TO
MANITOU
"More than a small town"

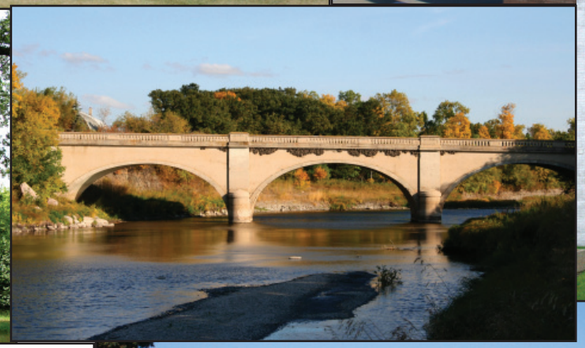
BOUNDARY TRAIL
HERITAGE REGION

BOUNDARY TRAIL
10TH STREET
STOP



Boundary Trail
Heritage Region
Good Luck Along The Trail

MIAMI
MIAMI STATION



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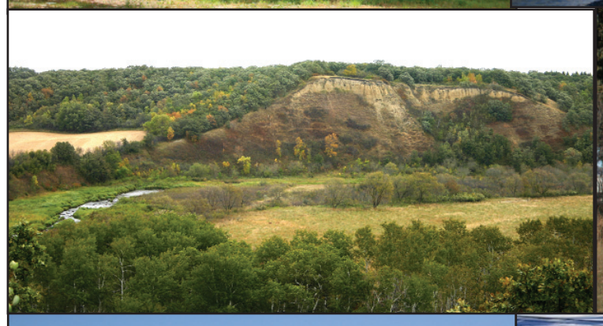

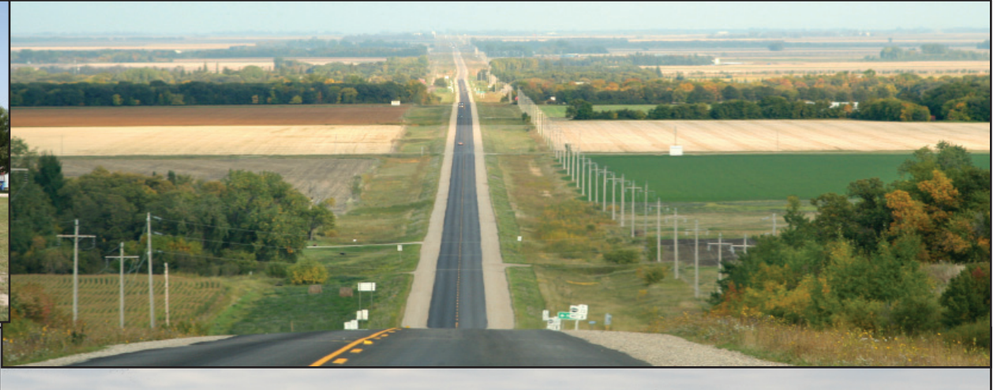

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Edward M. Ledohowski
for
The BTNHR Association

2022

DEDICATION

The phrase, "A Story for Every Mile" is the organizational motto of the Boundary Commission-North West Mounted Police (BC-NWMP) Trail Association. The Association was established in 1991 in conjunction with the creation of the Boundary Trail Heritage Region (BTHR) by Heritage Canada, the Province of Manitoba and participating rural municipalities. The Association's founding President, Felix Kuehn, described its origin. *"The motto of the trail, 'A Story For Every Mile', is a quotation from a column entitled 'The Woman about Town' in the Winnipeg publication, 'Town Topics'. Describing the John Jardine home at Pembina Crossing in an article written about 1912, the author noted, 'As the rays of the sun fell level across the valley, we came to the home of 'Alan Grant' (the pen name of Mrs. John Jardine), nestled below the brow of the hill by the Commission Trail that runs back into the first beginning of the history of the west and has a story for every mile."*

The motto was well chosen. Between 1989 and 2000, the BC-NWMP Trail Association published seven books, all researched and/or written and edited by Kuehn, the Association's chief advocate and driving force, with long family connections to the Boundary Trail Heritage Region. Kuehn was particularly interested in personal "eye-witness" accounts, so called "first person narratives." Three of his publications for the BTHR form a set that he entitled, *"Meet You On The Trail or The West Before the Railway."* These make extensive use of personal firsthand recollections and journal entries of early travellers along the BC-NWMP Trail, augmented by Kuehn, with copious amounts of additional research, commentary and footnoting. These publications have been posted on the Association's website: www.bthr.ca. In recognition of his dedication, enthusiasm and tireless efforts for the BHTR, this publication is dedicated to the memory of Felix Kuehn. In keeping with his appreciation of eye-witness accounts, this publication intentionally makes extensive use of personal recollections and descriptions. As well, being an "illustrated history", as many as possible of the images used were "drawn from life" by artists in the field. In this manner, it is hoped that the reader may gain some additional insight as to "what it was like to live in the old days" in the Region.

A captain sails nowhere without his crew, thus this work is also dedicated to the many volunteers who worked tirelessly on the BTNHR's many iniatives over the years.

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INTRODUCTION

This publication is intended to serve as a regional overview of the Boundary Trail National Heritage Region. The BTHR name was slightly altered, in 2013, with the addition of the word "National" to its official title (BTNHR). While this work spans the Region's history, from its geologic period to the present day, its primary focus is the Region's so-called settlement period, from the 1870s to the 1920s. The events and people of this time period were the main areas of interest and activity for the board members of the original BC-NWMP Trail Association of the 1990s. The author's original intention was to produce a somewhat shorter volume; however, the use of a fairly large font size and a significant number of illustrations, coupled with "an embarrassment of riches" in terms of research material and noteworthy subject matters, led to the current final result. Still, it incorporates only a mere fraction of the research material gathered for this project. Excess material is being re-packaged and uploaded to the Boundary Trail National Heritage Region website, www.bthr.ca, and the Pembina Manitou Archives.

While relying, to a large degree, on primary source historical information, this publication is not intended as an academic work, with commentary and analysis of broad social, economic and technological issues. It is meant, simply, to show current residents of the BTNHR, and its visitors, a little of what "normal everyday life" was like in the Region at different times in the Region's past, with emphasis on the later 1800s and early 1900s. The liberal use of period illustrations, many rarely, or not previously seen in a publication, is largely meant to help put the reader "on site." In addition to satisfying history buffs, it is hoped this publication might attract the attention and interest of individuals with only a passing interest in local or regional history, by vividly illustrating just how different, how interesting, and, even, how difficult life was for past generations living in the BTNHR. It is knowledge worth knowing and considering.

A note on nomenclature and abbreviations is also in order. The text in this publication includes quotations from historical source material, decades and even centuries old, reflecting the attitudes, thinking, and nomenclature of its time. Specifically, there is frequent use of the terms, "Half Breed" and "Indian." Such archaic terminology is, to modern audiences and norms, now considered to be racially offensive and derogatory. Though unacceptable today, such terms were, nevertheless, in common every day usage at the time and are frequently encountered in the research material. Such quoted passages should be viewed as a cultural product of the era in which it was produced. Thus, in text penned by the author, readers will encounter terms such as Métis, Indigenous, and First Nation; however, in text quoted from period source material, one would encounter the more pejorative terms, Half Breed and Indian.

Similarly, the reader will find that imperial measurements are primarily used throughout this publication, with only occasional metric equivalent values provided. Specifically, miles (mi.) rather than kilometers (km.) and feet (ft.) rather than meters (m.) will be frequently encountered. This is because the imperial measurement systern was used throughout most of the history covered by this document. Metric equivalents are provided in many, but not all, instances where distances and areas are cited. This was done to avoid frequent and needless repetition. Several types of term abbreviations were used for space and repetition considerations. First, rural locations are all described using Dominion Survey "section-township-range" coordinates. Townships located west or east of the prime meridian are differentiated by the suffix "W" or "E." Thus, "SE16-7-17W" is the abbreviated form for "south east quarter, section 16, township 7, range 17, west of the prime meridian." Abbreviations were also used for province and state names including, Man. for Manitoba, Ont. for Ontario, Que. for Quebec, N.D. for North Dakota, Minn. for Minnesota, Wis. for Wisconsin and Mich. for Michigan. Town or city names, not followed by an acronym, are all Manitoba communities.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The production and publication of this document would not have been possible without the generous involvement and support of many individuals and agencies. First to be acknowledged would be the members of the board of directors of the Boundary Trail National Heritage Region, including Gord McGill, Bill Reimer, Charlie Baldock, Bill Cantlon, Ed Giesbrecht, Allan Thorleifson, Maurice Butler, Wayne Arseny, and in particular, Leona Devuyst, BTNHR CAO, Secretary-Treasurer, fundraiser, document scanner and transcripton typist of unmatched skill and speed.

Production was also supported primarily by funding provided through the Province of Manitoba's Heritage Grants Program. Special thanks go out to Nicola Spasoff of the Historic Resources Branch for her valuable assistance. The Historic Resources Branch also generously provided digital copies of many useful reports, photographs and maps. Thanks are also owed to the staff of several major archival institutions whose valuable assistance was greatly appreciated by the author. These include Chris Kotecki of the Archives of Manitoba; Brian Hubner of the University of Manitoba Special Archives & Collections; Brett Lougheed of the University of Winnipeg Archives; and Monica Ball, Stuart Hay and Jason Woloski of the Manitoba Legislative Library. Very special thanks to proofreaders Claire Gillis, John Lehr, Allan Thorleifson, Allan Forbes, David McInnes, Lorna Hendrickson and Leona Devuyst, for their time and expertise; especially Ms. Gillis whose eagle eye can tell the difference between a "regular", "italic" or "bold" period at the end of a phrase. Special thanks and acknowledgements are also extended to Glacier FarmMedia, *Winnipeg Free Press*, TorStar Corporation Ltd., and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police for granting republishing rights to a wide range of copyrighted magazines and newspapers, including *The RCMP Quarterly, The Nor'-West Farmer*, *The Country Guide,* and *The Family Herald* magazines, among others. Special thanks to John Morriss and Laura Rance at Glacier FarmMedia for providing access to, and use of, their archives of original publication copies and advice.

Thanks are also extended to the following commercial establishments for funding donation copies of this publication for local schools, municipal offices, museums, and heritage organizations in the BTNHR. Thank you to Glacier FarmMedia, Wawanesa Insurance, MMJS Law Offices and the Manitoba Cooperative Association Inc.

A publication touching on as many local history subjects and themes as this made use of many sources, in particular the Region's many local history books. The communities and rural districts in the BTNHR are particularly fortunate to have a long list of journalists and history buffs who, over the years, have collected invaluable memories and images about the people and places that make up the historical record of the Region. Many of these provided information on general historical events, but some were especially useful and merit acknowledgment. These include, *The Mennonites in Manitoba* by J.F. Galbraith in 1900; *Andrew Stewart of the Prairie Homesteads* by T.M. McKitrick in 1932; *Echoes Of The Past — A History of the RM of Louise* edited by Mrs. C. Gosnell in 1968; and *Pembina Country - Land of Promise,* edited by Doreen Brown in 1974, among many others.

A final thank you and acknowledgment is extended to all the online archives and local history websites that have recently been uploaded to the internet. Thank you all for sharing your material and photo collections, and making them available for use by heritage agencies such as the BTNHR and making our research work so much easier. These archives include: Library and Archives Canada, Archives of Manitoba, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, the Toronto Public Library, the Manitoba Historical Society, and in particular, the Pembina Manitou Archives. A full list of sources consulted is provided towards the end of this publication. Thank you all.

...Edward M. Ledohowski

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Boundary Commission - North West Mounted Police Trail Association

Canada's national heritage foundation, "Heritage Canada", established the National Heritage Regions Program in 1988 to facilitate the establishment of a country-wide network of distinctive heritage areas. The objective of the program was to help partner regions revitalize their communities ecologically, culturally, economically and socially by promoting individual regions' unique mix of heritage resources.

The Boundary Commission - North West Mounted Police (NWMP) Trail Association was organized informally at a meeting at Cartwright, Manitoba on April 30, 1988. The meeting was organized by the Post Road Heritage Group, an association of people from the Emerson area interested in the accurate marking of the 1874 NWMP trail through western Canada. The Boundary Commission - NWMP Trail Association was formally organized at its first Annual General Meeting on April 15, 1989, at Killarney.

The Association's goal was the promotion of a network of southern Manitoba trails, collectively known as the Boundary Commission NWMP Trail, as a focal point for the history and heritage of southern Manitoba. At its meeting at Killarney on September 14, 1991, the Association passed a resolution requesting that Heritage Canada designate the 12 rural municipalities of southern Manitoba between the Red River and the Saskatchewan border as a national heritage region. Heritage Canada evaluated and accepted the proposal, officially designating the Boundary Trail Heritage Region at a ceremony on June 25, 1993, at Clearwater, Manitoba. In December 1993, a new, and larger association board of directors was elected, an appropriate constitution prepared and adopted, along with a name change to the "Boundary Trail Heritage Region" (BTHR) Association. At the time of its establishment, the BTHR was the fifth national Heritage Region in Canada and the first in western Canada.

Association Goals

The BTHR's constitution identified seven priorities for the Association to pursue to advance its goal:

1. Research - research and precisely locate the route of the Boundary Commission NWMP Trail;

2. Preservation - facilitate the preservation of vestiges of the Trail and the historic sites associated with its history;

3. Development - assist in the appropriate development of these historic sites;

4. Signage - encourage and assist in the erection of appropriate signs and markers for trail remnants and historic sites;

5. Events - support and/or sponsor events to increase public awareness of the location and significance of the Trail;

6. Publications - print and produce such publications and media materials that will increase public awareness of the significance of the Trail to the history and heritage of southern Manitoba;

7. Commemorative Highway Route - have an appropriate southern Manitoba transportation route officially designated and signed as a commemorative highway, "The Boundary Commission NWMP Route."

The official naming of the commemorative highway, in conjunction with the Province of Manitoba, took place at Clearwater on July 16, 1991, as part of provincial support for the Association's bid for national heritage region status. Dignitaries at the ceremony included MLAs Bonnie Mitchelson, Jack Penner and Bob Rose.

The commemorative route runs from Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) #75 near Emerson, west along Provincial Road (PR) #243 to PTH #32 near Reinland, then north to Winkler. From there, the route runs west a short distance along PTH #14 to where it merges with PTH #3 and then follows Highway 3 the entire distance to Pierson near the Saskatchewan border, as shown on the accompanying map.

At the time of its sixth annual general meeting in 1994, the 12 directors of the Boundary Trail Heritage Region included Felix G. Kuehn (Winnipeg, President), Harold Carson (Morden, Vice-President), Allen R. Kear (Winnipeg, Treasurer), Douglas J. Morrison (Deloraine), Robert B. Caldwell (Deloraine), Wayne Arseny (Emerson), Elmer D. McClelland (Emerson), Frank Ptosnick (Morden), Ben Kroeker (Deloraine), Henry H. Newton (Brandon), Richard Remus (Emerson, Post Road Heritage Group), and Ronald S. Brown (Brandon, Manitoba RCMP Veterans Association). These individuals were the prime "movers and shakers" for the Association during its active early years.

Association Activities

Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, the Association initiated several major projects. In addition to route signs and site interpretative materials, it helped to organize and sponsor two wagon train rides along the Boundary Trail route. The first, in 1990, travelled 100 miles from Crystal City to the Souris River. In 1992, over 12 days and nights, a second wagon train travelled 200 miles from the Red River to the Souris River, and continued the following year into southern Saskatchewan. A hardcover travelogue coffee-table style book about the Manitoba trail rides and the countryside it travelled through, entitled *Drawing The Line,*was published soon after. As well, the Association undertook the publication of a series of six "economy softcover" publications.

The first series of three publications, called *Meet You on the Trail*, consists of descriptive firsthand recollections and personal journal entries of a selection of early travellers on the Boundary Commission Trail. The volumes also include useful introductory remarks, footnotes, annotations and observations by the Association president, and primary historian at the time, Felix Kuehn. The next three publications provide a treasury of additional information concerning the history and heritage of southern Manitoba. Digital copies of these publications may be found on both the BTHR and Pembina Manitou Archives websites. A 28-foot map of the trail highlighting some 170 points of historic interest and a brochure, *Guide to the Historic Sites Along the Trail,* was also developed.

In addition to its many regional initiatives, the Association helped fund heritage projects undertaken by other local heritage groups, such as assisting the RCMP Veterans Association to erect a statue of a NWMP officer near Emerson. Funding for the Association's operations were provided principally through per capita support by member municipalities and provincial heritage grants. In recent years, operational funding has decreased, due in part to the economic recession resulting from the 2008 stock market collapse and its aftermath.

Beginning in 2013, in response to Canada's approaching 150th birthday and new Board of Directors membership, the Association has reinvigorated itself and is undertaking new initiatives and publications. Among these is a slight name change to "Boundary Trail National Heritage Region" (BTNHR). It also initiated a new series of research and illustrated history publications highlighting the Region's unique natural and cultural heritage, and a greatly expanded website including additional information on themes and events discussed in this volume.

***

Figure 1.1. Above: Key map. Map showing the location of the BTNHR along the province's southern border, straddling the US boundary. *(HRB.)*

Figure 1.2. Above: BC-NWMP logo. The Boundary Commission - NWMP Trail Association logo depicts the meeting of William Hallett (1811-1873), Chief Scout of the International Boundary Commission and George Arthur French (1841-1921), First Commissioner of the NWMP. It commemorates their chance meeting on the Boundary Commisson Trail west of Fort Dufferin in 1873. These two notable individuals, associated with two major historical events occurring concurrently in the same region, were chosen to represent, in addition to the NWMP and the International Boundary Commission members, all the early explorers, fur traders, Indigenous Peoples and early settlers, who travelled on the Region's network of early tails." *(BTNHR.)*

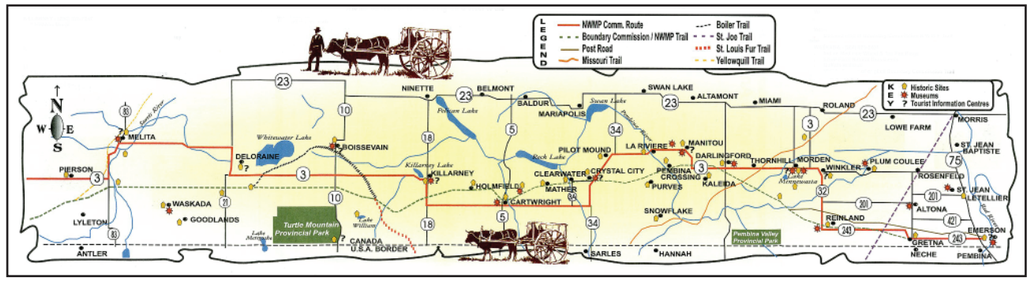


Figure 1.3. Above: The BTHR. A tourist map of the BTHR from a 1990s pamphlet.

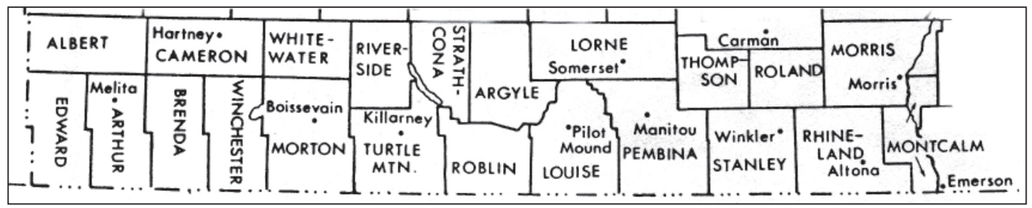


Figure 1.4. Above: Boundary Region rural municipalities. Detail of a map from the 1990s showing the rural municipalities located immediately adjacent to the US boundary. This is the area that comprised the original BTHR, established in 1993. For the purposes of this publication, a "greater" Boundary Trail National Heritage Region has been used, including the municipalities located immediately to the north, as shown. This was deemed necessary as municipalities recently have begun to merge into larger entities (i.e. Albert, Edward and Arthur into Two Borders) and for the simple fact that historical events are rarely defined by municipal boundaries, and neighbouring districts and communities often played a role, either directly or indirectly. *(HRB.)*

Figure 1.5. Above: Heritage mural. Photo of a large mural painted on a building side in Boissevain depicting a famous scene, the Boundary Commission supply train crossing Dead Horse Creek at Alexandria. June 1873. Figure 6.4.3. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.6. Above: BTHR volunteers. Association Board members Bill Reimer and Maurice Butler (in NWMP uniform) pose for a snapshot next to a BTHR sign. 2007. *(BTHR.)*

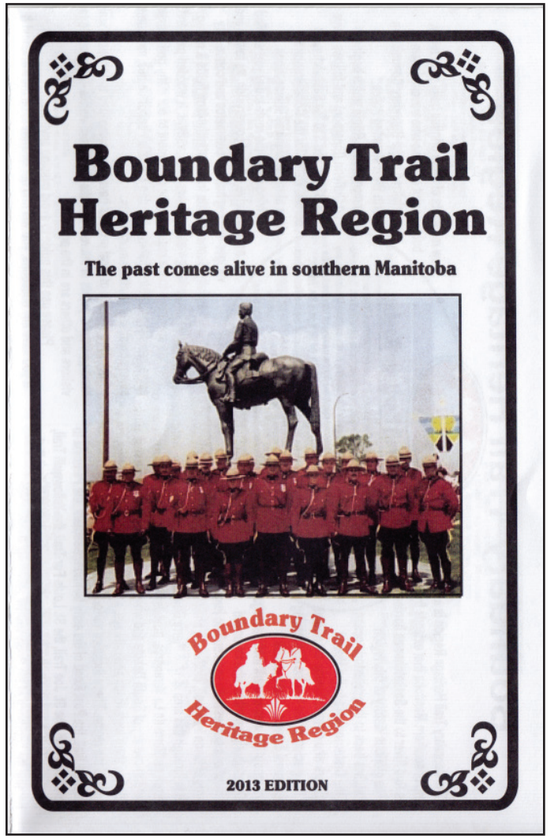


Figure 1.8. Above: BTHR publications. Cover of one of several pamphlets produced by the Association providing visitor information on sites located in the BTHR. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.7. Above: BTHR projects. A recreated NWMP outpost constructed by the BTHR association at the Pembina Threshermen's Museum complex near Morden. *(BTHR.)*

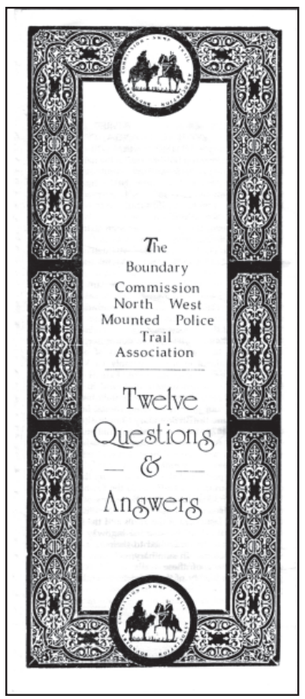


Figure 1.9. Above: BTHR projects. Heritage place mats produced by the Association and distributed to restaurants and cafés across southern Manitoba. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.10. Left: BTHR publications. A sample of information pamphlets produced by the Association during the 1990s and early 2000s; this one concerning commonly asked questions about the Association and its mandate. *(BTHR.)*

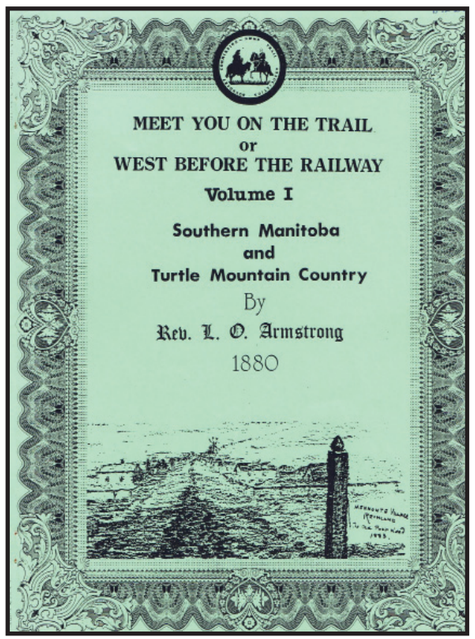
Figure 1.11. Above: BTHR signage. Information board located at the Pembina Threshermen's Museum. The same format was used to mark and recognize a number of significant heritage sites in the BTHR during the 1990s. *(BTHR.)*

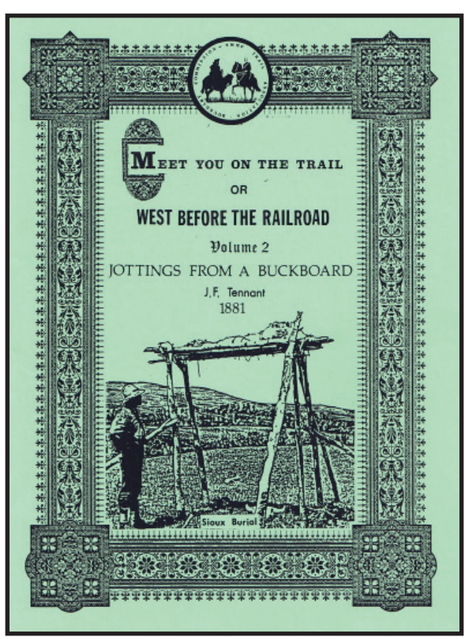
Figure 1.12. Above: BTHR signage. Boundary Commission NWMP Trail Association board members visiting an information kiosk installed at the Sourisford Burial Mounds site in the summer of 2000. Similar BTHR signs were installed at Gretna, Reinland, Pembina Threshermen's Museum, Fort Dufferin, Stanley Park, and the Clay Banks Bison Jump site near Cartwright. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.13. Above: Official opening. Unveiling of the first Boundary Commission NWMP commemorative route sign, Clearwater Park on July 16, 1991. L-R: On horses, Corporal Pat Dauk and Sargent Cliff McGregor. Standing L-R, Felix Kuehn, Honourable Jack Penner, Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, Honourable Bob Rose MLA for Turtle Mountain. Clearwater is the only community originally established along the trail to survive to the present day and, thus, was chosen as the ideal location for the unveiling of the first official sign. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.14. Above: BTHR signage. Commemorative Highway Route Signs. Because of petitioning by the Association, Manitoba Highways designated "The Boundary Commission NWMP Route" as an official Province of Manitoba Heritage Highway Route. The designation was officially proclaimed on July 15, 1991 by the Honourable Harry Enns, Minister of Natural Resources. The following day, the Honourable Bonnie Mitchelson, Minister of Culture, Heritage and Citizenship, officiated at ceremonies in the village of Clearwater. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 1.15. Above: BTHR signage. Professionally produced site information kiosks, such as this one located at the Clay Banks Bison Jump archeological site located northwest of Cartwright, help visitors better appreciate and understand sites that have little or no surviving current remnants. *(EdLed.)*





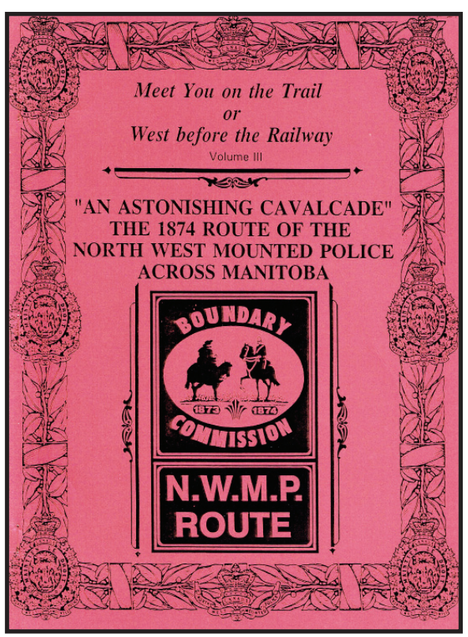
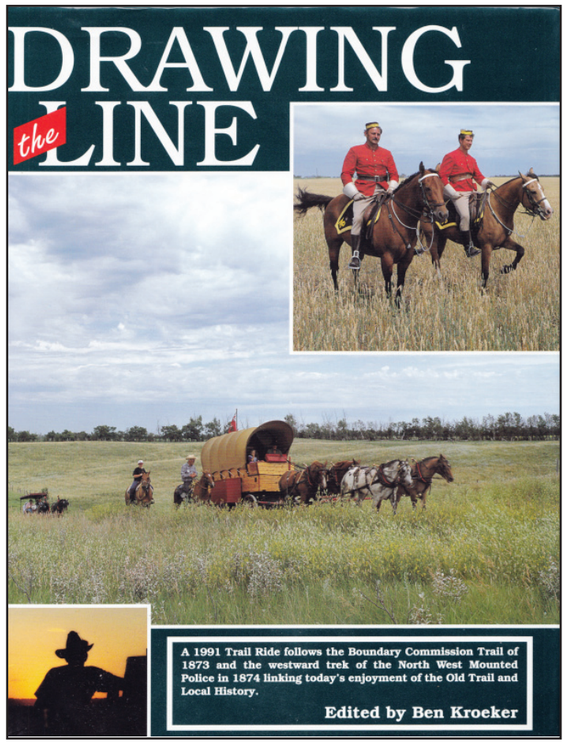


Figure 1.16. Left: BTHR publications. Cover pages of three of six softcover publications produced by the Association during the 1990s. This three volumne series was entitled, "*Meet You On The Trail or West Before The Railroad.*" Volume I, *"Southern Manitoba and Turtle Mountain Country",* is a travelogue penned in 1880 by Reverend Louis Armstrong, who preached to some of the earliest homesteaders of the Pembina Hills region and was an active participant in many speculative railway-related real estate dealings in the region. Volume II, *"Jottings From a Buckboard",* follows journalist, J.F. Tennant, narrating a 440 mile trip across southern Manitoba in May of 1881. Volume III, *"An Astonishing Cavalcade",* follows the journal entries of four members on the difficult NWMP 1874 "Trek West" during the Manitoba portion of this epic journey to the Rocky Mountains to bring law and order to the Canadian west. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 1.17. Right: BTHR publications. Association publication "*Drawing the Line*" describes the daily experiences of trail riders during the 1991 wagon train expedition along with similar descriptions from travellers along the trail during the 1870s and 1880s, and events of local history. *(BTHR.)*



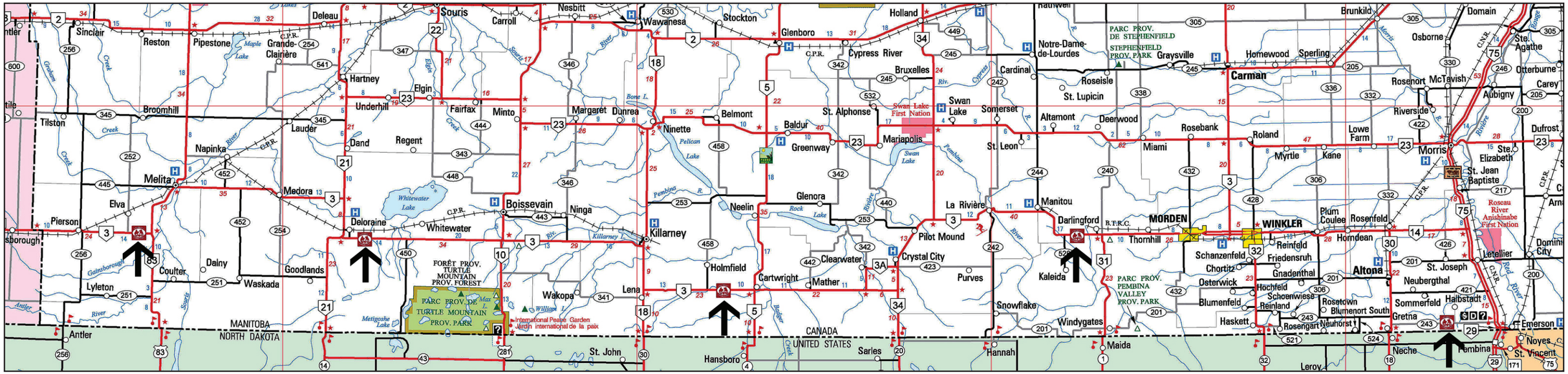


Figure 1.18. Above: Greater BTNHR Region. Detail from a 2010 Manitoba Highways map showing provincial highways (in red) and roads (in black) as well as communities, railway lines and major waterways. The Boundary Commission NWMP commemorative route is marked with the Association logo (arrows). *(MB Highways.)*

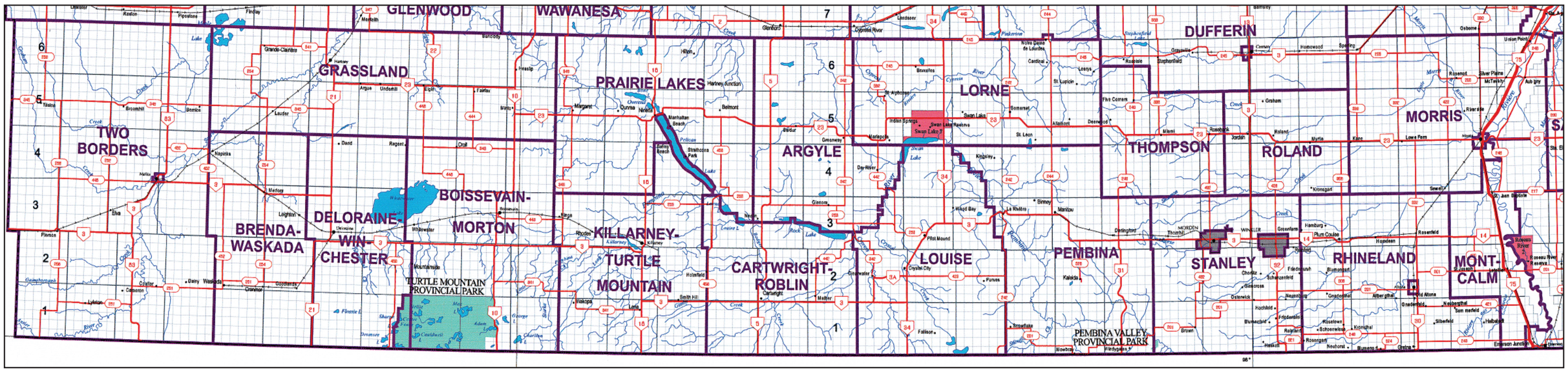


Figure 1.19. Above: Greater BTNHR Region. Detail from a 2012 map showing features such as the township grid, major highways, new municipal boundaries, First Nations communities, waterways and provincial parks in the "greater" BTNHR. *(MB Maps & Surveys.)*

2.0 NATURAL HISTORY 125 million to 10,000 years BP

Inland Seas, Volcanoes and Ice Sheets

An overview history of the BTNHR necessarily must begin at a time long before humans ever arrived on the scene. The unique natural environment of the region, its landforms, lakes and rivers, and even geology, played a significant role in how the human history of the BTNHR eventually unfolded. As the discussion to come will show, stories pertaining to the Region's unique natural history can be just as compelling as the many unique true tales from its vibrant and more recent human history.

2.1 GEOLOGY

Most of the layers of near surface bedrock beneath the BTNHR were laid down during the Cretaceous Period (145 to 66 million years ago) and Tertiary geologic Period,(66 to 2.6 million years ago). At the former, North America was divided into four land masses separated by a shallow inland seaways. Figure 2.1.1.

Over millions of years during the Cretaceous Period, the sea floor was being constantly covered with different concentrations of sediment, volcanic ash and remains of primitive plants, shellfish and marine life, creating distinct layers of sediment, one on top of the other, many meters deep. These materials were later compressed by the weight of subsequent layers to form various types of new material, particularly shale, which is a bedrock material commonly found in the BTNHR. Figure 2.1.2.

During the later Tertiary Period, when dinosaurs of all shapes and sizes roamed the dry land areas, an equally rich variety of marine life, large and small, inhabited the warm sea separating the two land masses. For most of the Tertiary Period, what is now southern Manitoba was covered by these shallow ocean waters and the fossilized remains of many sea creatures have been found to verify this fact. Figure 2.1.4.

As the Tertiary Period came to an end about 70 millions years ago, the inland seas retreated as the land slowly rose, and the warm moist environment created ideal conditions for lush vegetation which became buried in swamps located along the edges of the retreating seas. With time and pressure, from the weight of subsequent deposits of material, the decaying plant life was transformed into coal and petroleum deposits.

The original neat horizontal layering of the built-up ocean sediments was radically transformed by plate tectonics and continental drift. When the Pacific plate came into collision with the North American plate about 70 million years ago, the current Rocky Mountains were slowly pushed up, causing the sedimentary layers formed under the inland sea to the west of it to compress, bend and warp. The central and eastern portions of the former level seabed were forced down, creating a large bowl shape, and causing the layers in the eastern outermost areas to tilt downwards. Figure 2.1.6.

As the bending and warping of the bedrock was slowly going on, surface erosion by wind, water and, in particular, centuries of scouring by multiple glacial ice advances, removed the near-surface layers of the now tilted bedrock exposing the tops of the various tilted layers. Because of this tilting and subsequent erosion, these formerly horizontal layers appear at the surface in the BTNHR as bands or zones of different bedrock types. These bands in Manitoba are oriented in a northwest-southeast direction. Some of the tilted layers, however, do not extend all the way to the surface, and remain buried, as shown in the illustrations. Figure 2.1.7.

As the most recent "ice age" came to an end in the BTNHR about 12,000 years ago, the exposed tops of the various near-surface tilted bedrock seams were covered over by glacial-carried sediments, or "overburden', to varying depths. As the Region's creeks and rivers eroded down into the loose glacial deposits, seams of bedrock became exposed, particularly along the slopes of steep gullies and valley walls.

All of the events that, over time, created the current bedrock geology under the BTNHR also explain why the geologic treasures of the Region are found only in very specific locations. It is why there are coal and oil deposits only in the western district and also why bentonite rich layers of shale are only to be found in specific areas along the Manitoba Escarpment area in the eastern BTNHR.

Shale

The deepest layers of rock under the BTNHR consist of various black shales and limestone layers that were deposited 240 to 265 million years ago in the bottom of the saltwater sea. The plant and animal material that settled to the bottom, decayed and changed into oil. These sedimentary layers are Manitoba's only known oil-producing formation. The next significant layers above the oil-bearing rock are Cretaceous shales, deposited 145 to 66 million years ago. Sandstone and shales above Cretaceous layers in the BTNHR are unique to this area of Manitoba. These sandstone formations were deposited within the last 60 million years and are the most recent bedrock formation to be found in the Region.

Shale is a type of clay, but much harder as compared to the more recent extremely soft clay deposits found on the former lake bed of glacial Lake Agassiz in the eastern portions of the Region. The shale clays found in the central and western portions of the BTNHR were laid down many eons ago during the Cretaceous Period. The material was originally a mix of river-borne erosional material washed away from the dryland regions and deposited on the floor of a great inland seaway now known as the Western Interior Seaway. The finer material, the clays, were the lightest and, therefore, the last to settle to the seabed, creating layers of uniform fine-grained deposits. The weight of later sediments compressed the older deeper deposits, turning what had been simply soft mud into hard layered bedrock.

The BTNHR shales are distinctive in that they are often streaked with brilliant orange and red highlights. Also of note and of some significance, the bands of both volcanic ash and sandstone can often be found interspersed between the various layers of shale.

Figure 2.1.1. Above: Western Interior Seaway. As depicted on this map, during the Cretaceous Period much of the interior region of the current North American continent was covered by shallow saltwater seaways brimming with ancient marine life. *(CFDC Pamphlet'13.)*

Figure 2.1.4. Above: Marine fossils. Over 1000 marine fossil specimens have been excavated from locations along the Pembina Hills. The majority of these finds are now stored and displayed at the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in Morden. *(CFDC Pamphlet'13.)*

Figure 2.1.2. Above: Volcanic sediments. During the Cretaceous and Tertiary Periods, ash expelled from erupting volcanoes settled to the bottom of the ancient Western Interior Seaway creating the bentonite deposits for which the BTNHR study area has become renowned. *(usatoday.com.)*

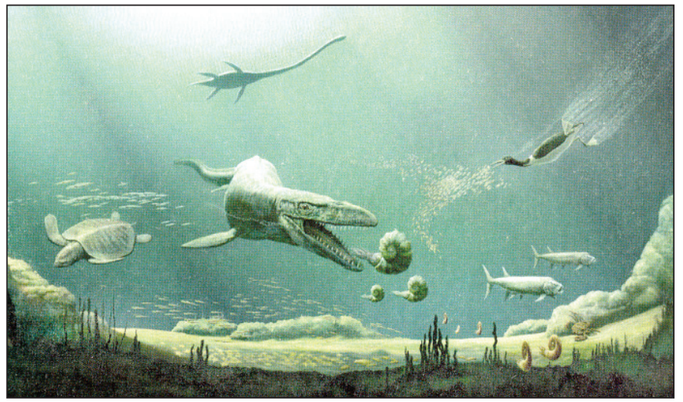


Figure 2.1.3. Above: Western Interior Seaway diorama. An artist's impression of marine life during the Cretaceous Period, evidence of which has been unearthed in the current BTNHR. *(Carr, Karen. CFDC Pamphlet'13.)*

Figure 2.1.5. Above: Marine fossils. Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre staff member, Cheryl Link, provides size context with the Museum's star attraction, "Bruce", a 13 m. (43 ft.) mosasaur skeleton discovered near Thornhill in 1974. *(EdLed.)*

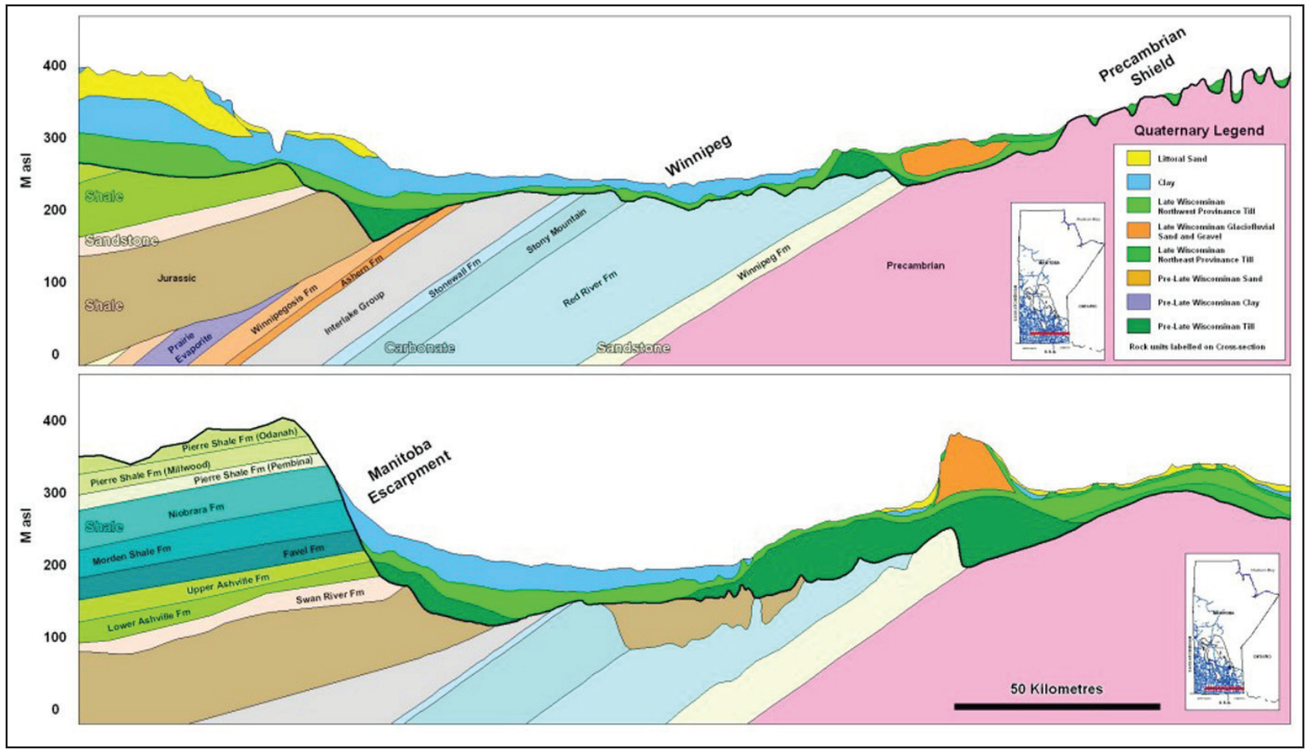
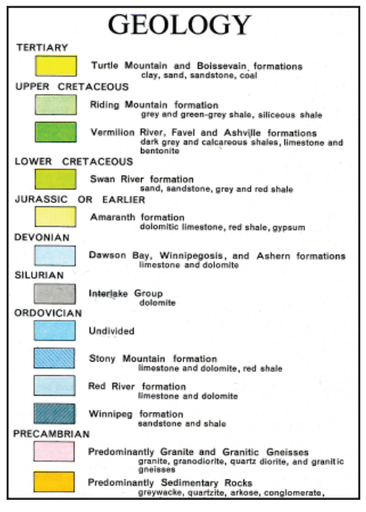


Figure 2.1.6. Above: BTNHR bedrock profiles. Some of the bedrock layers in the Region do not extend all the way to the surface, having been covered by more recent deposits. Some of these "buried" layers, such as the coal and oil bearing shale layers found in the western part of the BTNHR, were formed only in former long-standing swampy areas and, thus, are found in only certain locations and depths, rather than throughout the Region, as illustrated above. Vertical scale exaggerated for clarity. *(HRB.)*



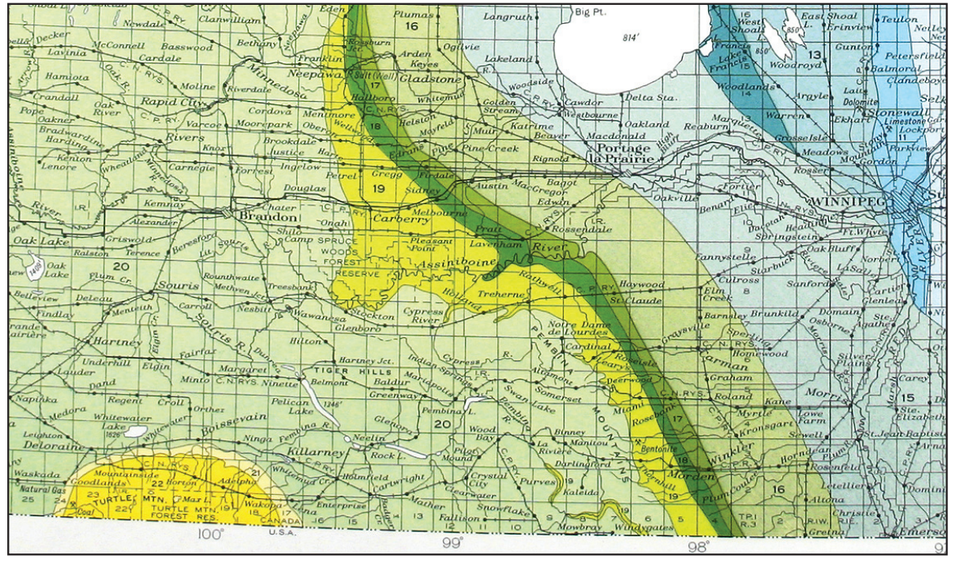


Figure 2.1.7. Above: BTNHR bedrock formation time periods. Yellow - Tertiary Period rock formations; Green - Cretaceous Period rock formations: Blue - Devonian Period rock formations. *(HRB.)*

All of these materials would later be found to be quite useful. Figure 2.1.8.

In southern Manitoba, the hardest of the ancient shales form the resistant bedrock of the Pembina Mountains/Manitoba Escarpment and areas west, including the Turtle Mountains and various smaller mounds and outcrops. Their relative hardness prevented them from being eroded to the level of central Manitoba that had a softer limestone bedrock.

There are several good locations to view shale bands, including on Provincial Highway No. 3 where it descends into the Pembina Valley just east of La Riviere. Here the roadway has been cut through thick deposits of brittle grey shales, in some places, 20 meters or more thick. Another good location to view roadway cuts exposing shale deposits is along Lyles Creek in Leary's Valley west of Roseisle.

With various shale deposits located in the region, it is only natural that, during the Region's period of settlement and development, a number of brickyards would be established at sites possessing brick-quality shale, especially with the long tradition of brick and stone construction by the Region's largely Anglo-British settlers. Such operations were common enterprises in the Region, especially from the early 1890s to the 1920s, and almost every other town had one or two brick making operations. As will be shown in the pages to come, most, but not all, were short-lived enterprises.

Bentonite

As noted above, it is known that towards the end of the Cretaceous Period large portions of what is now southern Manitoba were covered by a huge shallow inland sea. Beginning approximately 83 million years ago, a period of intense volcanic activity occurred, thought to have originated in present day Montana, that blasted millions of tons of volcanic ash into the sky. Much of this ash drifted northward and eventually settled onto the surface of the Western Interior Seaway. It soon sank to the bottom, where it was eventually covered with other layers of marine deposits before another series of eruptions laid down more strata of ash in a cycle of depositions which lasted eons.

Today. this decomposed volcanic ash, found in layers not usually more than six inches to a foot (15–30 cm) thick and layered between beds of shale, is a commercially valuable mineral known as bentonite. A creamy-white coloured, so-called "slippery clay", it possesses a high calcium content. Its main use is in the purification of mineral and vegetable oils as well as an ingredient in such products as kitty litter bleaching, and for filtering used oil. Customers for Pembina Hills bentonite range from firms in Eastern Canada, the US and as far away as Indonesia. Mount Nebo in the Miami district is the main current location of active bentonite mining.

Commercial bentonite mining began along the Pembina Escarpment during the 1930s. When the shale overburden was stripped away to access the bentonite deposits, the skeletons of the marine dwellers of the Western Interior Seaway seas were found remarkably preserved, particularly in the Miami area quarries. These included marine reptiles such as mosasaurs, plesiosaurs, massive turtles, crocodiles, ancient sharks and even the occasional bird. In some instances, because of the glacial erosion of later overlying deposits, these fossils can be found as little as five feet below the surface.

Some of these remarkable archaeological finds are on display in the Canadian Fossil Discovery Centre in Morden, where they form the largest collection of its kind in North America. Figure 2.1.5.

Figure 2.1.8. Above: Shale quarry. A view of an excavation cliff face at a Miami area shale quarry, showing the thick layered bands of shale deposits nearer the top, a much thinner layer of grey glacial deposits, and above that a final thin layer of dark soil. The very top layer seen in this photograph is a "push pile" of soil and sod created during the pit excavation. The size of the worker seen walking at the lower right provides scale to the height of the cliff and thickness of the various layers. *(Bamburak'10 :29.)*

Figure 2.1.9. Above: Shale wafers. A close up view of broken shale showing the layered "wafer-like"nature of this type of rock, even in crushed form. Shale is the most predominant bedrock type in the Region and is found in varying material composition, colour and density. It is used primarily as aggregate for road and building site construction projects. *(EdLed.)*

Coal

Geologists studying lignite coal seams found in the Turtle Mountain district have determined that the seams were created approximately 65 million years ago, during the time when the Western Inland Seaway covered much of the mid-Americas. What is now the Turtle Mountain plateau was, at that time, part of a large river delta that formed where a major river flowed into the sea. This delta created a lush swamp where plants grew in great abundance and, after they died, were transformed into peat. The peat came to be buried by sand that later became sandstone, and the weight and pressure of which slowly converted the peat into coal and petroleum.

Scattered small outcrops of lignite coal were discovered in places along the sides of the Souris River valley by the Region's early explorers and fur traders, and noted in their travel journals. However, as the Region's coal seams are located quite far below the surface, it was only along the deeply eroded slopes of Turtle Mountain where potentially commercially viable exposed or near-surface seams of lignite were discovered.

The first sizable seam of usable quality coal was discovered on the eastern slopes of Turtle Mountain in 1879 by an early settler digging a well. The seam was said to have been three feet (1 m.) thick. Despite the initial discovery of coal on the eastern slopes, all of the later commercial mining operations took place on seams discovered on the western slopes, particularly near Goodlands and south of Deloraine.

Coal mining was always small scale but was, nevertheless, a significant local industry during the 1890s and again during the Great Depression of the 1930s. It was long believed that there were still millions of tons of coal sitting under the Turtle Mountain plateau. This was recently confirmed when two test holes drilled by Goldsource Mines in 2008 revealed significant coal seams buried beneath 79 m. of overburden. The test drill holes also suggested that this coal zone extended into west central Manitoba. Figure 2.1.12.

Oil

Oil in commercial quantities has been found in two major bedrock zones in the BTNHR and was formed in much the same manner as was the Region's coal deposit. As of 2010, over 1000 wells have been drilled into the Triassic-Amaranth Formation and three wells into the Jurassic-Melita Formation. Virtually all of this production occurs in the Coulter, Waskada, Whitewater and Pierson "fields."

Souris Valley Oil drilled the first well in the RM of Edward in 1949, southwest of Lyleton. The drilling of the well was quite a spectacle for locals. Comments ranged from thoughts of instant riches to expressions of great skepticism. The drilling rig was on site for most of the summer and many spectators were drawn to the activity, especially on weekends. Walter Murray, a store operator from Pierson, set up a confectionery and light lunch counter in a granary beside the oil rig. He is said to have made a nice profit feeding the crowds of people who came from as far away as Brandon, Estevan and Minot to watch the progress. Although this first well did locate oil, there was too little of it at that location to be worth further follow-up production. The rig moved on from that site and went on to drill many other holes in southwest Manitoba.

Major oil drilling in the area commenced in 1953-1954. Some of the earliest wells that were drilled produced oil for over 30 years. During the 1990s, oil production in southwest Manitoba declined. However, in recent years, the oil fields have been reinvigorated by new technology and a higher price for oil. Communities such as Waskada and Pierson, in particular, have experienced both boom and bust times in the oil industry.

During the 1960s, oil shale development possibilities were actively explored at various sites along the Pembina Hills. One exploratory core hole tested as high as 60 liters (l.) per tonne at a depth of 105 m.; however, most holes tested an average oil content of only 18 l. per tonne, making production in the Pembina Hills unfeasible at the time. Figure 2.1.11.

Sandstone

Near-surface seams of building quality sandstone were discovered along two ravines just south of Boissevain on Section 9, Township 1, Range 9 West of the Principal Meridian, (9-1-9W) soon after settlement. Known locally as "Musgrove Ravine sandstone", the formation is known to geologists as the Cretaceous Boissevain Formation. Because the stone is not very dense, it is easier to shape and work with than limestone or granite; however, it is also relatively a soft stone and subject to the effects of weathering, making it unsuitable for large-scale commercial use. Nevertheless, during the 1890s and early 1900s, this tan and brown-coloured sandstone was quarried for use in the construction of many local farm houses and especially in the town of Boissevain where many sandstone homes, churches and commercial buildings were erected, and a number of good examples survive to the present time.

One of the surviving sandstone residences in Boissevain is the subject of a local legend. The following unsourced narrative was located in BTHR research files: "*Then there's also a house in town where Gordon Burbick lives now and the majority of that house was all cut from one single stone. The quarry it came from was on 13-3-20, just a couple of hundred yards from where the chicken plant is now. There were 29 wagon loads of stones taken out of that one block. Jim McLaughlin, was the contractor and he blasted it and cut it or whatever they had to do to it. There are also several other houses around town where most of the stones come from that same site.*" *(BTHR.)* Figure 2.1.15.

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Figure 2.1.10. Above: Bentonite mining. Excavation face showing fault lines in a bentonite layer in a pit in the Miami area of the BTNHR, with pit worker, Norman Harde, providing scale to the layers. *(Brown'74 :7.)*

Figure 2.1.12. Above: Coal mining. Excavation face showing coal mining on the northwestern slopes of Turtle Mountain in the western part of the BTNHR. *(Brown'74 :23.)*

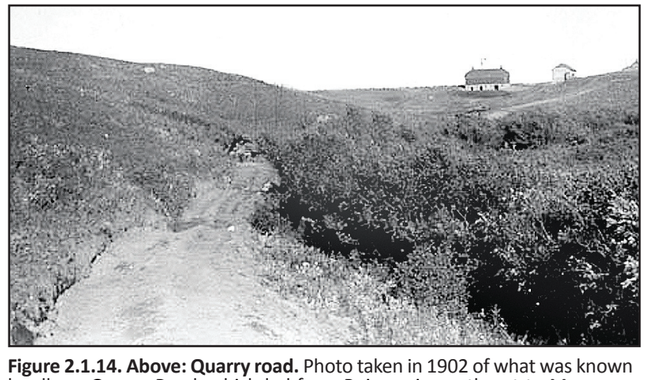

Figure 2.1.14. Above: Quarry road. Photo taken in 1902 of what was known locally as Quarry Road, which led from Boissevain southeast to Musgrove Ravine, where several sandstone quarries were being worked at the time. Note the farmyard in the distance and absence of trees. *(A&LC.)*

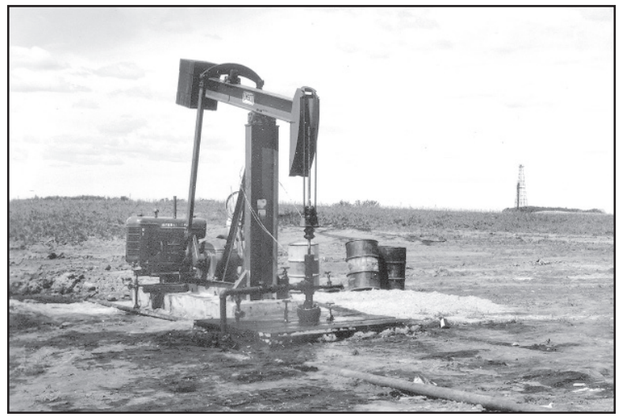

Figure 2.1.11. Above: Oil wells. In 1951, California Standard drilled the first commercial producing well in Manitoba, 14 km. west of Virden and, by 1958, there were 856 producing wells in the area. Note the pumper in the above photo is powered by an International tractor engine. Note also the exploratory derrick in the background. Circa 1953. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 2.1.13. Above: Coal mining. Coal mining was a local industry in the Turtle Mountain area for many years. *(A&LC.)*

Figure 2.1.15. Above: Musgrove sandstone quarry. Photo of one of the sandstone quarries located along Musgrove Ravine. Circa 1900. *(A&LC.)*

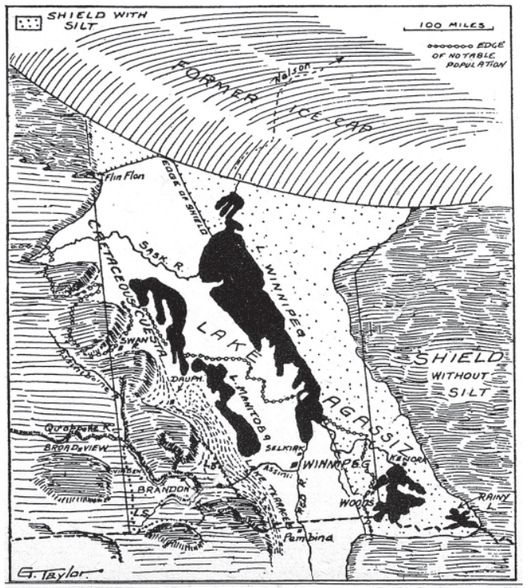

Figure 2.2.1 Above: Lake Agassiz deposits. A 1947 map showing the glacial topography of Manitoba, including Glacial Lake Agassiz sedimentation features. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :299.)*

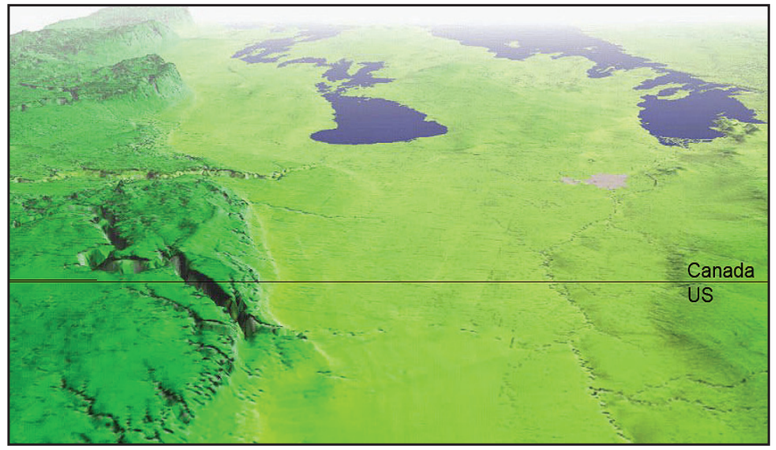

Figure 2.2.2 Above: Southern Manitoba topography. Computer-generated oblique aerial view of the Manitoba Lowlands region, including the Manitoba Escarpment and Pembina River valley, both at left. Elevation scale is exaggerated for better clarity. *(HRB.)*

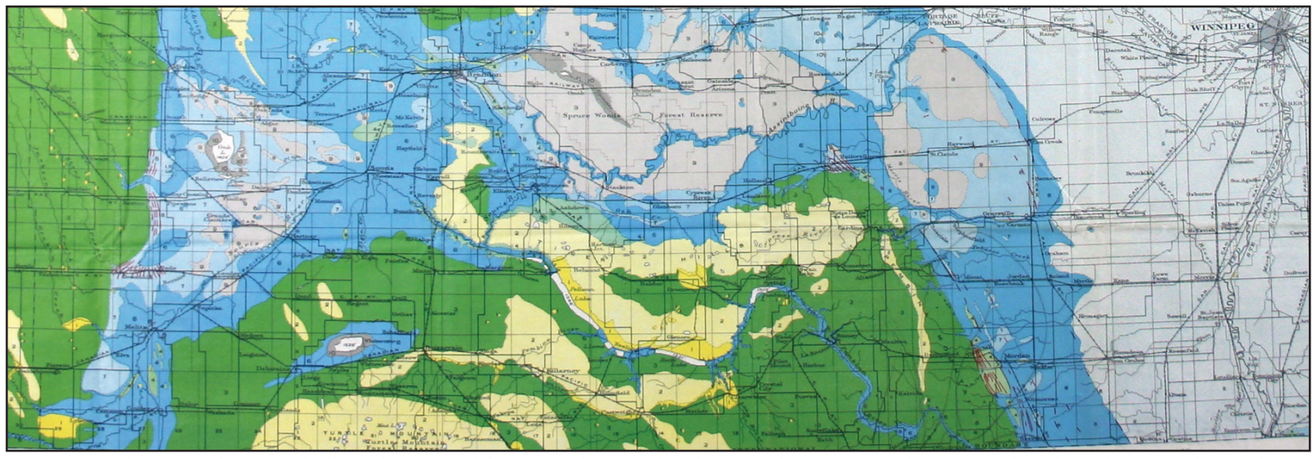

Figure 2.2.3 Above: Southern Manitoba surface materials. A map showing glacial surface deposits in southern Manitoba. Blue - fine grained water borne deposits; green - gently rolling ground moraine deposits; yellow - hilly terminal moraine deposits. *(HRB.)*

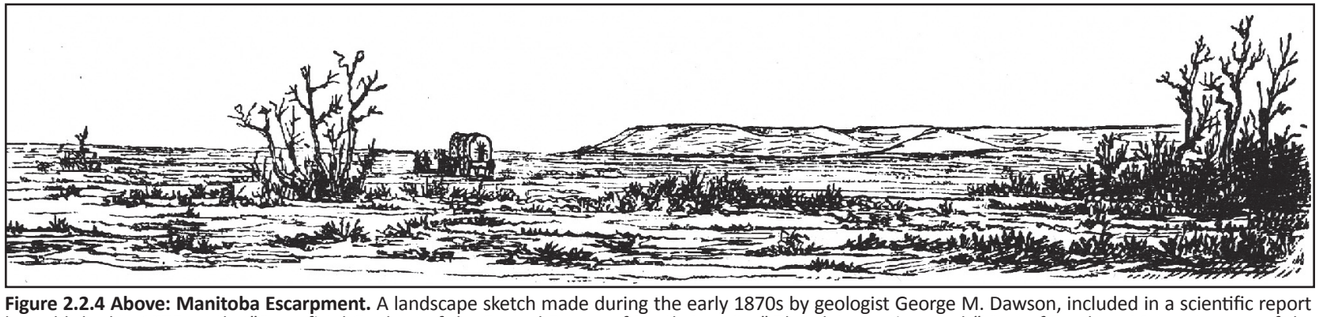

Figure 2.2.4 Above: Manitoba Escarpment. A landscape sketch made during the early 1870s by geologist George M. Dawson, included in a scientific report he published in 1875 on the "*Superficial Geology of the Central Region of North America*." The plate caption read *"View of Pembina Mountain, part of the Escarpment of the Second Prairie-Plateau*." *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :297.)*

2.2 ELEVATION AND LANDFORMS

The Pleistocene

About two million years ago, at the beginning of the Pleistocene Epoch, the world climate turned colder and, as snow built up to great depths over Hudson Bay, massive glaciers formed and flowed southward, covering all of Canada and reaching at times far into the US. The Pleistocene ice sheets are thought to have been as much as two kilometers thick and spread south simply by the pull of gravity on its great height and weight, much as water always flows to its lowest level. The weight of the ice sheet was so massive that it caused the Earth's crust to sink beneath it and caused almost all of Canada's rivers to flow northwards afterward as a result. The land in northern Canada is still slowly rebounding, resulting in the formation of the large marshes that currently exist at the southern ends of both Lakes Manitoba and Winnipeg, as the elevation at the north ends of the lakes slowly rises more than the south ends do.

As the climate fluctuated over many thousands of years of the Pleistocene, it is known that the glacial ice front advanced and receded no less than four times. Finally, about 25,000 years ago, the last known ice advance occurred when the "Wisconsin Glacier" spread south across what is now southern Manitoba. The ice sheet front advanced as far south as present-day Wisconsin, hence the name. As the climate warmed, the Wisconsin ice lobe thinned and the front slowly retreated. The front retreated from what is now southern Manitoba between 15,000 to 13,000 years ago. It has been suggested, with some amount of truth, that due to the Pleistocene and the "bulldozer nature" of the glaciers, all of Canada's best soils are now located in the northern US, having been transported there by the glaciers.

It quickly became obvious to early geologists and geographers looking at the surface landforms of southern Manitoba that they were glacially-derived. More detailed analysis later determined that these remnant glacial landforms were created by one or a combination of four identifiable basic glacial processes. These are erosion by advancing ice, deposition by melting ice, erosion by flowing meltwaters, and deposition in and around meltwater lakes. The BTNHR, in particular, contains a rich variety of excellent glacial-derived surface landforms. Few other regions in Canada, the size of the BTNHR, possess such a rich and interesting variety. Figure 2.2.1.

Landforms Created by Glacial Erosion

- Manitoba Escarpment, Turtle Mountain and Small Upland Buttes

During periods of ice advance and retreat, as with all glaciers, the ice is continuously moving forward, pushed by the weight of the ice still accumulating in the far north and spreading out. Even as the ice front retreated during periods of sustained melting, the ice within the glacier continued to flow forward. This continuous scouring of the bedrock was so significant that almost 75 million years of surface deposits were pulverized and removed from the geology of southern Manitoba. Virtually all of the more recent Cenozoic Era rock layers were removed, leaving the older Cretaceous Period bedrock layers at or just below the surface in the BTNHR. It is for this reason that open pit mining of bentonite and coal was possible, simply by removing the loose overburden at selected locations, especially along the Manitoba escarpment and along river and roadbed cuts.

As noted earlier, tectonic plate movement forced the horizontal bedrock layers beneath the current BTNHR to tilt. Later, as the surface bedrock was ground away by moving ice, the exposed surface bedrock ended up as distinct bands of different types of rock that, in the BTNHR, run north-west to south-east and descend towards the west. The band of limestone bedrock, being a relatively soft rock, was ground down as much as 180 metres (600 feet) lower than were the shales located immediately to the west. Referred to as the "First Prairie Level' or "Manitoba Lowlands', this region possesses the lowest elevations found on the Canadian prairies and is the level to which all rivers flow on the prairies. The Manitoba Escarpment marks the transition line from the softer, lower level, limestone bedrock to the east of it and the harder shales to the west. Figure 2.2.2.

Bedrock scouring west of the Manitoba Escarpment was not entirely uniform and, in some locations where slightly harder shales existed, less erosion occurred, leaving small heights of land on an otherwise fairly smooth surface. The Turtle Mountain plateau is the largest of these remnant erosional features, while Pilot Mound, Star Mound and, possibly even, Calf Mountain are among smaller examples in the BTNHR of these unusual erosional features.

Landforms Created by Glacial Deposition

- Tiger Hills, Turtle Mountain and Boissevain Till Plain

During the melting and retreat of the Wisconsin glaciation which, in southern Manitoba, occurred from roughly 75,000 to 13,000 years ago, a thick layer known as "ground moraine" was deposited on the bedrock surface by the receding ice front. Also known as "boulder till", this type of glacial material was deposited in the areas where the meltwaters did not pond but drained away fairly quickly from the ice face. As a result, the large amount of ground up bedrock that had been caught up in the ice was simply dropped in place, eventually creating a gently rolling topography of mixed gravels, rocks, boulders and clays. The district immediately west of the Escarpment, especially in the area between Darlingford and Manitou, is typical of ground moraine deposition. Where the ice front stopped retreating for a extended amount of time, the conveyor-belt nature of the still flowing ice and materials within the glacier, caused the boulder till to "pile up" along the ice front creating what are now called Morainic Hills. The Tiger Hills, in the centre of the BTNHR, are an excellent example of terminal moraine deposits. Figure 2.2.3.

Landforms Created by Flowing Meltwaters

- Souris and Pembina River Valleys

In addition to the Manitoba Escarpment and the Tiger Hills, another impressive major glacial landform in the BTNHR is the remnant Glacial Lake Souris spillway — within which both the Souris and Pembina rivers now flow. The weight of the Wisconsin ice sheet was so great that it actually forced the crust of the Earth to sink, especially in the far north. This northward tilt of the land resulted in meltwaters at the ice front to accumulate or pond in many places. The water levels in these glacial meltwater lakes would rise until an outlet was reached and the water began to drain. Some of these meltwater lakes

drained away quickly while others increased in size to become substantial bodies of water. In some cases, when an outlet was finally breached, the rapidly flowing meltwater quickly eroded into the loose mix of rock, sand and gravel left by the retreating glaciers creating progressively deeper and wider channels. This allowed even greater volumes of meltwater to drain that, with all the sand and gravel and rocks carried along, could scour a channel all the way through the ground moraine and into the surface bedrock. Such deep wide meltwater drainage channels are known as glacial spillways. The former Glacial Lake Souris spillway is almost four kms. (2.5 mi.) wide in places and over 60 m. (200 ft.) deep. It is well worth the effort to find a suitable lookout over the valley today, such as the observation tower in Pembina Valley Provincial Park, and imagine it filled from brim to brim with rapidly flowing meltwaters, choked with ice, stone and gravel. The actual original view would, no doubt, have been an astonishing sight. Figure 2.2.6.

As impressive as the Glacial Lake Souris spillway is on its own accord, it is also associated with another rare and impressive glacial landform well worth seeing. Known as a "captured stream" site; it is created when the route of an existing river, or in this case a spillway, is "captured" by headwater erosion of a different watercourse, thereafter diverting increasing amounts of water from the original waterway into a different channel until the entire volume of water has been captured and diverted into the new water channel. The Glacial Lake Souris spillway at one time contained a single waterway within its entire length; however, at some point in its history, that waterway took a hard left turn and exited the deep spillway valley, flowing northeast rather than southeast and connecting with the Assiniboine River some 30 km. downstream. A complete diversion of the water channel had been created. After that event, the upstream portion of the original waterway became the Souris River and the downstream portion became the Pembina River, with the modest height of land between the two located near Dunrea. It is likely that some type of catastrophic flood event must have been responsible for a waterway located in such a deep valley to abandon its channel and alter its course in such a dramatic fashion. Figure 2.2.9.

Landforms Created by a Combination of Erosion and Deposition - Turtle Mountain

The Turtle Mountain upland plateau is a very unusual type glacial landform. In other areas of Canada, Turtle Mountain would be referred to as a plateau or simply a hilly area. But in southern Manitoba, one of the flattest places on the North American continent, there is a tendency to call even relatively modest rises "mountains." The Turtle Mountain has a maximum elevation of 600 m. (2000 ft.) above sea level and rises 180 to 245 m. (600 to 800 ft.) above the surrounding prairie. In area, it extends about 32 km. (20 mi.) from north to south and 64 km. (40 mi.) from east to west. It is an elevated island of hilly terrain covered by forest and lakes and is surrounded on all sides by gently rolling prairie. The east-west Canada - US border runs through the centre of it.

It is believed that, at the core of Turtle Mountain, is a local rise of hard shale which survived glacial scouring to a greater extent than the surrounding area. This bedrock obstruction caused enough resistance to the southward flowing glacial ice that a large section of ice became wedged on top of the rise forcing the main ice lobe to flow around the obstruction and causing moraine accumulation around its perimeter. Fifteen thousand years ago, when the ice thinned and the ice front retreated during melting, this large chunk of stagnant melting ice became thickly covered by till and other debris. Geologists think this blanket of sediment,150 m. (500 ft.) thick, postponed the buried ice around the Turtle Mountains from melting for about 3000 years. The ice front of the main Wisconsin ice sheet had fully retreated by about 12,000 years ago, while the Turtle Mountains still had till-covered stagnant glaciers up until 9000 years ago.

It is believed that various other, much smaller mounds located in the BTNHR, such as Pilot Mound, Star Mound, and Spence's Knoll were also glacial-till covered shale buttes, much like Turtle Mountain.

The Turtle Mountain plateau area is currently covered by deciduous forest, mainly trembling aspen, interspersed with balsam poplar, ash, birch, Manitoba maple, elm and bur oak. The original old growth forest

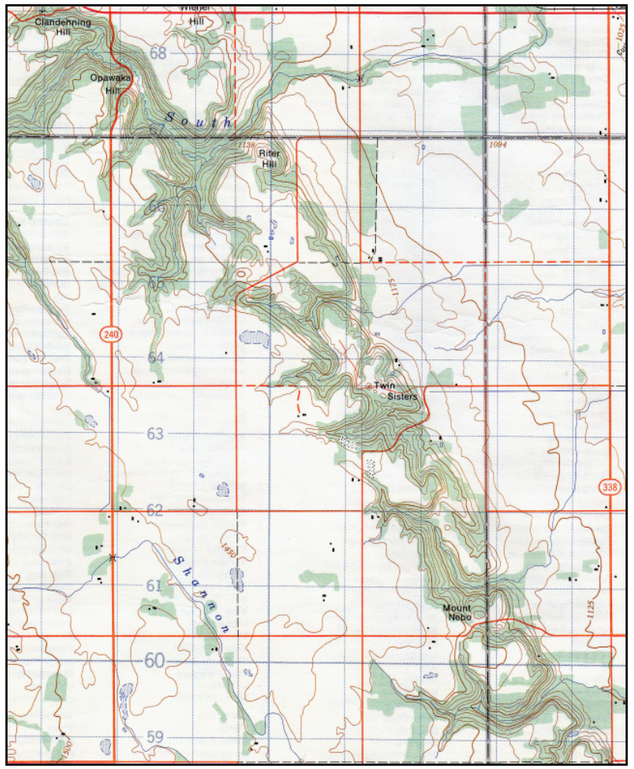

Figure 2.2.5. Above: Manitoba Escarpment. Topographic map of the area south of Miami, showing Mount Nebo and other hilltop mounds located along the Manitoba Escarpment. Mount Nebo is a hillock or high point that withstood the glacial scouring of the last ice age. The core on the mound is made up of ocean hardpan "blue clay" that was slightly more resistant to ice erosion than the shale to the west of it, and much more resistant than the limestone bedrock to the east. Thus, when the last ice front retreated, Mound Nebo was left exposed as an isolated peak along the lip of the Manitoba Escarpment. Such hillocks and peaks were often used for Indigenous religious rituals and cultural meeting places. *(Manitoba Map Sales.)*

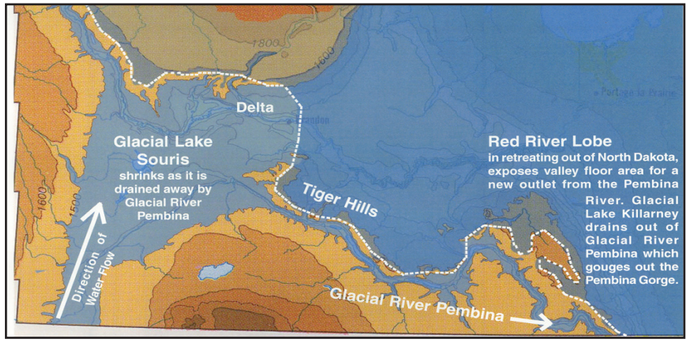

Figure 2.2.6. Above: Lake Souris. Glacial Lake Souris and its meltwater spillway as imagined to have existed about 10,000 years ago. *(TM-SPHA.)*

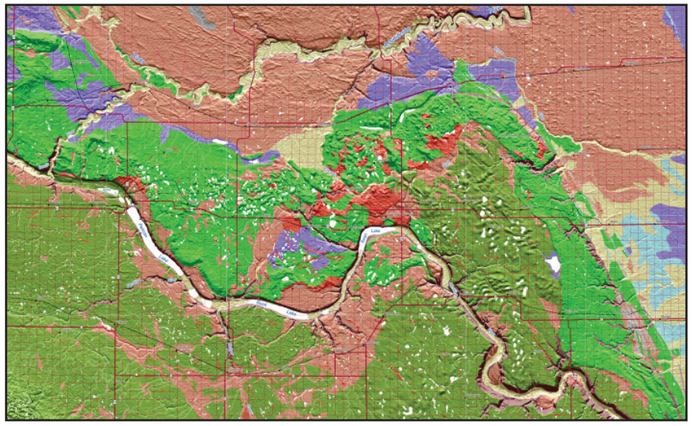

Figure 2.2.7. Above: Glacial deposits. Surficial map showing glacial till deposits: Pinks - waterborne sand and silts; Reds - complex deposits of sand and gravels; Dark Green - glacial ground moraine; Light Green - glacial end moraine deposits, clays and silts. *(Manitoba Geological Survey'04.)*

Figure 2.2.8. Above: Manitoba Escarpment. View of the Manitoba Escarpment south of Morden from a distance of about four km. looking west. The elevation at this location abruptly rises 375 feet , (115 m.) above the Red River plain to the east. *(EdLed.)*

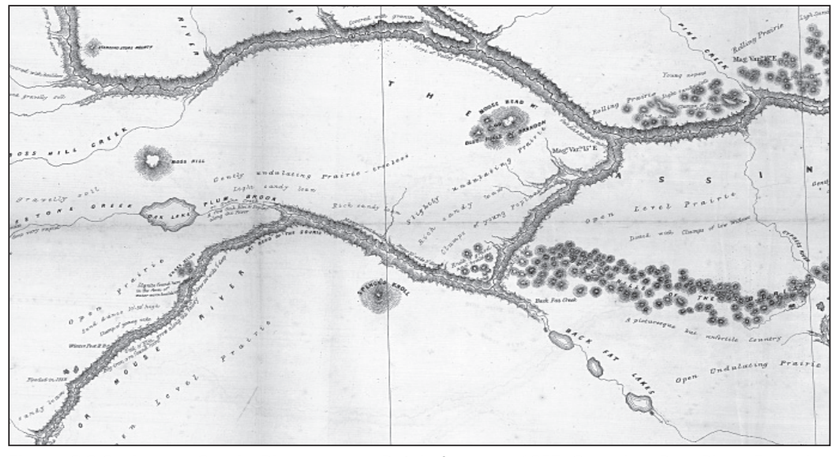

Figure 2.2.9. Above: Souris River elbow. Detail from an 1857 Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition map showing the "captured stream" feature located in the former Glacial Lake Souris spillway near present day Ninette, where the Souris River takes a 90 degree left turn and exits the deep former Glacial Lake Souris spillway valley. *(Hind'59 :foldout.)*

Figure 2.2.10. Above: Former Glacial Lake Souris spillway. The former site of the frontier community of Pembina Crossing located on the floor of the former Glacial Lake Souris meltwater spillway. Despite its beautiful setting and long history as an important Indigenous campsite and river crossing location, the site failed to develop into a permanent community. It is hard to imagine that, at one time, this valley was filled brim to brim with cold rushing meltwaters. The modest-sized Pembina River now flows through this portion of the former spillway valley, providing an excellent example of what is known to geographers as a "misfit" stream. *(Frank Wilson photo.)*

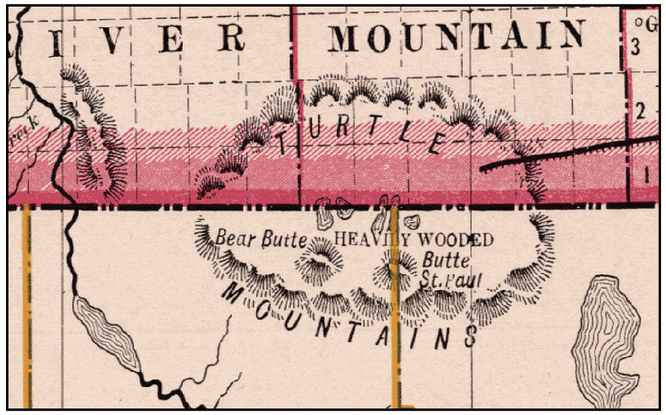

Figure 2.2.11. Above: Turtle Mountain uplands. Detail from an 1884 map showing the Turtle Mountain uplands, split down the centre by the international border. *(HRB.)*

Figure 2.2.12. Above: Former Glacial Lake Souris spillway. A view over the former Glacial Lake Souris spillway in the recently created Pembina Valley Provincial Park, located near where the valley enters the US. The park attractions include hiking and cycling trails, lookout platforms, picnic and group use areas. *(Province of Manitoba :Parks Branch.)*

Figure 2.2.13. Above: Turtle Mountain uplands. View from the lookout tower on the "Turtle's Back Summit" in William Lake Provincial Park. *(Province of Manitoba :Parks Branch.)*

Figure 2.2.14. Above: Former Glacial Lake Souris spillway. The view entering the former Lake Souris spillway near the US boundary south of Morden. The valley in this location remained largely untouched by human development and is one of the last areas along the spillway with its post-glacial natural valley bottom forest almost completely intact. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 2.2.15. Above: Turtle Mountain uplands. One of many similar eroded river channels located along the north slope of Turtle Mountain. Note the small field cleared and cropped at right, to make agriciultural use of the rich sediment deposits on the valley floor. *(TM-SPHA image.)*

cover burned in 1896 when a massive forest fire swept over the entire mountain. Only the trees on an island on Max Lake survived. Shrubs consist of hazel, highbush cranberry, saskatoon, pincherry, and wild plum. It is home to moose, white-tailed deer, beaver, raccoon, and mink, as well as birds like loons, great blue herons, black-crowned night herons, double-crested cormorants, and red-necked grebes. The abundant small lakes support painted turtles, wood frogs, northern leopard frogs, and the barred tiger salamanders.

Because of its thick forest cover and many lakes, hills and gullies, the Turtle Mountain plateau became an important hunting and seasonal camping area for Indigenous populations. This attraction continues to the present day and much of the plateau is now protected as Turtle Mountain Provincial Park. The Park is very popular with families and outdoor enthusiasts. There are cottage subdivisions on many of the lakes including Lake Max and Dropmore Lake. There are campgrounds at Adam Lake and Max Lake. The Park is also known for its bike trails, fishing, back country cabins and canoe routes. Significantly, it is the location of the International Peace Garden, a major bilateral park straddling the boundary line, dedicated to world peace and established during the early 1930s.

Star Mound

Star Mound is an isolated glacial moraine formed atop a localized bedrock 'hump', as are most other 'mounds' located in the BTNHR. It has been a regional landmark for centuries and has been known by many names, the oldest known likely being "Nebogwawin Butte." Early maps record its name as "Dry Dance Mountain", "Dry Dance Hill", and "Big Dance Hill." Star Mound was the name given to it by the early settlers and eventually the name became the officially recognized term. There was said to have been a beaver-shaped effigy mound atop Star Mound, which had been dug into by locals and archaeologists to such an extent that the original shape and extent of the effigy has been lost. It is believed to have been created relatively recently by the Assiniboine people, who are known to have used this prominent height of land for various purposes, including spotting bison and ceremonial events and burials. Figure 2.2.17.

Pilot Mound

Pilot Mound rises almost 60 m. (200 ft.) above the Prairies and offers visitors one of the most fabulous panoramic views in southern Manitoba. Geologists inform us that Pilot Mound, like Star Mound, is a glaciated uplift of the surrounding rock shales and later blanketed with a thick layer of glacial ground moraine till, much like Star Mound and even Turtle Mountain. Like many of the other natural mounds in the BTNHR, the early Indigenous inhabitants of the Region used the Pilot Mound butte, which they called "Mepawaquomoshin" or "Little Dance Hill", as a lookout and as a burial site. In such cases, smaller earth mounds were built at the base or summit of the mound. Pilot Mound was known to have had such burial mounds at its base. During pioneer years, the height of land was used as a trail landmark to help the travellers "pilot" the trails. Thus, it became known locally as the "Pilot mound." It was selected as the location of the district's first townsite. Figure 7.16.7.

Landforms Created by Glacial Meltwater Lakes - Lake Agassiz Lake Bed and Beach Ridges

The largest glacial landform feature to have been created during the life of the Wisconsin ice sheet was no doubt the massive meltwater lake known as Glacial Lake Agassiz, which covered large portions of what is now Manitoba, northwestern Ontario and Minnesota.

The Lake was created when the cold murky meltwaters flowing away from the ice front from as far as the Rocky Mountains naturally found their way to the lowest level on the prairies, the Manitoba Lowlands region. With the ice front still blocking the natural northward drainage, the water simply kept accumulating along the ice front and grew in size until an outlet lip was breached and the Lake began to drain, creating deep spillways as a result of the rushing meltwaters and its load of boulders, rocks and gravels.

Because Glacial Lake Agassiz moved northward following the melting ice front, the lake was ever changing in terms of size and shoreline locations. Sand and gravel beach ridges were formed by wave action at various shoreline locations as the lake levels rose and fell over the centuries and slowly moved northward with the retreating ice. The Manitoba Escarpment marked the western shoreline of Glacial Lake Agassiz for a long period of time, resulting in a complex series of beach ridge deposits and terrace cuts. Successive stages of advance and retreat resulted in some gravel deposits being buried and others being exposed. Figure 2.2.18.

The deepest parts of the Lake were long-lived and, in these lake bed areas, large flat sedimentation basins of fine-grained clays accumulated. These sedimentation basins are also referred to as clay plains. The current Red River Valley is one such clay plain. In some locations in the Red River Valley, the clay deposits are as much as 15 m. (45 ft.) thick. The clay found in the Red River Valley is sometimes not-so-affectionately called "Red River Gumbo" because, when wet, it becomes both slippery and sticky, making it difficult to walk or drive a vehicle through without bogging down. Being a former lake bottom clay plain, the Red River Valley region is extremely flat. The area around present day Emerson, in particular, is recognized as one of the flattest landscapes in the world, rising only 2.5 cm. per km. (2 in. per mi.). Figure 2.2.19.

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Figure 2.2.16. Above: Pilot Mound. A view of glacial erosional remnant Pilot Mound from the south. *(EdLed.)*

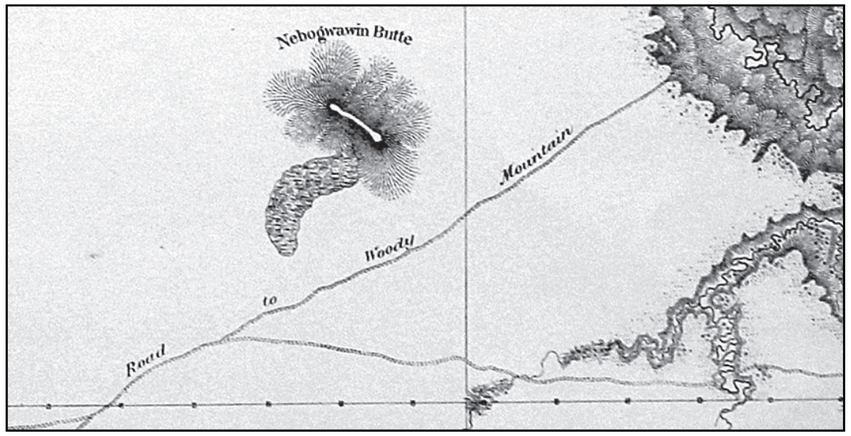

Figure 2.2.17. Above: Star Mound. Map prepared by the surveyors of the Boundary Commission International in 1874 showing "Nebogwawin Butte"- now known as Star Mound. The international border can be seen along the bottom and the Pembina River valley at the right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 2.2.21. Above: Star Mound. View to the northeast from the summit of Star Mound. The forested slopes of the Pembina River valley can be seen in the far distance. *(EdLed.)*

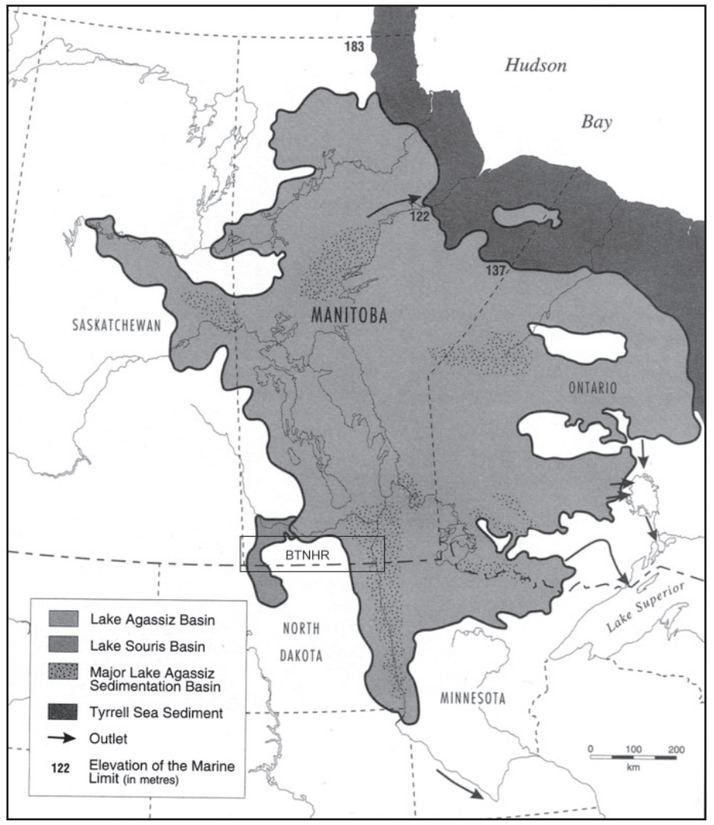

Figure 2.2.18. Above: Glacial Lake Agassiz. Sketch map showing the "cumulative" full extent of Glacial Lake Agassiz including the locations of Glacial Lake Souris, several "clay plain" sedimentation basins, and temporary southern, eastern and final northern drainage routes. *(HRB.)*

Figure 2.2.22. Above: Former Lake Agassiz beach ridges. A photograph taken near the community of Miami looking west towards the Manitoba Escarpment showing the old beach ridge deposits in the foreground and midground. *(EdLed.)*

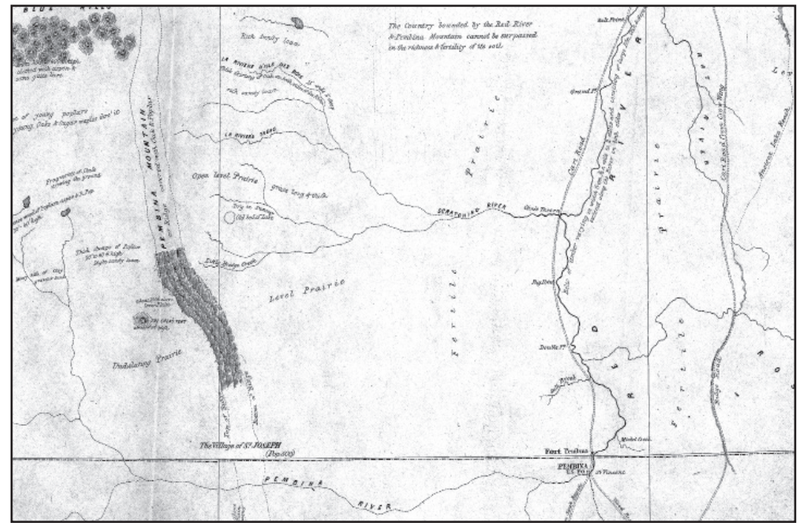

Figure 2.2.19. Above: Red River clay plain. An 1857 Canadian Exploration Expedition map showing the extensive "clay plain" area between the Pembina River (left) and the Red River (right). The Manitoba Escarpment and the various creeks running eastward from the escarpment are also shown. The map maker assumed the creeks all merged to form the Morris River when, in fact, most flowed into a massive swampy area. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 2.2.20. Above: Red River clay plain. A view of the "flatland" landscape of the former Lake Agassiz lake bottom clay plain. Farmland nearer to the Manitoba Escarpment, such as this field near Graysville, is somewhat better drained than the even flatter areas located nearer to the Red River and is one of a few areas in Manitoba with "Class 1" soils. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 2.2.23. Above: Red River flats. Flooding in the Red River valley during the 1997 "Flood of the Century." As a former Glacial Lake Agassiz lake bottom clay plain, the landscape in the area is extremely flat; thus, when the Red River spills it banks, even only slightly, water can spread a great distance from the river channel. *(HRB.)*

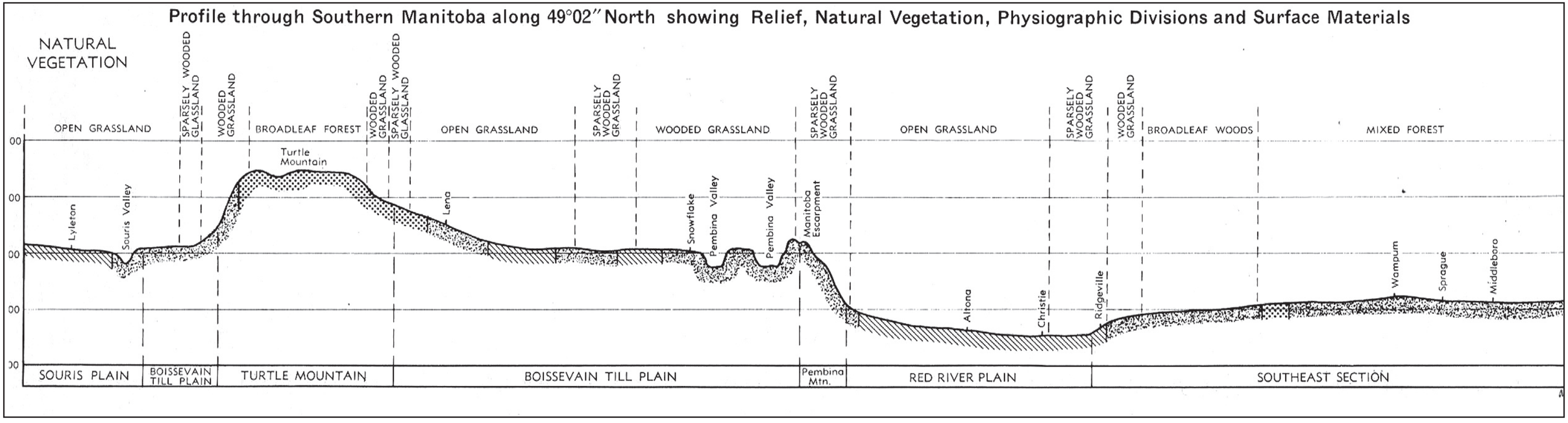

Figure 2.2.24. Above: Elevation profile and physiographic zones. Profile through Southern Manitoba just north of the 49th parallel showing relief, natural vegetation, physiographic divisions and subsurface materials. The vertical scale is exaggerated to better show the elevation changes. *(Wier'60 :13.)*

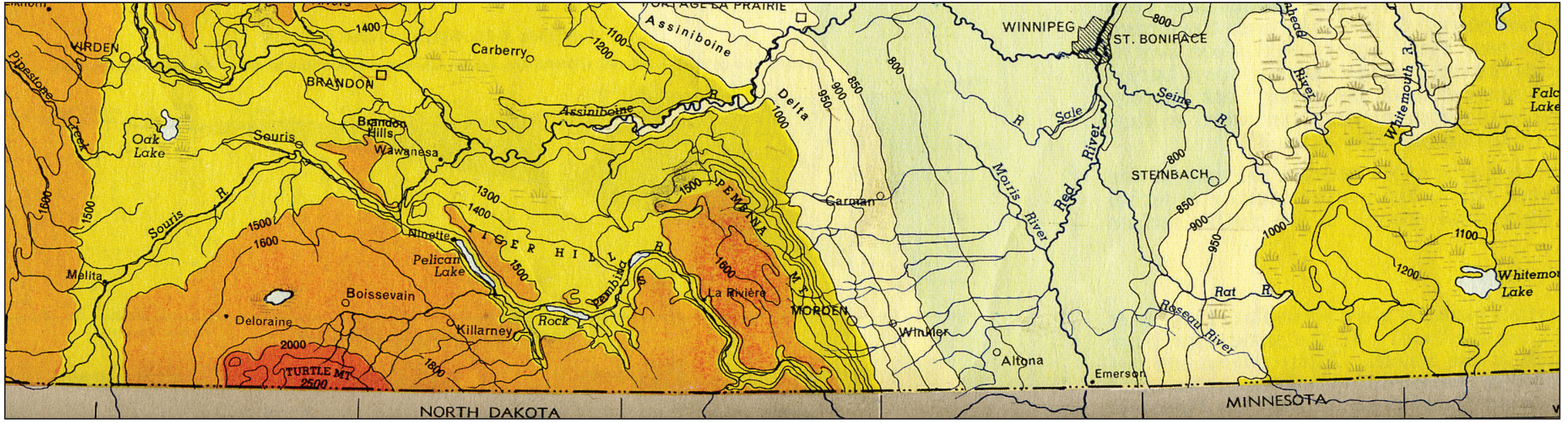

Figure 2.2.25. Above: Elevation contour map. Map of southern Manitoba with 50 ft. contours showing the lowest elevation contours (>800 ft.) in the Red River valley and the highest areas (<2500 ft.) in the Turtle Mountain plateau. Clearly shown is the former Glacial Lake Souris spillway, now occupied by the Souris and Pembina Rivers. *(Wier'60 :12.)*

2.3 LAKES AND RIVERS

Despite its largely "open-prairie" natural setting, the BTNHR possesses a surprising variety of interesting waterways and lakes. In terms of waterways, portions of three major rivers flow through the BTNHR: the Souris, the Pembina, and the Red rivers. As well, there are many smaller tributary rivers, creeks and coulees in the region, including from west to east: Antler River, Gainsborough, Graham, Turtlehead, Badger, Cypress, Crystal, Little Pembina, and Dead Horse creeks. Also to be found, are the Plum and Morris rivers, which are east-flowing tributaries of the Red River located in the eastern section of the BTNHR. Figure 2.3.1.

A short 38 km. (24 mi.) section of the north-flowing Red River, from Emerson to Morris, marks the BTNHR's eastern boundary and receives all the water flowing eastward from the Manitoba Escarpment to the Red River. The eastward-flowing Pembina River drains the south-central part of the Region before dipping just south of the international border and joining the Red at Pembina, North Dakota. The lower reaches of the Souris River drain the waters falling on and flowing into the western portion of the BTNHR. The Souris' headwaters are located in southern Saskatchewan with the bulk of the River's length in North Dakota. Figure 2.3.7.

The BTNHR also possesses an abundance of lakes. Whitewater Lake, located north of Turtle Mountain, is normally the Region's largest in terms of total area; "normally"because Whitewater Lake is a very shallow lake and, in years past, has been known to dry up entirely. There are seven so-called "chain lakes" located in the Pembina River Valley. The three largest being Pelican, Rock and Swan lakes. Killarney Lake, while only roughly one by three kilometers in size, is a long-time open prairie landmark and Indigenous campground and, more recently, an adjacent townsite. And, perhaps the most interesting of the Region's many lakes is the "kettle lakes" district on the Turtle Mountain plateau. Its many small lakes and pothole sloughs account for almost one third of the surface area in Turtle Mountain Provincial Park, a significant attraction for wildlife populations in the past and present.

The many water-related features located in the BTNHR are popular attractions for both residents and visitors and are well worth exploring for their natural and recreational attributes.

The Red River

The eastern boundary of the BTNHR is demarked by the waters of the Red River and, although only a short 40 km. section of the river's total length is represented in the Region, this particular portion of the Red River is highly significant both naturally and historically.

The Red River, like the Souris and Pembina rivers, is an international river, with much of its watershed lying south of the border. It flows in an almost straight line, south to north, although in places it meanders considerably within its own narrow and shallow erosion channel. The River starts at Lake Traverse near the border of South Dakota and Minnesota and flows 880 km. (545 mi.) by length of channel, or 456 km. (256 mi.) "as the crow flies", across the entire length of the very flat Red River Valley, emptying into the south basin of Lake Winnipeg 56 km. (35 mi.) north of the City of Winnipeg. Over its 880 km. length, the channel elevation falls only 71 m. (233 ft.), for an average slope of only about nine cm. per km. (six in. per mi.). The majority of its drainage basin is fine grained silt and clay deposited by former Glacial Lake Agassiz; thus, the waters of the Red River are murky and silt-laden. The name "Winnipeg" in the Cree language actually means "muddy waters."

The current northward flow of the Red River is actually contrary to the natural, pre-glacial, gradient of the land in the northern midwest of North America. The weight of the Pleistocene ice sheets was so great that the Earth's crust was compressed, causing the land to slope northward. As the ice sheet melted back and away, the earth's crust was released from the massive weight of the ice sheets and, ever since, the Earth's crust has been slowly rebounding (about two mm. every decade in recent times). Since the ice departed, the River has lost about 60% of its elevation gradient. This isostatic rebound, paired with the extremely flat nature of the Red River Valley's clay plain, creates an environment whereby the river almost doesn't know in which direction it should flow. As a result, the channel meanders back and forth in wide switchbacks as it seeks to locate lower ground and to maintain flow. With continued isostatic rebound, it is predicted that, in several thousand years, the Red River will reverse its direction and again flow south and become part of the Mississippi River watershed, as it did prior to the last ice age.

In Manitoba, the Red has an average gradient of 0.0001. The area near Emerson possesses the shallowest grade of anywhere along the Red River. This section of the Red is arguably the flattest part of one of the flattest rivers in the world. This is also the reason why the Red River has a long history of flooding, water overflowing out of its normal channel is able to spread out far and wide over the surrounding level landscape. Although flowing across almost level ground, the River has eroded a shallow stream-cut valley, or erosion channel, into the surface of the plain, in places up to 15 m. deep and 2500 m. wide. In its original natural state, the River supported a rich "river bottom" forest environment and a diverse wildlife population. This narrow erosion channel is the actual Red River valley. What is today referred to as the Red River valley is, in fact, the former Lake Agassiz lake bed clay plain and not a river valley at all. The Red River valley extends over 506 km (315 mi.) from Lake Traverse in the south to Lake Winnipeg in the north. It is 95 km (60 mi.) wide at its widest point. The popular Dufferin Trail walking path at Emerson offers visitors a sense of what the original river bottom forest was like.

Over the last 150 years of recorded history, there have been many floods along the Red and its tributaries. The largest on record occurred in 1826, during which the area that would become downtown Winnipeg was under 3.5 m. (11 ft.) of water. The second largest occurred in 1852 and it was slightly larger than the 1997 flood. Other major floods occurred in 1861, 1950, 1966 and 1979. The one many people remember is the Flood of the Century in 1997. The 1950 and 1997 floods are significant because, after both of those floods, major projects were undertaken to protect communities from future flooding. Manitoba is now recognized worldwide as being in the forefront of flood protection techniques. Figure 2.2.23.

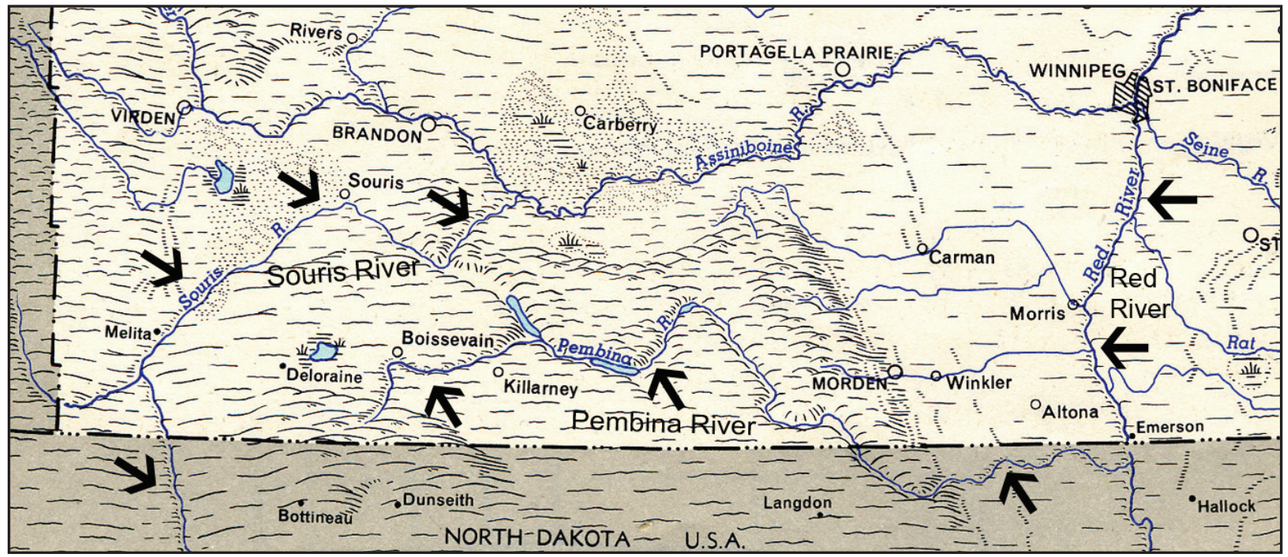

Figure 2.3.1. Above: Major rivers. A surface deposits map of southern Manitoba also showing the main rivers in the greater BTNHR area, with the channels of the Red, Pembina and Souris Rivers indicated with arrows. This map also shows the two delta sandhills areas, around Oak Lake and Carberry, created where glacial spillways entered glacial lakes. Also noted are the remnant beach ridges along the Manitoba Escarpement north and south of Morden. *(Wier'60 :5.)*

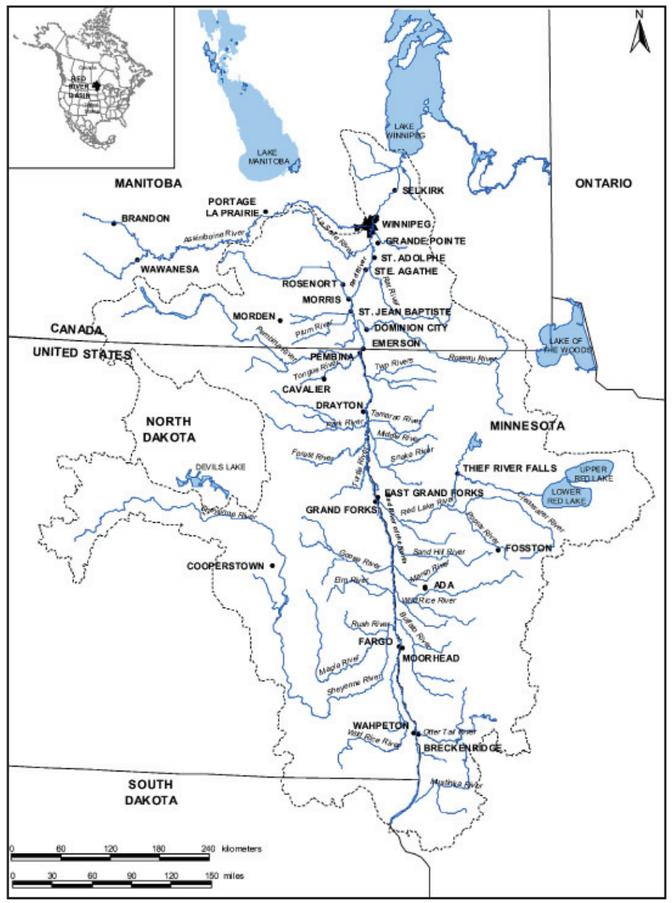

Figure 2.3.2. Left: Red River drainage basin. Map of the Red River drainage basin with its 39 tributaries, 25 south of the border and 14 north of the border. Note also the landlocked Devils Lake drainage basin, at centre left. *(International Joint Commission 2000.)*

Figure 2.3.3. Above: Red River. Aerial photo of the Red River showing the wide "switchbacks" that formed due to the extremely flat nature of the surrounding landscape. Very few significant parcels of original "riverbottom forest" currently survives along the Red River, the majority of it having been cleared for cropland right up to the riverbank. *(Province of Manitoba :Tourism Branch.)*

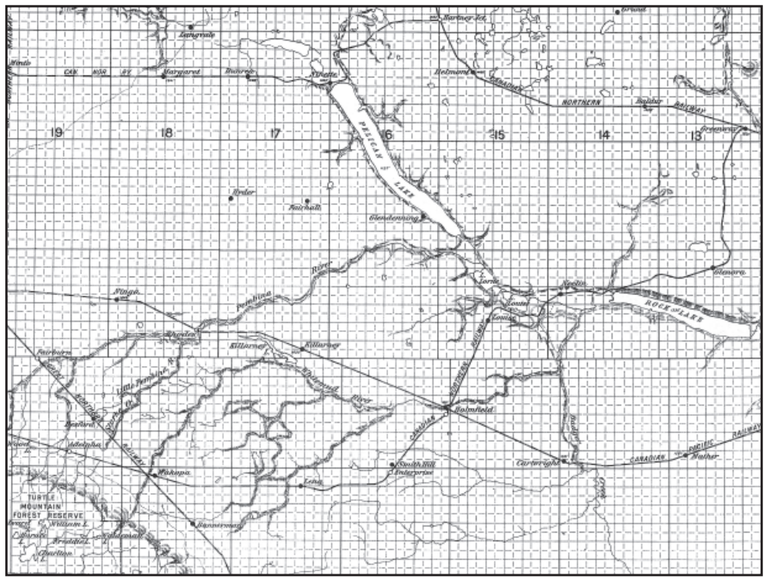

Figure 2.3.4. Above: Pembina River headwaters. A detail from a 1913 Dominion sectional series map showing the headwaters and upper tributaries of the Pembina River. Also shown are six of the seven "chain lakes" located in the Pembina River Valley including, from upstream to downstream: Bone, Overend, Pelican, Lorne, Louise, and Rock lakes. Not shown is Swan Lake. Tributary waterways such as Badger, Cypress and Crystal creeks have eroded deep channels into the landscape due to the fairly significant 250 m. drop in elevation from the upper slopes of Turtle Mountain to the bottom of the Pembina Valley. Note the absence of a developed drainage system in the area north of the Pembina River headwaters. *(Dufferin Sheet, 1913 Sectional Map Series.)*

Figure 2.3.5. Above: Pembina River valley. The Pembina River near where it crosses into the US. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 2.3.6. Above: Souris River valley. A view of the Souris River near Lang's Ford, where the river makes an abrupt left turn, and exits the former glacial spillway valley before connecting with the Assiniboine. *(Ken Storie photo.)*

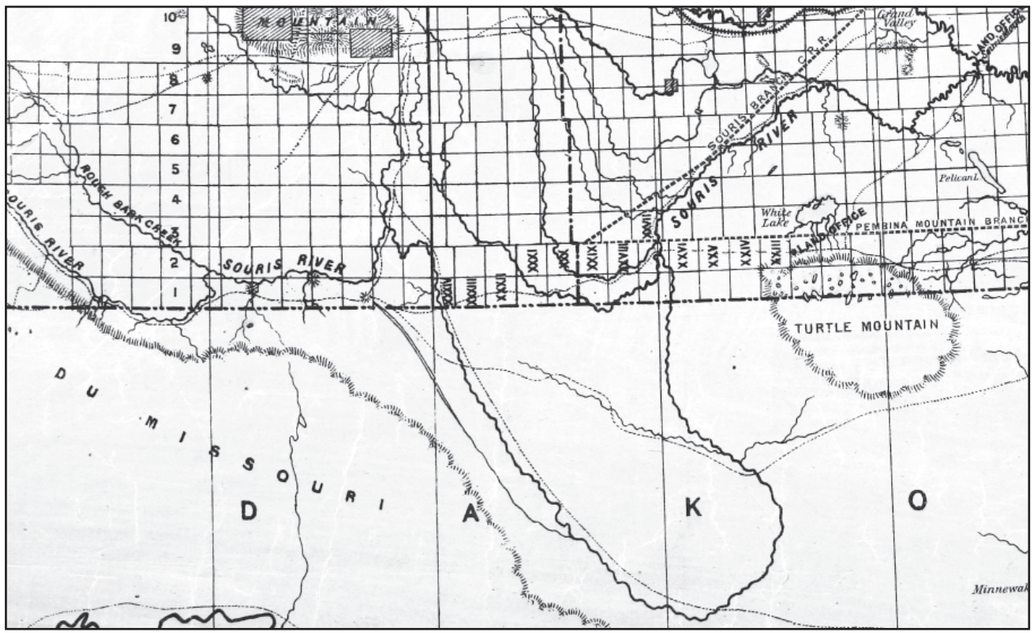

Figure 2.3.7. Above: Souris River. Part of an interesting map, dating from 1881, showing the current Manitoba - Saskatchewan - North Dakota border region and almost the entire length of the Souris River. Clearly evident is the unusual complete reversal in the direction of flow, from southeast to northwest, in the American middle section of the river. Also shown, in the area north of Turtle Mountain, is the River's abrupt 90 degree turn to the northeast where it exits the former glacial meltwater spillway in which it was located. Just a short distance beyond this route change, its confluence with the Assiniboine River can also be seen. *(A of MB.)*

The Pembina River

The Pembina River is also a rather interesting and unusual waterway. Like the Red and the Souris, it is an international waterway. The total area of the watershed is about 10,230 sq. km. (3950 sq. mi.) and is divided nearly equally between Manitoba and North Dakota. The length of the Pembina River basin from west to east is about 210 km. (130 mi.) "as the crow flies", although the winding river channel itself is about 500 km. (310 mi.) long. The River drops from an elevation of about 610 m. (2000 ft.) above sea level at its source on Turtle Mountain to about 240 m. (790 ft.) at its confluence with the Red River, a drop of over 391 m. (1200 ft.) over the total length of the river.

Much of the course of the Pembina River is located within the former glacial Lake Souris meltwater spillway described earlier. The Pembina's headwaters spring forth from the northeastern slopes of Turtle Mountain, about 16 km. (10 mi.) south of the town of Boissevain. Precipitation on Turtle Mountain is significantly higher than on the surrounding region. As the rain and snowmelt descend the relatively steep slopes flowing straight towards the lowest elevation in the area, the bottom of the Lake Souris spillway, creeks such as Badger, Cypress, Crystal, and Snowflake have, over the centuries, eroded deep channels in the rolling prairie landscape. These erosion channels are especially prominent in areas near where the watercourses enter the old spillway valley. The Pembina and its tributaries are in stark physical contrast to the meandering Red River and its prairie flatland tributary streams. Figure 2.3.4.

The Pembina River, like the Souris, is what's known as a misfit waterway. The little stream that now flows in the wide deep Pembina River Valley could not possibly have eroded such a large channel. Another unusual feature about the Pembina River is that the deep, wide valley suddenly and dramatically "opens up"onto the flat former Lake Agassiz lake bed a short distance south of the international boundary at Walhalla, North Dakota. From the former Lake Souris spillway mouth area, for its final 25 km. (15 mi.), the Pembina River meanders lazily eastward and joins with the Red River at the current site of Pembina, North Dakota which, like Walhalla, is located just a few short kilometers south of the international border.

Another unusual feature of the Pembina River system is that its course includes a series of connected so-called "chain-lakes." Because the River is located in a wide, flat-bottomed valley, landslides and damming of the Pembina River in places has resulted in the formation of lakes upstream of these obstructions. These lakes have known many names, including "Back Fat Lakes" and "Rib Lakes." In all, there are seven lakes in the Pembina River chain-lakes watercourse. Figure 2.3.11.

The Souris River

The Souris River, like the Red and Pembina, is an international river with its upper reaches in Saskatchewan, its middle section in the State of North Dakota and the last one quarter of its length flowing through the BTNHR and southern Manitoba. Its waters join with those of the Assiniboine River near the community of Treesbank. It is about 700 km. (435 mi.) in length. In Manitoba, it passes through the communities of Melita, Hartney, Souris, Wawanesa, and Treesbank. The drop in the River's elevation from its headwaters along the Coteau du Missouri and the Moose Mountain plateau, to the point where it empties into the Assiniboine River, is 480 m. (1575 ft.). Figure 2.3.7.

The Souris is noteworthy for several reasons. One is the rather unusual course of its river channel with several abrupt changes in direction, including a 180 degree reversal in direction on the American side of the border. It too is an excellent example of a misfit stream, in that the valley in which it flows is far larger than a river that size could have created through erosion. The river valley is, in fact, a remnant glacial meltwater spillway that flowed from what is now southern Saskatchewan into glacial lakes Souris and Agassiz. Another unusual aspect of the Manitoba portion of the Souris is that virtually all of its tributaries arrive from the west. These include Antler River, Gainsborough Creek, Graham Creek, Jackson Creek and Plum Creek, all of which originate south and east of the Moose Mountain plateau. The reason for the lack of significant east bank tributaries is because Glacial Lake Souris at one time existed in this area and the former lake bed is largely level land with poorly developed drainage. In the area nearer to its confluence with the Assiniboine, the Souris River has eroded a deep channel into the glacial till surface materials and there are many scenic views with high cliffs on either bank, best viewed from a canoe or kayak on the river. Figure 2.3.6.

Another rare and unusual aspect of the Souris River is that, near the current community of Margaret, the River takes an abrupt 90 degree left turn and exits the former Lake Souris spillway valley though a deep gap in the north wall of the valley. It then flows northeast, through the Tiger Hills, before connecting with the Assiniboine River near Treesbank, Manitoba. This is what is known as a "captured stream" landform — a very rare geographic feature. In this case, the River formerly flowing in the spillway valley was "captured" when the headwaters of a shorter river flowing northeast out of the Tiger Hills eroded back far enough that, probably during a flood event, a second water channel was created that eventually eroded low enough to become the River's primary channel. At this point, what had been one river located at the bottom of the former glacial spillway, became two rivers — now called the Souris and the Pembina. The Souris River Bend Wildlife Management Area was recently established in this area where visitors can view and visit this unusual natural water feature. Figure 2.3.7.

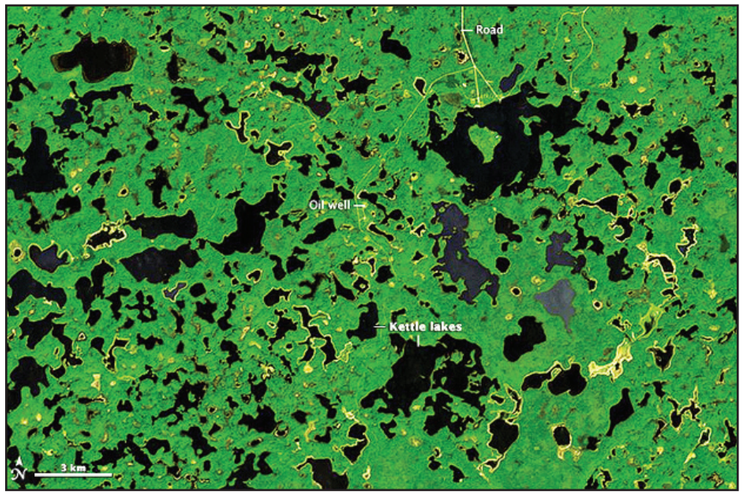

Figure 2.3.8. Above: Turtle Mountain kettle lakes. A NASA Earth observatory aerial image of the kettle lakes and pothole marshes landscape found on the Turtle Mountain plateau. Lake Max is located at top center right. The area appears to be one-third water and two-thirds forest. The wetlands are shallow with seasonally varying depths. Precipitation is the source of all the fresh water, which is considerably more than on the surrounding prairie. Drainage is poor due to the uneven nature of the surface. It is not unusual to find nearly adjacent ponds at noticeably different elevations. Because the waters are shallow and contain little oxygen, most are unsuitable for fish populations but some, such as Adam, Bower, Max, and William lakes currently are periodically stocked with fish. The ponds and marshes, nevertheless, support a great variety of wildlife, including herons, cormorants, turtles, salamanders, muskrats, beavers, raccoons, mink and moose. *(www.earthobservatory.nasa.gov.)*

Figure 2.3.11. Below: Lakes and rivers in the BTNHR. Detail of a map of southern Manitoba, showing highways, railways, communities, IR communities, and parks in the greater BTNHR. It also effectively shows, within a single view, all the major river and drainage systems located within the BTNHR. Note the absense of natural waterways in the flat, former lake bottoms of glacial Lake Agassiz in the districts west of the Red River and glacial Lake Souris in the districts west and north of Whitewater Lake. *(Wier'60 :5.)*

Figure 2.3.9. Above: "*Y.M.C.A. Camping Ground, Pelican Lake, Manitoba.*" Period picture postcard showing boaters on Pelican Lake. After the railway came through Ninette in 1898, Pelican Lake became a popular tourist destination, with cabin rentals, camping grounds and resorts. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

Figure 2.3.12. Above: "*A Calm Day, Killarney, Man.*" Period postcard showing Killarney Lake, with town buldings visible on the far shore. *(Peels Postcards - U of AB.)*

Figure 2.3.10. Above: Whitewater Lake. View of the visitors lookout kiosk at Whitewater Lake. *(EdLed.)*

Whitewater Lake

Whitewater Lake is the largest body of open water in the BTNHR. It is, however, quite shallow and is, in fact, little more than a 14 km. (8.5 mi.) wide slough. It is also a remnant of former Glacial Lake Souris that covered this area for several thousand years. As noted, from 12,000 – 8000 years ago, the melting Wisconsin glacier created large lakes of meltwater in its wake. Lakes that formed to the west and north of Turtle Mountain during this time have been named Glacial lakes Hind and Souris. They existed for several thousands of years and were fed by glacial meltwaters flowing eastward, from what is now central Saskatchewan and Alberta. As the melting ice front retreated northward, these meltwaters found a more northerly new channel leading to Lake Agassiz in what is now the Assiniboine River valley. No longer being fed by replenishing meltwaters, lakes Hind and Souris slowly drained away and disappeared. What is now known as the Souris Plains is, in fact, the dried lake bed of Glacial lakes Hind and Souris, with today's Whitewater Lake being the final remnant of Glacial Lake Souris and the lowest part of the former lake bed. Being situated in the centre of what is actually a large shallow bowl-shaped depression, Whitewater Lake has no natural outlet. It is fed primarily by spring runoff, rainfall and creeks running off the Turtle Mountain highlands and has been known to dry up entirely for short periods.

Historically, Whitewater Lake has been a very important feature of the prairies. The surrounding grasslands attracted grazing bison, which led Aboriginal and Métis hunters to the area in pursuit of them. Similarly, the abundance of fur-bearing animals on the nearby Turtle Mountain uplands attracted many trappers and traders to the area. The marsh area surrounding the lake was the home of many fur-bearing animals which were trapped in great numbers. Muskrats from this marsh were larger and darker in colour than usual and had a much softer fur pelt and were highly sought after by trappers. The Lake is also an important migratory bird staging and stopover site. The Region's early pioneers noted that some flocks were so large that it took three days for them to pass over. Whitewater Lake is currently protected as a wildlife management area. Figure 2.3.10.

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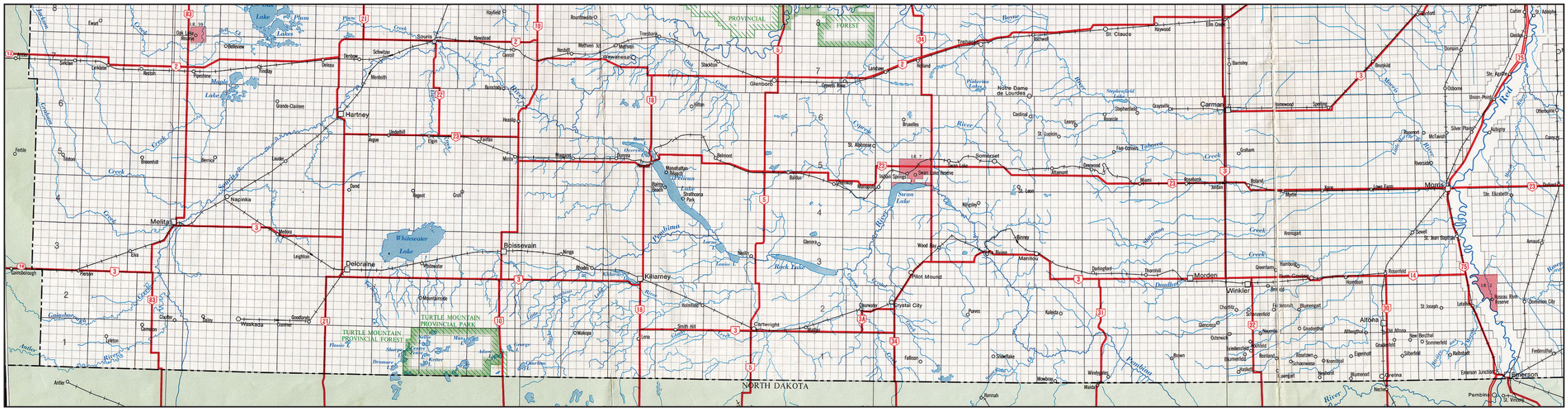

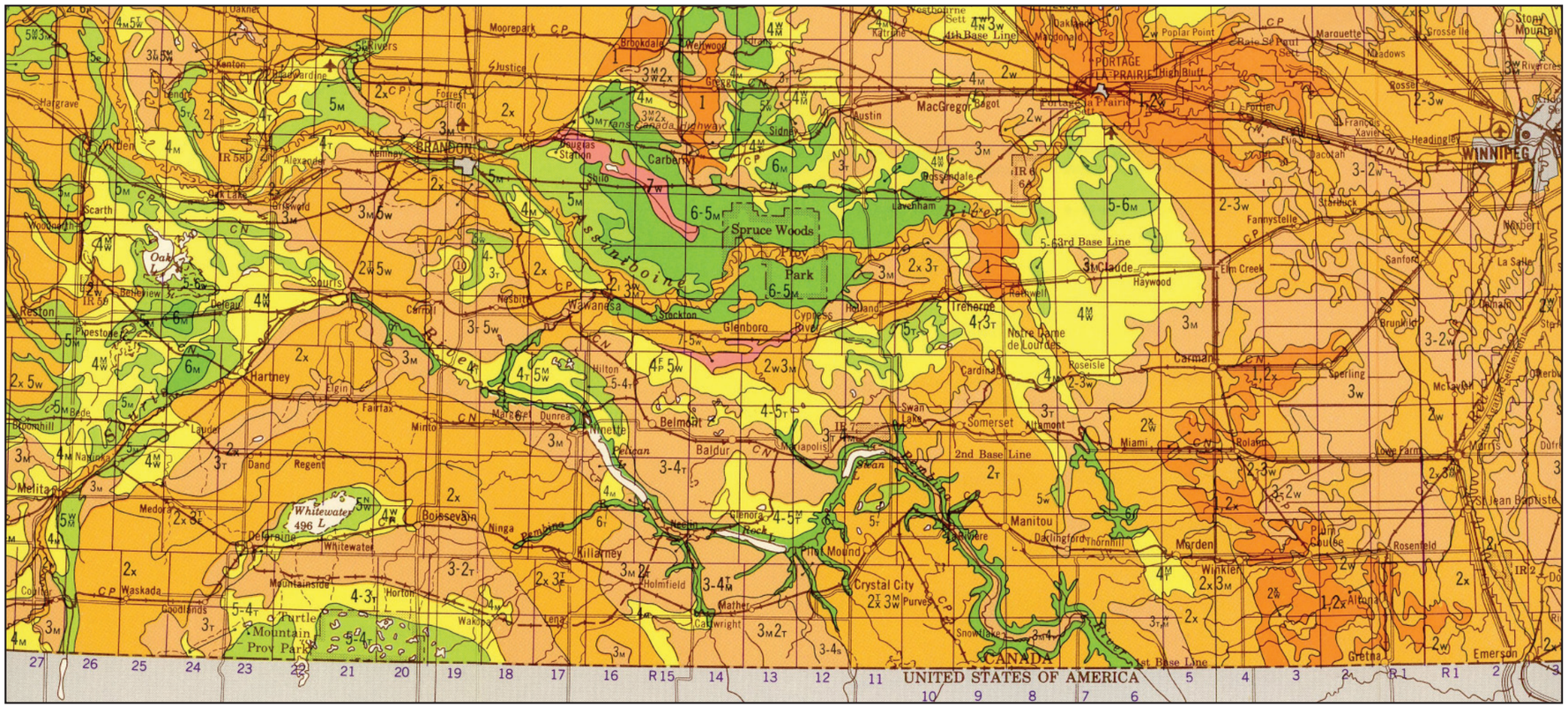

2.4 SOILS AND VEGETATION

After the glacial ice melted, the meltwaters drained and the surface of the glacial till mantle began to dry up, vegetation returned to the BTNHR. The first growth to return were evergreen forests of spruce and pine, which followed the slowly retreating ice front and its cooler and wetter environment. For many centuries following, prairie grassland vegetation dominated the landscape of what is now southern and central Manitoba. This is evidenced by archaeological discoveries of pre-contact period bison bones, spear points, grass pollens and seeds in locations much farther north than more recent similar finds. During this time, the open prairie landscape extended beyond the northern shores of present day Lake Winnipeg.

After thousands of years of annual growth and decay, a slowly deepening layer of soil was formed across the entire surface of southern Manitoba and the BTNHR. The composition and nature of the soils being developed varied depending upon local elevation and sub-surface glacial parent material, which favoured different types of vegetation. Some of it was rich and fertile and some of it thin and sandy, each depending on local conditions.

Because of its many glacial landscapes and deposits, the Boundary Trail Region possesses an unusually wide range of soil types, ranging from Class 1 to Class 5. The BTNHR is one of very few districts in Manitoba possessing Class 1 soils, notably in the Carman, Morden and Gretna areas where the land is stone-free and well-drained, and the soils deep and fertile. It has been referred to as Manitoba's "golden triangle", where multiple types of crops can be grown including fruit and vegetables. Class 5 and 6 (green areas) are steeply sloped, with sand and gravels being the underlying parent material. Most of the soils in the BTNHR range from Class 1 to 3, making the Region one of the Province's most productive agricultural areas.

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Figure 2.4.1. Above: Soil classifications.
Detail from a 1974 Canada Land Inventory Map showing soil classifications in southern Manitoba including the BTNHR. *(ECLD'74.)*

Colour code:

Reds - Class 1;
Oranges - Class 2;
Pink - Class 3;
Yellows - Class 4;
Light Green - Class 5;
Dark Green - Class 6.

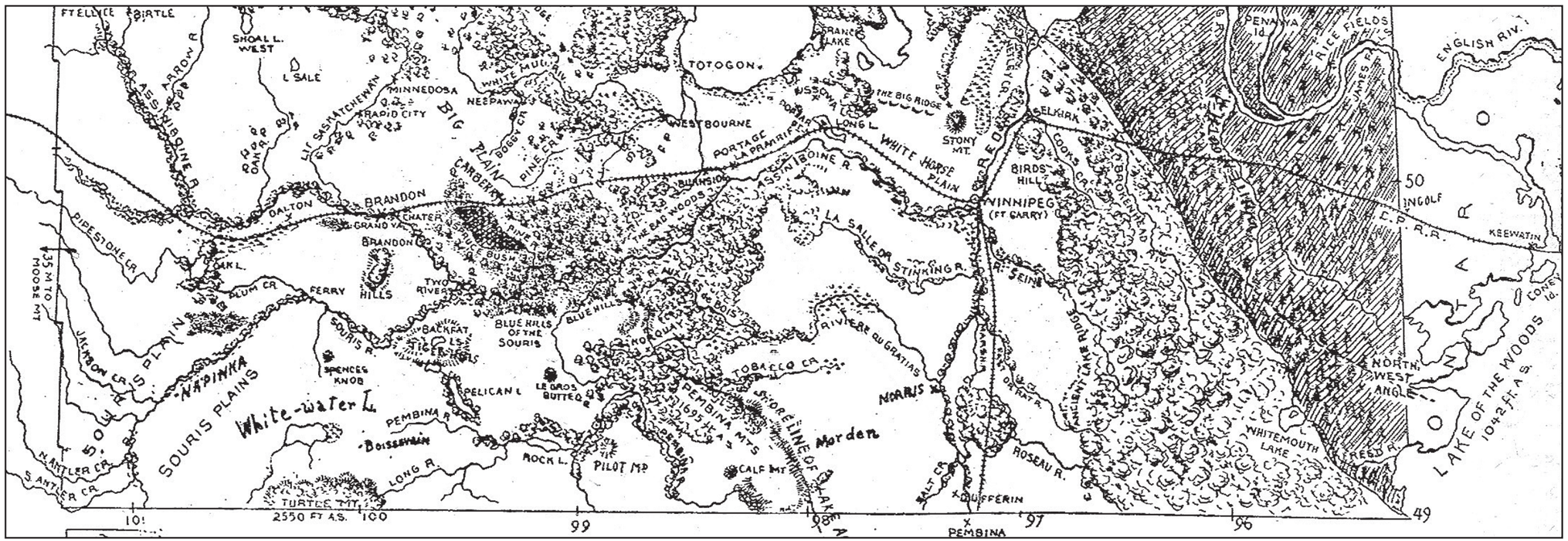


Figure 2.4.2. Right: Natural vegetation. Detail from a natural vegetation map drawn in 1905 by famed naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton who, for a time, homesteaded near Carberry. Despite its unusual design and age, the map has been shown to be a very accurate depiction of grasslands as well as forest uplands and "riverbottom" valleys. Soon after agricultural settlement took place, land clearing, lumbering and shelter-belt planting would completely change the natural distribution of grasslands and forests in and around the Boundary Trail region. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :456.)*

3.0 PRE-CONTACT INDIGENOUS 8,000 BP to 1730 AD

Mammoths, Burial Mounds and Buffalo Jumps

About 16,000 years ago, North American temperatures gradually began to rise and the huge glaciers began to melt. Nevertheless, it still took about 5000 more years before this ice had melted back north sufficiently to uncover southern Manitoba. Turtle Mountain was the first area to be freed of this massive ice pack and, by 11,000 BC, the Tiger Hills are believed to have also been ice free. As the ice receded northwards and the ice-front meltwaters drained away, spruce forests soon became established on the newly exposed ground, the northern tree-line following the retreating ice front. Despite the cool and damp conditions, spruce would have been able to grow on the glacial debris as soon as 50 years after the departure of the ice. As the land dried and the climate continued to grow drier and milder, ash, poplar and birch would have followed. As the forests spread over the Region, the land became capable of supporting wildlife,but the returning wildlife population diversity was limited, as the spruce forest vegetation would not have attracted big game animals nor the early human hunters following such game.

As the climate gradually became drier, during a period known as the "Altithermal" from about 8000 to 2500 BC, the forests were slowly replaced by prairie grasslands. In Manitoba, these grasslands extended considerably farther to the north than in more recent centuries. Vast areas, only recently covered with glacial moraine and outwash and meltwater lakes, now became ideal pastures for a variety of now-extinct animals. Archaeological remains show that these included ancient horses, camels, four-horned antelope, giant bison, armadillos, ground sloths, as well as the impressively large woolly mammoth and mastodon. Mammoth remains have been discovered in 15 separate locations in Manitoba. A section of mammoth tusk was recovered from a gravel pit near Boissevain, and is now in the Moncur Gallery in Boissevain. A well-preserved mammoth tooth was found in a gravel pit near La Rivière and is now on display in the Pilot Mound museum. The human population during the pre-contact era has been divided into three principal periods or phases by archaeologists, the Paleo, Meso and Neo Pre-Contat phases.

Paleo Pre-Contact Period - 10,000 to 5000 BC

With the change from spruce forests to open grasslands during the Altithermal period, ancient bison came in large numbers and the humans followed. Referred to by archaeologists as the "Paleo Pre-Contact" period, these Stone Age people arrived about 10,000 years ago from the plains to the south and southwest where periodic drought drove wildlife and human populations northward in search of food and water. The various cultures of early Indigenous people that lived and hunted in the northern Great Plains, including what is now southern Manitoba, are identified by archaeologists through the design of the stone points with which they tipped their weapons.

The oldest archaeological culture of the Paleo Pre-Contact group, the Clovis Culture, is named for a town in New Mexico where their stone tool artifacts were first discovered. This Indigenous group developed distinctive, finely made stone spear points that were sharp enough to penetrate the thick hides of the Ice Age mammoths and bison they hunted. Generally, "Clovis Points" are four to five inches long with nearly parallel sides close to the base. Carefully thinned and extremely sharp, the edges near the base are deliberately dulled in order not to cut the lashing used to attach the point to the shaft. Particularly characteristic is the thinning of the base at the point where the split spear shaft was hafted to the point. Figure 3.2.

Because Manitoba was still largely buried beneath glacial ice during the main period of the Clovis Culture, approximately 12,000 years ago, Clovis artifacts are understandably rare in this province. Only four or five Clovis points have been discovered in Manitoba and are believed to be about 10,000 years old. One of these was picked up on Section 36-1-8, eight mi. south of Darlingford. This flint point, only a little more than three inches long, is the hard evidence that the earliest known people on the North American continent, the Clovis people, were present in southern Manitoba and explored and hunted in Turtle Mountain. It is believed that the Clovis people hunted primarily mammoth and big-horned bison and their presence in southern Manitoba was fairly short-lived, given the rarity of Clovis artifacts. Figure 3.1.

After the departure of the Clovis people, the mammoth and the big-horned bison were in turn hunted by the Folsom people, who invented the use of the "atlatl" to increase the killing power of the spear. This simple invention, consisting of a stick with a notched end into which the butt end of the spear was placed, greatly increased the strength and velocity by which spears could be thrown. There is speculation that the spear thrower was so efficient in hunting mammoths and mastodons that this single innovation contributed to the extinction of "mega" sized mammals on the North American continent such as mammoths, mastodons, sloth and giant bison. The Folsom points used from approximately 8000 to 5000 BC, have been found in locations across the BTNHR. When the mammoth and big-horned bison were hunted into extinction, a species of smaller bison, or buffalo as they are more popularly called, took their place on the grasslands. Spears were the principal weapons of the Region's hunters for the first 5000 years of human occupation in the BTNHR, bows and arrows being a relatively modern invention in North America. Figure 3.5.

Meso Pre-Contact Period - 5000 BC to 500 BC

As the climate became drier and warmer and grasslands replaced the forests on the northern Great Plains, the somewhat better-watered parkland areas and highlands, such as Turtle Mountain, provided welcome refuge for wildlife and human populations from the frequently drought-stricken southern plains. Weapon points during this period underwent change in both shape and style, and a hunter's arsenal now included darts and lances as well as spears. Another new innovation that appeared during this period was the use of native copper, which was used to make everyday tools, weapon points, knives and fish gaffs. The copper originated in the Upper Great Lakes Region, indicating a trading network and group migration from that region. Another Meso period

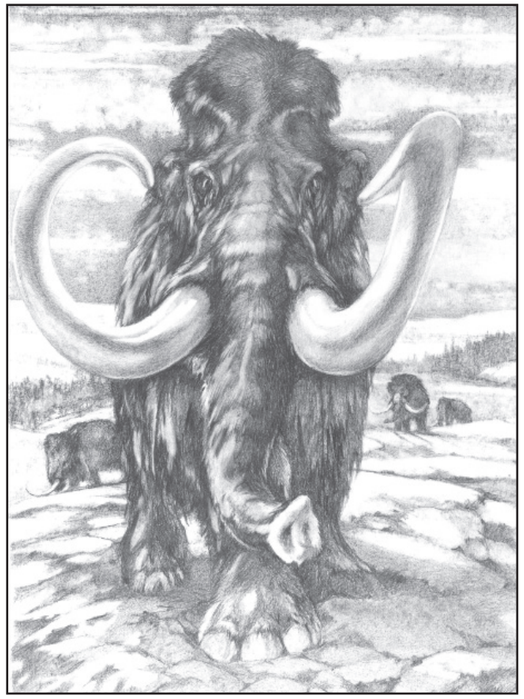


Figure 3.1. Above: Post-glacial wildlife. The southwestern portion of the Province was repopulated by mammoths when the glaciers retreated some 10,000 years ago. By 8000 years ago, the climate warmed to the point where the habitat changed significantly. This, perhaps with centuries of hunting, brought about the animal's extinction. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.2. Above: Clovis projectile point. Clovis and Folsom stone points are characterized by "flutings", the removal of a large flake from one or both sides from the base of the point to thin it to be more easily fitted into a split end of a wooden or bone shaft. (*Wikipedia)*

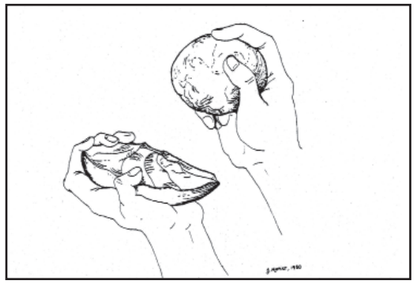


Figure 3.3. Above: Stone tools. Stone-chipping techniques, hard-hammer free-hand percussion used to create a rough point. *(HRB.)*

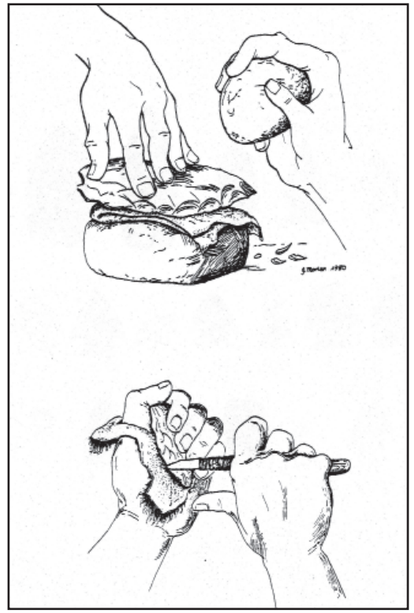


Figure 3.4. Right: Stone tools. Stone-chipping techniques, direct hard-hammer percussion using an "anvil stone"; and pressure flaking, whereby the finishing touches are applied to delicate stone tools. *(HRB.)*

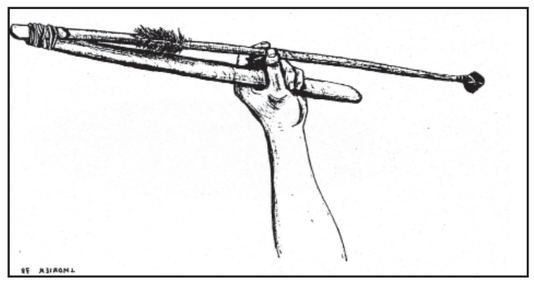
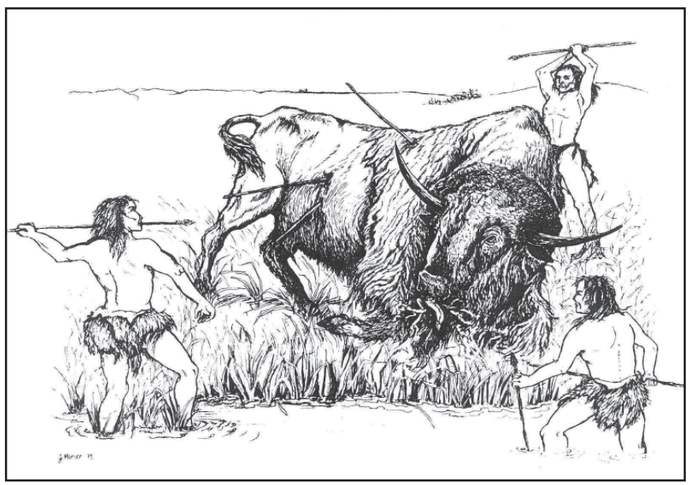


Figure 3.5. Above: Atlatl. The "atlatl" or throwing board was used by the Paleo-Indians to bring down large game. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.6. Left: Folsom point. Many stone projectile tips, such as this Folsom point, have been surface collected throughout the BTNHR since the pioneer settlement days. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.7. Right: Ancient bison. With the disappearance of the spruce forest and its replacement with grassland, southwestern Manitoba became the home of large numbers of ancient bison and home to the Clovis people. This scene was no doubt a common one in the BTNHR around 8000 BC. *(HRB.)*



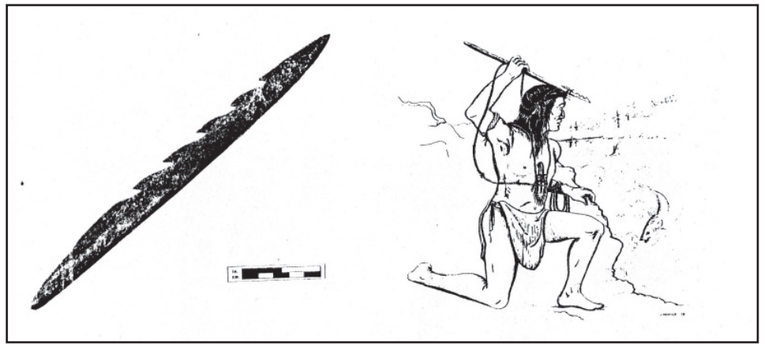


Figure 3.8. Above: Fishing. A bone harpoon and its use, southern Manitoba. *(HRB :Jan Morier.)*

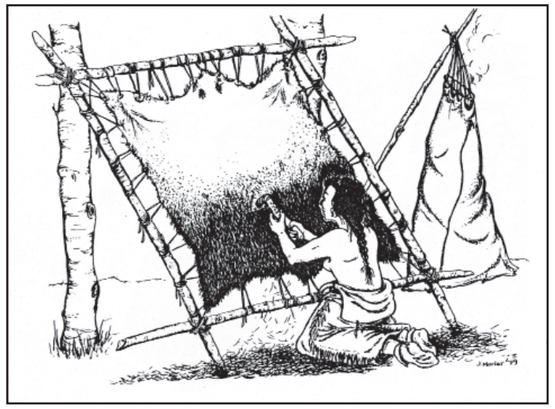


Figure 3.9. Above: Leather working. Dehairing and smoking hides. Like stone-chipping, the hide-working industry was a common occupation throughout Manitoba's pre-history. *(HRB :Jan Morier.)*

Figure 3.10. Above: Pottery making. Neo-Indian period pottery making (left) building the walls of the vessel by coiling clay "strings" and (right) using a paddle and anvil to weld the coils together and thin the vessel walls. *(HRB :Jan Morier.)*

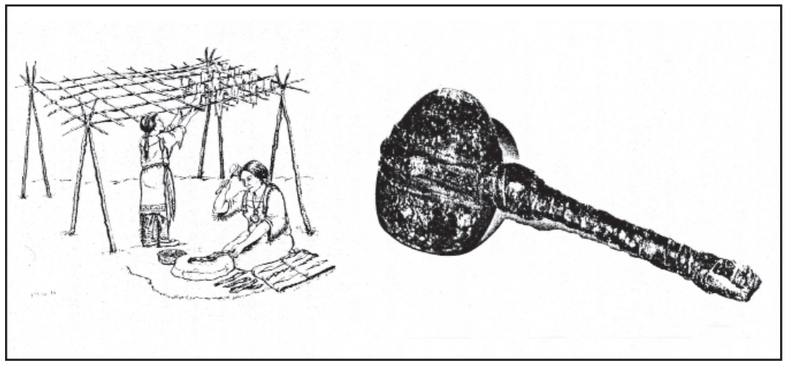


Figure 3.11 Above: Meat hammers. Drying meat with the use of a rack and pounding dried meat with a "grooved maul" or stone hammerhead. These Neo-Indian artifacts are among the most commonly found objects in the BTNHR. *(HRB.)*

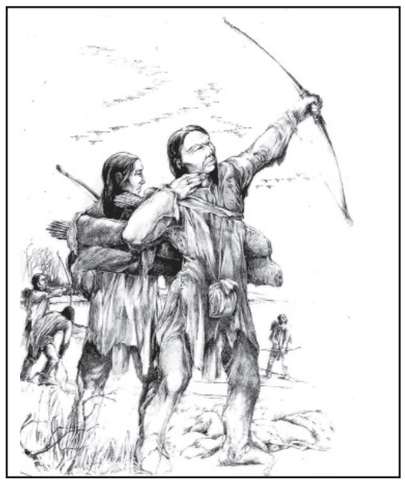


Figure 3.12. Above: Waterfowl hunting. The invention of the bow and arrow resulted in greater success hunting waterfowl. *(HRB :Larry Jameson.)*

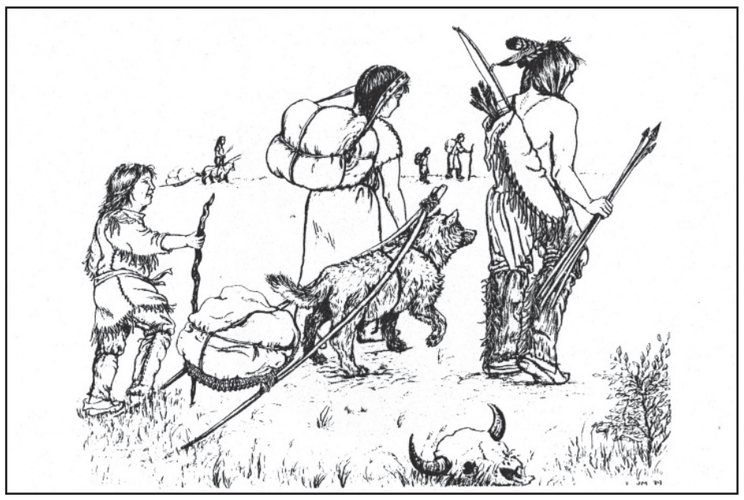


Figure 3.13. Above. Neo Culture. Neo-Indian nomads, showing the use of the dog travois prior to the advent of the horse. *(HRB :Jan Morier.)*

innovation was shell-working. Freshwater clams were collected along major river systems and lake shores and used mostly for body ornament, but also as scrapers and small bowls. The clams would have been a seasonal food item.

Similar to the earlier Paleo Pre-Contact period, bone-working continued, but bone was now also being made into barbed harpoons for fishing. The harpoons and fish bones found in archaeological digs indicate that fishing was likely commonplace in southern Manitoba, with sturgeon bones positively identified. Bones found at digs at former campsites show that beaver, deer, canids (wolves, foxes, etc.) and rabbits were also being hunted by Meso groups in southwestern Manitoba. Only small amounts of duck bones were present indicating little success hunting waterfowl by the Meso period people, as this time pre-dated the use of the bow and arrow.

On the other hand, the distinct abundance of skin working stone tools found by the Province's archaeologists points to considerable use of leather and hides for clothing and shelter. Another interesting archaeological find stemming from this period were remains of cooking pits, evidenced by fire-cracked rocks in filled-in pits, pointing to roasting as a mean of food preparation. *(Pittipas'81.)*

Neo Pre-Contact Period - 500 BC to 1650 AD

In terms of found artifacts, the roughly 2000 year long "Neo Pre-Contact" period offered the richest and most complex finds, indicating a fairly sophisticated and well-developed society. There were many new innovations, among them pottery making. Remains of large round-bottomed jars have been found in several locations. These vessels would have been used for carrying water and boiling food. Impressions on many of these pots point to fabric making. Dip and gill nets were also being made, possibly using leather thongs and, perhaps, plant fabric, evidenced by found net sinker stones.

Stone and bone working became very sophisticated during this time, which now included grinding and polishing of stones. In addition to hide scrapers, weapon points and net sinkers, grooved hammer stones were commonplace items. Stone woodworking tools, such as adzes and axes, were also being made. This allowed for the construction of corrals or "pounds" into which bison would be chased and slaughtered. A site near the forks of the Souris and North Antler Rivers is known to have been a long-term bison run site. For thousands of years prior to the use of bison pounds as a hunting technique, Indigenous groups drove bison herds off cliffs and into gullies where they could be more easily killed, such as at the Clay Banks site near Cartwright. The post holes found near the North Antler River give clear evidence of wood working in the construction and maintenance of this particular bison corral.

Stone chipping continued to develop with very fine detailed work being done. Significantly, and for the first time, there is clear evidence that stone arrowheads were being fashioned, indicating the appearance of the bow and arrow. This new innovation allowed for the hunting of more waterfowl, which is evidenced by bone fragments found in former campsites from this period. The use of the bow and arrow and bison corrals allowed for the acquisition of considerable amounts of meat all at one time. This made it possible to support a larger number of people and the Indigenous population very likely grew significantly during this period, as it did after the acquisition of horses during the early post-contact Indigenous period.

Bone working during this period also showed development and growth. Digging hoes made from deer shoulder blades indicate that some type of agriculture was being undertaken. Bone awls and needles similarly provide evidence of leather working. Harpoon heads show fishing was occurring. Fleshing tools were made from the large bones of hoofed animals. Whistles were being made from bird bones and beaver teeth were used as chisels. Freshwater shells were used as paint dishes, with evidence of ochre found in several examples. Salt water shells from the Gulf of Mexico were used for making beads and pendants, indicating trading connections involving great distances. In addition to the wild game, fish and freshwater clams, berries and fruit also served as a fairly reliable food source. This overall abundance of food resulted in the development of food storing pits, with several oval-shaped storage pits being found in Manitoba. Many museums in BTNHR contain large and interesting "arrowhead" collections, as do many farm collections in the region, landowners having discovered items on their fields over the decades. Stone points and other artifacts can be seen at several local museums, including in Darlingford and Deloraine. *(Pittipas'81.)*

Burial Mounds

In the western districts of the BTNHR, earthen mounds abound on the landscape in sizes large and small. Most, like the Turtle Mountain plateau itself, are remnant outcrops of hard Cretaceous Period shales that withstood the glacial scouring of the last ice age, leaving isolated bedrock "bumps" on the landscape. These were then covered with a mantle of glacial till as the glacier melted back, increasing their height. Some of these "mounds" include Pilot Mound, Star Mound, Calf Mountain, Spence's Knoll and Mount Nebo. On top of many of these heights of land, Indigenous people of the Neo Pre-contact Period constructed small mounds of soil to serve as burial places for the deceased.

The burial mounds found in the BTNHR are believed to have been built by nomadic bison hunters between 500 AD and 1730 AD during the last thousand or so years of the Pre-Contact period. Some archaeologists, such as William Nickerson, who excavated several mounds during the early 1900s, suggested they were built by people associated with, or influenced by, the vibrant Siouan culture which was centered in the Mississippi River valley region during this time. Other scholars attribute the burial mounds to the Assiniboine people, who occupied the region during the early days of the fur trade.

Because of their high visibility on the landscape, the Region's many mounds naturally attracted the attention of explorers, fur traders, travellers and, later, settlers. Prominent individuals such as Henry Youle Hind excavated a burial mound near the Souris River in 1857; John Schultz and Reverend George Bruce, prominent

Winnipeg figures, excavated several mounds during the 1870s and 1880s. Charles Bells, a Wolseley Expedition member, carried out his own excavations during the later 1880s, (page 48). These, along with other unpublicized excavations, were not professionally conducted or recorded and amounted to little more than grave robbing.

The first "bona fide" anthropological investigation of the BTNHR's burial mounds was undertaken in 1909 by University of Toronto professor Henry Montgomery. A prominent American anthropologist, William Baker Nickerson, was commissioned by the National Museum in Ottawa to investigate Manitoba's mounds between 1912 and 1915. He excavated sites at Manitou, Morden, Darlingford, Pilot Mound and Melita, as well as sites along the Pembina River and north of the Assiniboine River. During the 1940s, the Region's mounds were inspected by Manitoba archaeologist Chris Vickers and, again more recently by Dr. Leigh Syms, former Manitoba Museum curator and University of Brandon's Dr. Bev Nicholson. Descriptions of their findings were printed in several publications, which can be located online, including on the BTNHR and Manitoba Historical Society websites. The Region's burial mounds, and what remains of their contents, are now protected historic sites under *The Heritage Resources Act (1986)*. The Sourisford Linear Mounds site has been declared a national historic site. This is one of many sites in the Region where the BTNHR has erected site information kiosks.

Bison Jumps and Corrals

Neo Pre-contact presence in the BTNHR is also evidenced by the discovery of several "buffalo jump" and kill sites, two of which have been investigated by provincial archaeologists. One, known as the Clay Banks Bison Jump, is located north of Cartwright near the confluence of Badger Creek and the Pembina River; and the second, known as the Brockinton Site, is located about 16 km. (10 mi.) south of Melita, near the forks of the Antler and Souris Rivers. Figure 3.16.

At Clay Banks, archaeologists found the remains of an ancient campsite and a nearby jump and butchering site. The many artifacts found and studied permitted the investigators to get a clearer picture and understanding of the lives of the people who occupied this site. The projectile points found at this site are known as Sonota points and date from between 250 and 600 AD.

Hunting bison was a very complex and strategic activity. The use of cliffs, such as at Clay Banks, was only one hunting method. In this scenario, a man, very likely covered in a bison hide, slowly approached a bison herd, pretending to be an injured calf. He counted on the maternal instinct of the female bison to lure the others slowly toward the cliff. Piles of rocks and brush would have been lined up to direct the herd to the exact desired location. At the right moment, women and older children would jump up from behind the stone piles, yelling and waving blankets. The startled animals would stampede over the cliff. At the bottom was a corral compound built to contain the less injured animals until they could be killed. Butchering the carcasses occurred on site, with the meat processed in the nearby campsite.

The Brockinton Archaeological Site is situated on the east bank of the Souris River near its confluence with the Antler River near the US border south of Melita. This archaeological site is significant for having been occupied by three separate pre-contact cultures over a 1200 year period. The bison kill and butchering site component of it stems from around 800 AD. It is quite unusual, as the Indigenous people who built it installed a series of vertical posts at the bottom of the Souris River Valley, rather than simply piling stones and brush. Bison would be herded down the steep valley side to run tripping and tumbling into the structure. Archaeologists suggest that this was likely a more efficient method of killing bison than driving herds over a high cliff, as it would have resulted in a minimum of bone breakage. A very large number of small side-notched arrows were also found at the site.

It is also evident that, after its use, the Brockinton pound was dismantled and re-erected, likely, many times over. Most of the post holes discovered had been filled in with vertically placed bison bones and small stones, allowing them to be easily uncovered for pound construction in the next season or next visit to the area. The existence of former post holes also indicates that stone blades and axes were being used for "wood working" purposes. Although not the only site where bison run associated post holes have been discovered, the Brockinton jump site is one of the first and certainly the best documented cases of such a rare occurrence on the Prairies.

Calf Mountain Burial Mound

- Alexander Henry the Younger was one of many early fur traders and explorers who made note of the site currently known as Calf Mountain. Few features of southern Manitoba aroused the curiosity of early travellers as much as Calf Mountain and, from this modest-sized mound, trails led in many directions, including a major trail to the Missouri River. Alexander Henry the Younger visited in 1806; he refers to it in his journals as the "Tete de Boeuf" (Buffalo Head)." He wrote: "*At daybreak, we were on horseback; our roads still worse than yesterday, being marshy for several leagues, until we came to Tete de Boeuf, where we arrived at ten o'clock and unloaded. This appears to be the highest land of the mountain. From this elevated station, the prospect is extensive in every direction except on the north, where strong wood is near at hand. In other directions, the land appears to fall in all directions for a considerable distance. There is a small lake, about half a mile in circumference, at the south end of which stands a small hillock in the shape of a beehive. On the top of this, the Assiniboines and Crees are very particular to make sacrifices of tobacco and other trifles, and to collect a certain number of bull's heads, which they daub with red earth, and deposit on the summit, the nose always pointing to the east.*" *(HRB.)*

- John Palliser, half a century later in 1857, dubbed it "*Beef Lodge*" and noted it as "*a very curious hill.*" Two years later, the William Hind expedition preferred the name "*Calf's Tent"* hill." Figure 3.20.

The first recorded excavations, undertaken by local residents, took place in September 1886 when a number of buffalo skulls, human bones and Indigenous relics were uncovered. Dr. Henry Montgomery, of the University of Toronto, conducted the first systematic excavations at the mound in the fall of 1909. He discovered, in addition to large numbers of buffalo bones, 20 human skeletons. Of particular interest was the

Figure 3.14. Above: BTNHR Pre-contact Indigenous artifacts. A collection of stone tools and blades on display at the Darlingford Museum. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 3.16. Above: Bison run. Drawing of a Neo Pre-Contact period "bison run", over the lip of a gully into a timber-fence corral. This scene would have been very similar to that at a former bison run discovered in the Sourisford district, south of Melita. Other bison run sites, with extensive subsurface bone beds, have been discovered in several locations in the BTNHR along the Souris and Pembina rivers. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.18. Above: Archaeological digs. Photograph of one of many Boundary Trail Region burial mounds investigated by Chris Vickers in 1946 and 1947. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.15. Above: Stone points. Many farm families in the BTNHR have built up impressive collections of surface collected stone points and tools brought up to the surface during field cultivation. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.17. Above: Meso Pre-Contact period pottery. Photograph of the reassembled remains of Meso Pre-Contact Period pottery discovered by provincial archaeologists. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.19. Above: Bone bed. A provincial archaeological dig showing a bone bed being slowly and carefully excavated. *(HRB.)*

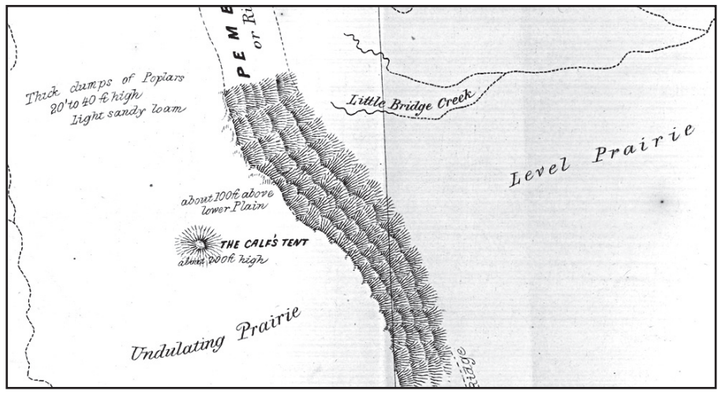


Figure 3.20. Above: The Calf's Tent. The Calf's Tent (Calf Mountain) shown on an 1859 Hind Expedition map. Known by many names, this isolated modest-sized mound served as a burial and ceremonial site, a lookout site, and marked the nearby crossroads of two major early trails. *(Hind'60 :foldout.)*

Figure 3.21. Above: BTNHR interpretive signage. A photo of a BTHR erected information kiosk at the Linear Mounds National Historic Site. 2000. *(BTHR.)*

Figure 3.22. Above: Archaeology. Manitoba archaeologist, Chris Vickers and assistant screening for small artifacts. 1947. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.23. Above: Burial mound artifacts. One of several Indigenous shell artifacts found in Calf Mountain by Dr. Henry Montgomery. It was about six inches (15 cm.) tall and exhibited carvings on both sides. On the convex side was a stylized face with eye holes, likely for a cord. On the much-worn concave side were remains of carvings, "*of probably a mythical creature, a combination of a man, a turtle and a beaver.*" *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.24. Above: BTNHR interpretive signage. Clay Banks Buffalo Jump Heritage Site information kiosk north of Cartwright. Extensive bone beds have been discovered at the cliff base and evidence of a large campsite in the large level area to the left of the drop site and butchering area. The entire site is now protected from any alteration. *(EdLed.)*

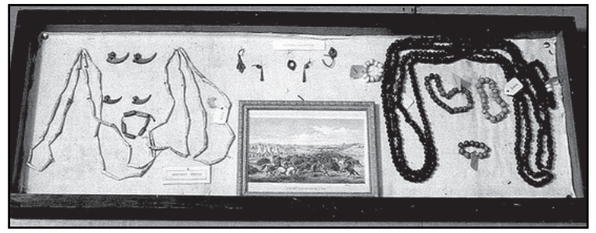


Figure 3.25. Above: Archaeology. Display of some of the artifacts Chris Vickers located during his archaeological investigations in the Boundary Trail Region during the late 1940s. *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.26. Above: Archaeology. Archaeological dig at a BTNHR pre-contact burial site in 1947. Indigenous burial sites in Manitoba are now protected under *The Heritage Resources Act (1986).* *(HRB.)*

Figure 3.27. Above: Star Mound. A 2019 photograph of Star Mound taken from the southwest. Just visible on the summit is a row of spruce trees and the relocated one-room Star Mound schoolhouse which now serves as a district museum. Also located on the summit is a burial mound that is believed to have originally been in the shape of a beaver. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 3.28. Above: Star Mound. BTNHR interpretive sign at the Star Mound Schoolhouse Museum. *(EdLed.)*

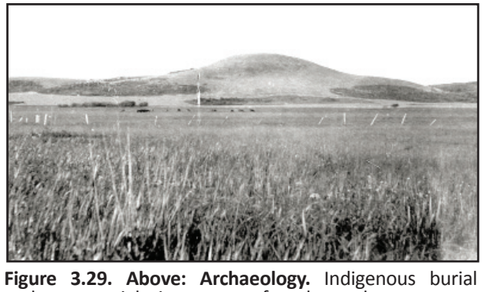


Figure 3.29. Above: Archaeology. Indigenous burial and ceremonial sites were often located on or near natural mounds and high points, such as the one above photographed by Chris VIckers in 1946. *(HRB.)*

discovery of beads manufactured from copper native to Michigan and large seashells from the Gulf of Mexico, each bearing an engraved human face. He believed these artifacts date to around 1500 AD. The mound, and what remains of its contents, is now a protected archeological and Indigenous sacred site. Figure 3.18.

Star Mound Burials

Star Mound serves as an excellent example of the Region's many burial mound sites. This 1.5 km. (1 mi.) long by 1 km. wide elevation has been known by many names, the oldest likely being *Nebogwawin* sometimes spelled as *Nebogwain* Butte, but also known as *Merry Dance Mountain*, *Dry Dance Hill*, *Big Dance Hill*, *Paquewin Hill,* and *Hill of the Great Medicine Dance*. The name "Star Mound" was first used by archaeologists in reference to the star-shaped cluster of burial mounds located on the hill top.

The main burial mound was originally some 21 m. (70 ft.) in diameter and up to 2 m. (6 ft.) in height and appeared to be shaped in the outline of a beaver. It was excavated by William Nickerson in 1912 and 1914. He uncovered several graves of adults and children interred in a sitting position. He also found artifacts including stone blades and fleshing stones, small stone points, a large stone spear point, some pottery shards and several bushels of food bones, mostly bison but some fish and birds. More significant finds included a "hammered-copper" axe head, a piece of sheet copper, and a decorative sea shell, later identified as coming from the Gulf of Mexico. A bison bone from the main mound was radiocarbon dated to 885 AD, and it is believed that most of the burial mounds in southwestern Manitoba were built at roughly this time. After Nickerson was done, the soil was replaced with the use of a horse-scraper, but much of its original appearance was lost. The three nearby smaller circular mounds have likewise been destroyed over time. There were also apparently numerous hut rings found along the base of the mound's southern slope, along with former bison wallows, rub stones and cart and wagon ruts.

- Dr. Henry Haxo, a translator of the La Vérendrye journals, made reference to Star Mound in an article published in the *North Dakota Historical Quarterly,* and quoted on an site information sheet posted in the Star Mound Schoolhouse Museum. "*The route used by La Vérendrye from Fort La Reine, followed an old trail used by the Great Plains Indian to reach the Hudson's Bay Company post at York Factory on Hudson Bay. According to the Chippewa Indians at Ponemah Red Lake, Minnesota, this height of land was the site of an ancient earth lodge village where they were accustomed, from early times, to trade their furs for the goods of the white man which came from the far north. By the time La Vérendrye had built Fort La Reine in 1738, the village was no longer occupied and the Chippewas had to travel the whole distance to Hudson Bay for the goods they once traded for at Star Mound.*" *(NDHQ'44.)*

- Artist Paul Kane, another famous visitor noted in this same information sheet, visited in 1822. In his published journal, he writes, "*The following day we passed Dry Dance Mountain, where the Indians, before going on a war-party, have a custom of dancing and fasting for three days and nights. This practise is always observed by young warriors going to battle for the first time, to accustom them to the privations and fatigues which they must expect to undergo, and to prove their strength and endurance. Should any sink under the fatigue and fasting of this ceremony, they are invariably sent back to camp where the women and children remain.*" *(Star Mound Museum info sheet'16.)*

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4.0 THE FUR TRADE 1670 to 1870 AD

Explorers, Traders and Map Makers

The BTNHR possesses an exceptionally rich fur trade era history. While its largely prairie/parkland natural landscape prevented it producing large numbers of furs and pelts, the Region was, nevertheless, well known to fur traders and explorers throughout the entire 200 year interior fur trade period. It was the location of some of the earliest fur trading posts and most significant events, and its rivers and forests were explored by some of the best-known fur traders and map makers. It was also the first region in the west to be a source of pemmican, the main food for the canoe and ox cart freighting brigades. And it was the birthplace of the famous Red River Cart and home to some of the earliest Métis settlements in western Canada. The following is a brief history of the interior fur trade with specific reference to the Red River region and the BTNHR.

The Early Years - French vs English

The fabled Northwest Passage was the prize the earliest explorers, such as Henry Hudson in 1610 and Thomas Button in 1612, were searching for, as it was for many others who followed them. What they found instead was the bleak, barren shore of Hudson Bay which did not offer a way to China; however, it gave early promise of furs, much valued in Europe at the time. It remained for two Frenchmen, Radisson and Groseilliers, who in 1681, by land, traveled to and explored the region south of Hudson and James Bays, returning to Montreal with many valuable furs to confirm the region's great abundance. Because of a quarrel with the authorities in New France, the two explorers transferred their services to England. In 1668, Groseilliers sailed into James Bay on the "*Nonsuch*" and returned to England the next year with a rich cargo of furs. As a result of this success, the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) or "the Governor and Company of Adventurers of England trading into Hudson's Bay" was formed in 1670 by Royal Charter granted by King Charles II, giving the Company exclusive trading rights to the Hudson Bay watershed. It was destined to become the oldest company in the world.

Over the next few years, the HBC constructed and staffed three trading posts on James Bay, Forts Charles, Albany, and Moose. Over the next few decades, as these posts attracted more and more Indigenous traders, the HBC built three additional "tidewater" posts on the shores of Hudson Bay at the mouths of the Severn, Nelson and Churchill Rivers. York Factory, at the mouth of the Nelson River, would later become a significant distribution point and trading post for the HBC.

While the English fur traders were coming to present day Manitoba by sea, the French, also in search of the "western sea", were coming by land. Pierre Gaultier de Varennes, Sieur de La Vérendrye, the first European to explore what is now southern Manitoba, established a series of forts in the Red River-Lake Winnipeg regions during the 1730s. These included Fort Maurepas at the mouth of the Red River, Fort Rouge at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, Fort La Reine on the Assiniboine River near Portage la Prairie, Fort Dauphin in 1739 near Lake Winnipegosis, and Fort Bourbon in 1741 on Cedar Lake near the mouth of the Saskatchewan River. These trading posts began to intercept much of the Indigenous fur traffic headed to the HBC posts on the shores of Hudson Bay.

End of the French Fur Trade

The French-administered fur trade ended in 1760 when, following the Battle of the Plains of Abraham in 1759, New France was ceded to Britain. Very quickly, however, the new English business elite, taking up residence in Quebec and Montreal, set up their own operations in pursuit of the rich fur trade the French had lost. Many of the posts and employees were much the same as under the French, only with different bosses. These independent fur traders initially used French Canadian "coureur des bois" to paddle their canoes from Montreal to the western plains, trade with the resident Indigenous groups for their furs, and bring those furs to Montreal. The fierce competition amongst themselves and the enormously expensive distances involved, led to a union of most of the investors into the North West Company (NWC) in 1784. The XY Fur Trade Company (XYC) was also formed at this time and, for a time, successfully competed with its larger rivals. There were also a number of short-lived "Canadian independent" traders and American Fur Company posts constructed in what is now southern Manitoba in the years immediately following the fall of New France.

After the formation of the NWC and XYC trading companies, competition with the HBC increased significantly, with all three companies building new trading posts in an attempt to get the Natives' furs before the others could. Between 1790 and 1816, about 15 different trading posts were established in the Brandon-Swan River district, along with a similar number being built in the lower Red and Assiniboine River districts. Most of the heavy manual labour in the fur trade, especially in the NWC, was undertaken by mixed-blood French-Catholic Métis workers, with English-Protestant "Country Born" workers supplying the labour for HBC operations.

This early fur trade period was a time of intense competition, especially between the NWC and the HBC. During this period, the major companies frequently moved the locations of their posts, all of which were located along the region's waterways, which served as the main transportation routes. Large freighter canoes and "bateaux" (flat bottomed rafts) were the main watercraft at the time. Eventually, longer-lived major posts were established at strategic locations along the waterways. Employees stationed at these regional posts were often sent out to establish small sub-posts or "wintering houses" at one or two days travel distance from the main post to intercept Indigenous hunters and trappers before they were able to journey to rival posts. These wintering houses were often abandoned after only two or three years, especially if they did not take in sufficient furs, pelts or pemmican to make the venture profitable.

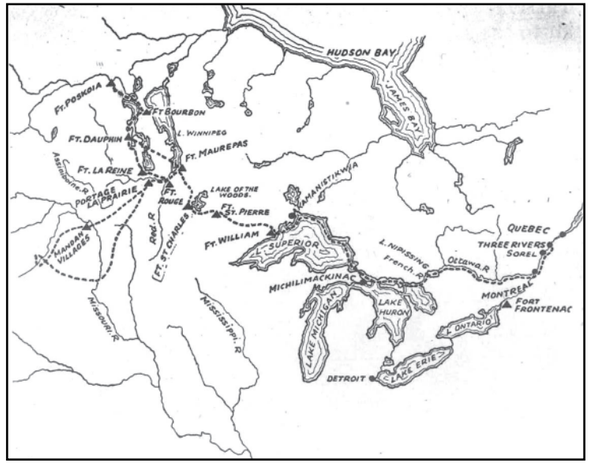

Figure 4.1. Above: French era explorations. Map showing La Vérendrye's explorations and posts in the Lake Winnipeg-Red River valley region during the 1730s. *(HRB.)*

Figure 4.3. Above: French era posts. An artist's impression of a French era fur trading post being visited by Indigenous traders. Uniformed French soldiers, such as the one depicted in the illustration, were often assigned to protect French trading posts during the early fur trade era. *(HBCA.)*

Figure 4.4. Right: Fort La Fourche des Roseaux. Part of an 1737 map showing La Vérendrye's western posts and explorations. While he did not establish any permanent fur trade posts in what is now the BTNHR, a short-lived minor post was apparently constructed at the confluence of the Red and Roseau Rivers in 1732. The fort site was noted on his 1737 map as "La Fourche" (circled). At the time, the Roseau River was used as the main route into the Red River valley from Lake of the Woods. The post was likely primarily used as a "half-way house" between the more important Fort St. Charles and Fort Maurepas. Roseau River House is more importantly remembered as the site where La Vérendrye's nephew, Christophe Dufrost de La Jemeraye, second in command of operations, took sick and passed away on May 10, 1736, during a trip between the two aforementioned posts. He is recognized as the very first European to die and be buried in western Canada. The Village of Dufrost, established many years later, commemorates his memory. *(Burpee'27 :116.)*

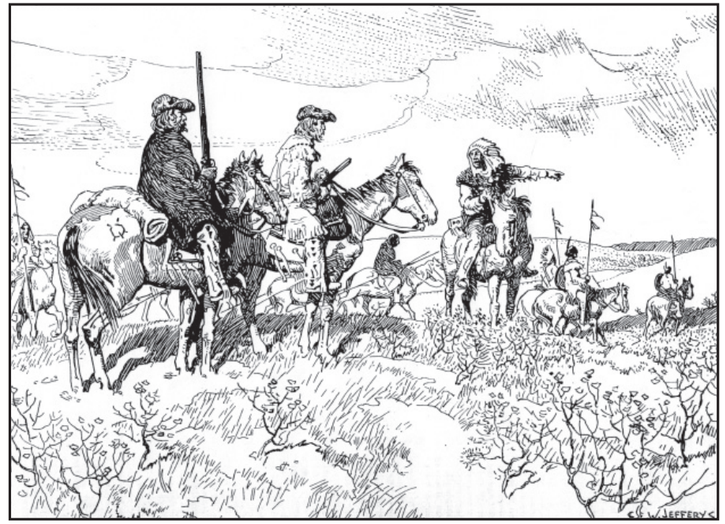

Figure 4.2. Above: La Vérendrye's explorations. The first European known to have entered the present BTNHR was Pierre Gaultier de Varnennes, Sieur de La Vérendrye, the Quebec-based fur trader, who travelled through what is now the BTNHR in 1738. La Vérendrye was one of the earliest and most famous explorers of western Canada. Between 1731 and 1759, he and his sons established a series of trading posts stretching from Lake Superior to southwestern Manitoba. For a time, La Vérendrye based his operations at Fort La Reine, near present day Portage la Prairie and sent exploring expeditions north and south from there. North, resulting in the establishment of forts Dauphin and Pasquia, and south to meet and trade with the Mandan Indians along the Missouri River. During his trip to the Mandans in 1738, he followed a well-established Native trail which passed over the Pembina Hills and on to Turtle Mountain. His journal entries concerning this trip, noted in part, "*We were far from being able to follow a straight road. For every three leagues we made in a straight line we travelled four or five. From the First Mountain (Pembina) to the second (Turtle) the whole route lay in a prairie country, but with a succession of hills and valleys which it is fatiguing to climb up and down several times in a day.*" From this and other journal entries, it seems likely that his party camped overnight at present day Calf Mountain. Illustration by C.W. Jefferys, circa 1950. *(Louise'79 :63.)*

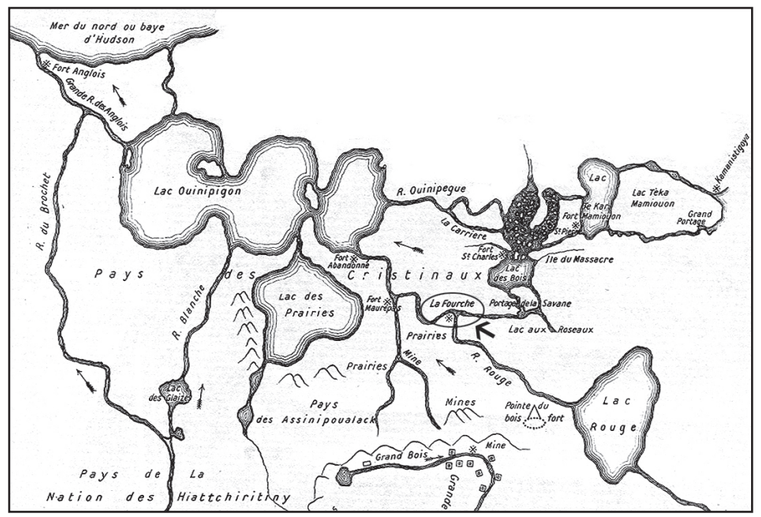

Figure 4.5. Above: La Vérendrye memorial. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada plaque, located along PTH #3 near Darlingford, commemorates, *"La Vérendrye's Journey to the Mandans. Having left Fort La Reine October 18th, 1738. The Canadian explorer, La Vérendrye with his sons Francois and Louis-Joseph, crossed this region on his way to the country of the Mandans, whence by following the Missouri he hoped to reach the western sea."* *(EdLed.)*

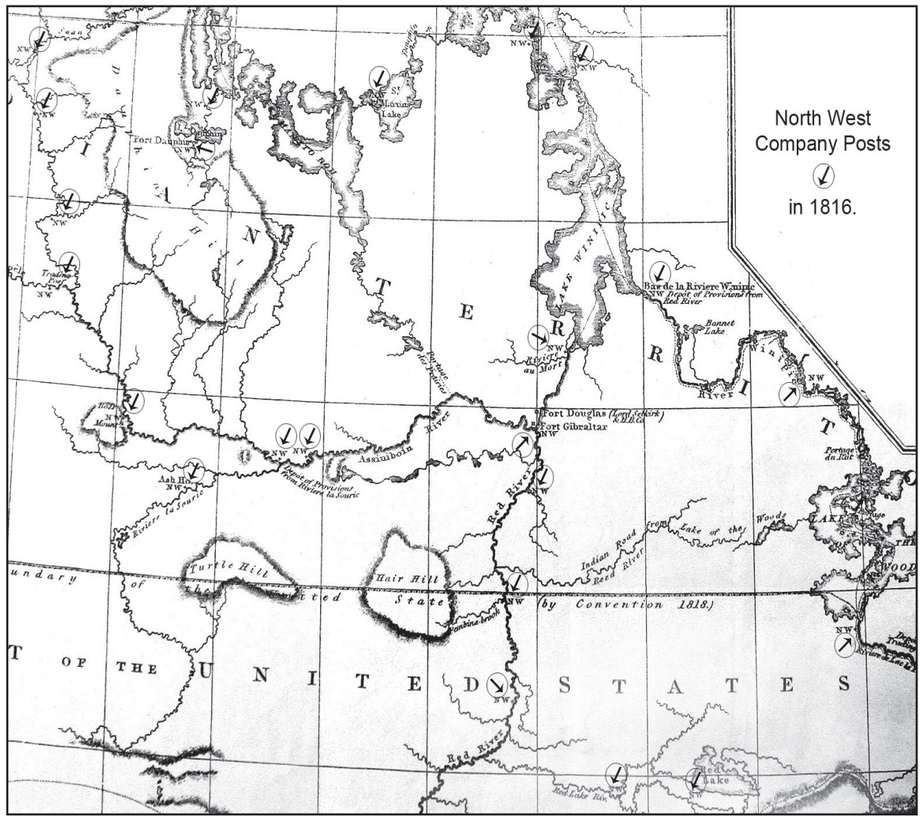

Figure 4.7. Above: North West Company posts. Detail of a map printed in 1816 showing North West Company trading post locations in the lower Red and Assiniboine River basins. Twenty-two NWC sites are noted in the region depicted, plus Fort Douglas belonging to *"Lord Selkirk & HBC."* At this time, there would also have been a number of competing HBC, XYC and Independent posts in this same region, not shown on this map, giving some sense of the large number of posts and employees involved in the fur trade at the time. *(A of MB.)*

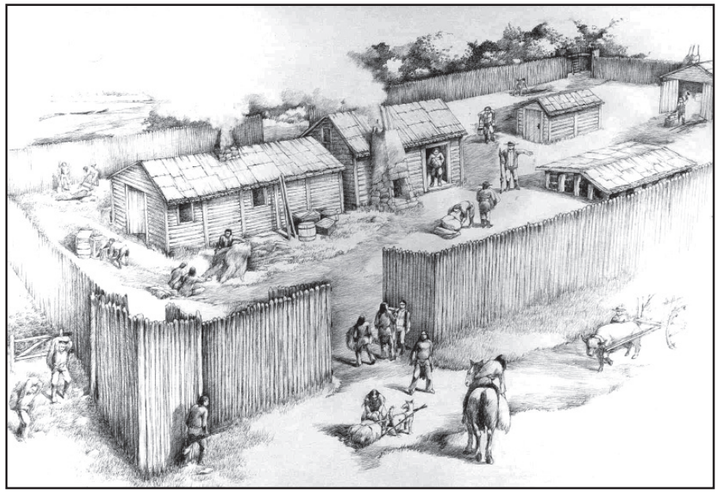

Figure 4.6. Above: HBC Brandon House. An artist's impression of Brandon House No. 1, circa 1810, based on archaeological evidence. Brandon House was an important source of pemmican, much valued as travel food for the fur trade company freighting brigades. *(HRB.)*

Figure 4.8. Above: David Thompson. A painting of David Thompson, by Manitoba artist Don McMaster, entitled "*A Perfect Storm.*" depicting the explorer leading his brigade through a blinding snowstorm on December 10, 1797, while on a trip to the Mandan villages on the Missouri River, which almost cost him and his companions their lives. "*The hummock of woods on the Turtle Hill* (Turtle Mountain), *which was our mark, gave our course by the compass 30 degrees E. As we had to cross a plain of twenty-two miles, and having felt the severe changes of weather, I desired the men to follow close in file. By noon it had become a perfect storm; we proceeded slowly and with great labour. Night came on; I could no longer see the compass and had to trust to the wind; but as it was evident we were ascending a gentle rising ground, we continued, and soon, thank good Providence, my face struck against some oak saplings, and I passed the word that we were in the woods. A fire was quickly made. At 7:30 PM thermometer read 36 degrees, making in little over twelve hours, a difference of temperature of fifty-six degrees. This was the most distressing day I had yet seen.*" *(www.donmcmaster.com.)*

Figure 4.9. Above: "*To The Great Mandan Village.*" A December 30, 1797 journal entry, "*Monsieur Jussome introduced me to a chief called Big White Man, which well designated him, and told him I was one of the chiefs of the white men and did not concern myself with trade, which somewhat surprised him, until told that my business was to see the countries, converse with the natives, and see how they could more regularly be supplied with arms, ammunition, and other articles they much wanted. This he said would be very good, as sometimes they were many days without ammunition.*" *(www.donmcmaster.com.)*

There were two locations in the current BTNHR that supported such long-lived "regional" posts, at the forks of the Red and Pembina Rivers and the area of the forks of the Assiniboine and Souris Rivers. As with other regional posts, the company employees at these posts were often sent out to build smaller wintering posts in the surrounding hinterland. Thus, the BTNHR's long and colourful fur trade history includes many major posts and temporary wintering houses established for varying lengths of time and at various locations in and near the Region.

Souris River Mouth Posts

One of the first European fur traders to explore the Turtle Mountain and Souris Plains region after the fall of New France was Alexander Henry, a prominent HBC trader and explorer who passed through and explored the region in 1776, while on a trading mission to the Mandan villages on the Missouri River. He reported that the resident Assiniboine on the Souris Plains were now in possession of large numbers of horses and, as La Vérendrye reported three decades earlier, they seemed quite indifferent to the white man's trade goods, having *"all they needed in the buffalo."* *(Nicholson'85 :3.)*

In 1785, the NWC established Pine Fort on the Assiniboine River, a short distance downstream of the mouth of the Souris River to trade furs and, more importantly, to obtain corn, beans, and squash from the Mandan and pemmican from the Assiniboine. These provisions were needed to feed the voyageurs on their long canoe trips from the Prairies to Montreal. The HBC quickly followed suit and erected Brandon House on the Assiniboine River just up stream from the mouth of the Souris River.

In 1793, the newly established XYC, led by Sir Alexander MacKenzie, instructed its agent, Peter Grant, to build a provisioning post of its own near the mouth of the Souris River in support of its growing network of trading posts. This prompted the NWC to abandon Pine Fort and erect a new post, "Assiniboine House", closer to both HBC Brandon House and Peter Grant's XYC post. The three rival posts remained profitable, though only a small amount of furs and buffalo and wolf pelts were taken in. Pemmican was the main and most important intake. The three rival "pemmican posts" operated in near proximity to each other for over a decade without incident. Post records show that the staff were on friendly terms and socialized frequently.

In 1805, the XYC merged with the NWC and both XYC's Fort Souris and NWC's Assiniboine House were torn down and replaced by a nearby, new, larger post that was named NWC Fort Riviére la Souris.

Souris River & Turtle Mountain Outposts

During the late 1790s and early 1800s, during the peak of fur trade rivalries, short-lived "wintering outposts" were commonly built, as noted earlier. In the autumn of 1795, the Chief Factor of NWC Assiniboine House sent men and supplies up the Souris River with instructions to establish a wintering house. The group erected buildings at a site on the west bank of the Souris River a short distance south of present day Deloraine. NWC Ash House operated for only a single season. A possible reason for its brief use was noted by David Thompson in December 1797, who, while travelling up the Souris River, stopped briefly at the recently abandoned post, noting in his journal that "*...it had to be given up from it being too close to the incursions of the Sioux Indians.*" *(Tyrrell'88.)*

In 1797, the Missouri Fur Company issued a declaration forbidding British subjects, such as David Thompson, from trading in the Missouri River drainage basin. Thereafter, trading south of the Assiniboine River slowly but surely shifted from trading with the Missouri River Mandan to trading with the Turtle Mountain Assiniboine. The Assiniboine increasingly become critical suppliers of pemmican for the various fur trade transport brigades and the Assiniboine River provision posts remained critical elements in the profitability of the various fur trade companies.

In 1801, prairie fires swept across the Souris Plains affecting trade and prompting the HBC to establish an outpost on the northern slopes of Turtle Mountain so: "I*ndians from the south would not have to cross the burned out plain to reach Brandon House*." The next season, the NWC and XYC both constructed wintering posts "on the edge" of Turtle Mountain. However, trade was further disrupted by growing tribal conflicts, with the Assiniboine fleeing Turtle Mountain due to the arrival of Gros Ventre and war parties of Sioux having been sighted in the region. As a result, trade for furs and provisions was very poor at Turtle Mountain that winter and, in the spring, all traders retreated to their respective establishments around the mouth of the Souris. *(Nicholson' 85 :18.)*

The situation soon improved because, in 1806, Alexander Henry the Younger, on a journey to the Mandans, reported that the Assiniboine were back in the Pembina Hills-Souris Plains region and still lived according to a pure bison economy. Henry Jr. noted in his journal during that trip the HBC Lena House was once again functioning as a winter post. *(Nicholson' 85 :19.)*

NWC Fort Rivière la Souris remained the Company's main post on the Assiniboine until the amalgamation of the NWC and HBC in 1821 under the HBC banner. Many trading posts immediately became redundant, and were closed soon after and abandoned, including HBC Brandon House II and its various outposts. A third HBC Brandon House was constructed in 1828, but operated for only six seasons before the Souris mouth area was permanently abandoned by the HBC. The Company chose to develop the more strategically located Fort Ellice, near the mouth of the Qu'appelle River, as the Company's sole post on the Assiniboine River. *(Smyth'68 :131.)*

Pembina Mouth Trading Posts

The mouth of the Pembina River was a strategic and very well-known site. A long series of posts and forts were constructed in the area, especially during the early fur-trade era. The earliest known trading post at this site was a "Canadian Independent" post built in 1793 known as "Grant's House." In 1796, Charles Baptiste Chaboillé built "Rat River House", a wintering post at the mouth of the Rat River, for the NWC, its first post on the Red River. However, after a single season, the site was abandoned and NWC "Fort Pambian", its replacement, was erected at the mouth of the Pembina River. Four years later, in 1801, Alexander Henry the Younger, the new Superintendent for the Lower Red River Region, arrived and replaced that post with a nearby larger one. Within a couple of years of the construction of NWC Fort Pambian, opposition posts operated by the HBC and XYC were erected in the immediate vicinity. Because of the threat of Sioux raiding parties, all these posts were substantial structures with sturdy blockades, ramparts and guard towers. Figure 4.9.

As with the Souris River posts, to gain more control of the furs being traded, each of the companies set up smaller outposts at several strategic nearby sites. In most cases, these posts were not actually forts, but rather one or two small, quickly constructed log cabins occupied for only one or two winter seasons. In some cases, however, such as with the NWC Red Lake outpost, the furs taken in warranted operating the outpost for several years, necessitating larger buildings and the protection of a timber palisade.

The Hair Hills Outposts

In 1800, Alexander Henry the Younger, set up a Fort Pembina outpost in the Hair Hills (Pembina Hills). According to his journal of September 4, 1800, he arranged for a guide named Nanaundeyea and three other men to journey into the hills and build a wintering house there. Nanaundeyea is said to have responded that the location was within the raiding range of the Sioux and suggested that it would be wiser to wait until after the beginning of October before entering the area when the danger of attack by a Sioux warparty would be much less likely. In accepting that bit of advice, Henry forestalled the departure of the work party until October 1st. Two weeks later, Henry himself journeyed to the site of the Hair Hills outpost to inspect their work and to personally explore the local district.

Between 1800 and 1805, at least five separate NWC wintering houses were established in the Pembina Hills area, with locations being moved each winter. After the second winter, in October 1802, Henry reported in his journal that a party of XYC men had departed their post at Pembina bound for the Hair Hills to build a competing post near his own "NWC Langlois' House." Direct competition in the Hair Hills area did not seem to affect Langlois' trading success since, that winter, he acquired almost as many furs as Henry himself did at Fort Pembina and much more pemmican. The records from these sub-posts indicate that, for a time at least, the region was rich in furs and a considerable amount of trading took place. *(Smyth'68 :117.)*

Scratching River Outposts

In September 1801, the XYC built another sub-post downstream the Red River near the mouth of the Scratching (now Morris) River. Not to be outdone, Alexander Henry the Younger instructed his interpreter, J.B. Desmarais, and five other men to take sufficient supplies and trade goods from the NWC post at Pembina and build a competing outpost at the Scratching River or Rivière aux Gratias, as it was also known at the time. The NWC's Scratching River post proved to be a commercial failure, taking in only 130 beaver skins, 7 bags of pemmican and 3.5 packs of furs during the winter of 1801-02. Both it and the XYC post were abandoned after one season.

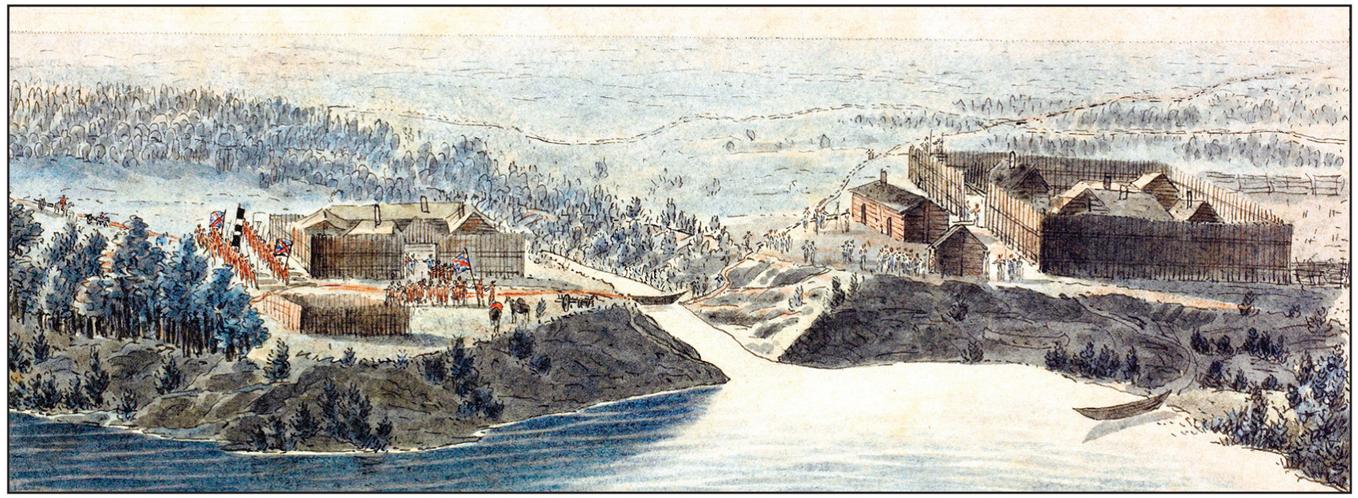

Figure 4.10. Above: Pembina posts. A drawing of HBC Fort Pembina (right) and Fort Daer in 1822, by Red River colonist, Peter Rindisbacher. Note the Des Meurons Regiment, hired by Lord Selkirk to protect the colony, "on parade" outside Fort Daer. Note also the configuration of buildings inside the palisades and the overland trails leading to and from the forts. The Pembina Trail connecting posts located at the forks of the Assiniboine and the forks of the Pembina and Red Rivers was one of the earliest established "cart" trails in all of western Canada. *(A of MB.)*

RETURNS OF LOWER RED RIVER DEPARTMENT, 1801–02.

	JOHN CAMERON, X. Y. OPPOSITION, GRANDES FOURCHES.	M. LANGLOIS, HAIR HILLS.	J. B. DESMARAIS, OLD MOUGE, RIVIÈRE AUX GRATIAS.	A. HENRY, JOHN CRÉBASSA, PANBIAN RIVER.	TOTALS, IN FOUR CANOES.
Beavers, weighing 1,805 lbs.	410	200	130	629	1,369
Black bears.	22	24	..	18	64
Brown bears.	2	5	..	4	11
Wolves	30	160	8	58	256
Foxes	20	39	2	16	77
Raccoons	29	14	3	39	85
Fishers	23	57	38	67	185
Otters	29	5	2	24	60
Martens	..	13	5	6	24
Minks	6	..	5	26	40
Wolverenes	..	3	1	..	1
Loup-cerviers	..	8	8	51	67
Dressed moose and biches	..	20	..	..	20
Shaved and parchment biches	..	220	12	38	270
Muskrats	..	5	..	8	13
Buffalo robes	..	1	7	2	10
Packs of 90 lbs. each	9	24	3½	25½	62
Bags of pemmican, of 90 lbs. each	..	50	7	33	90
Kegs of beef	..	..	..	16	16
Kegs of grease	3	..	..	..	3
Kegs of sugar	3	..	..	..	3

Gain, Halifax currency, £1,171 15s. 7d.

Figure 4.12. Above: Post returns. "Returns of the Lower Red River Department", winter of 1801-02. Note that most of the 90-pound fur packs originated at the Pembina River post (25 1/2 packs) with Hair Hills (Pembina Hills) post (24 packs), with Grand Forks and Rivière Aux Gratias (Morris River) bringing in only 12 1/2 packs between the two of them, for a total of 62 fur packs. Also taken in were 90 bags of pemmican, 16 kegs of "beef", and 3 kegs each of grease and sugar. Total estimated "Gain" (profit): 1171 Pounds, 15 Shillings and 7 Pence. Note also the many types of wildlife that inhabited the eastern part of the BTNHR during that period, 16 different animals are listed. *(HRB.)*

Figure 4.11. Above: The trading counter. A trading scene illustrated by C.W. Jefferys showing a typical fur trade post during the early 1800s. Firearms and steel knives were among the most sought after trade goods during the early years of the fur trade. *(HBCA.)*

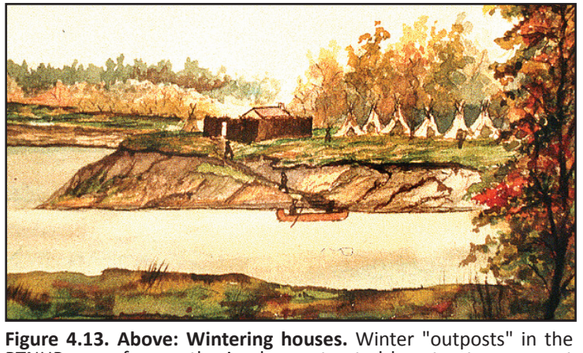

Figure 4.13. Above: Wintering houses. Winter "outposts" in the BTNHR were frequently simply constructed log structures meant to last only one or two seasons, but had to be secure enough for winter occupation. Some, such as the example depicted above, were enclosed in a protective palisade. *(HBCA.)*

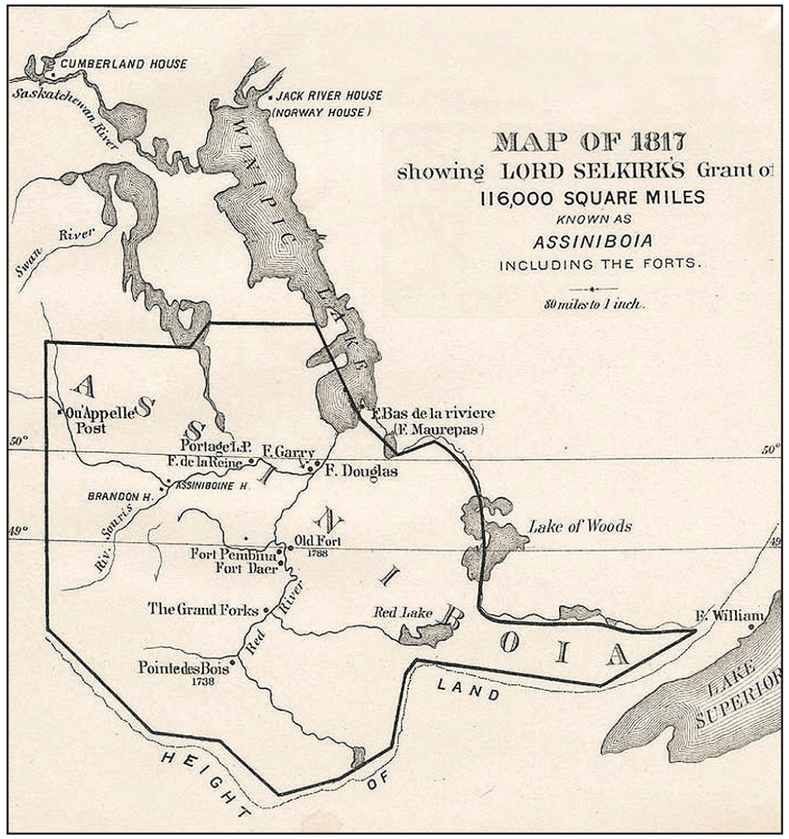

Figure 4.14. Selkirk's land grant. Map from 1817 showing *"Lord Selkirk's Grant of 116,000 square miles known as Assiniboia, including the* (HBC) *Forts."* Note that the District of Assiniboia land grant extended well into what is now the US and up to the height of land separating rivers flowing north and those flowing south. *(HRB.)*

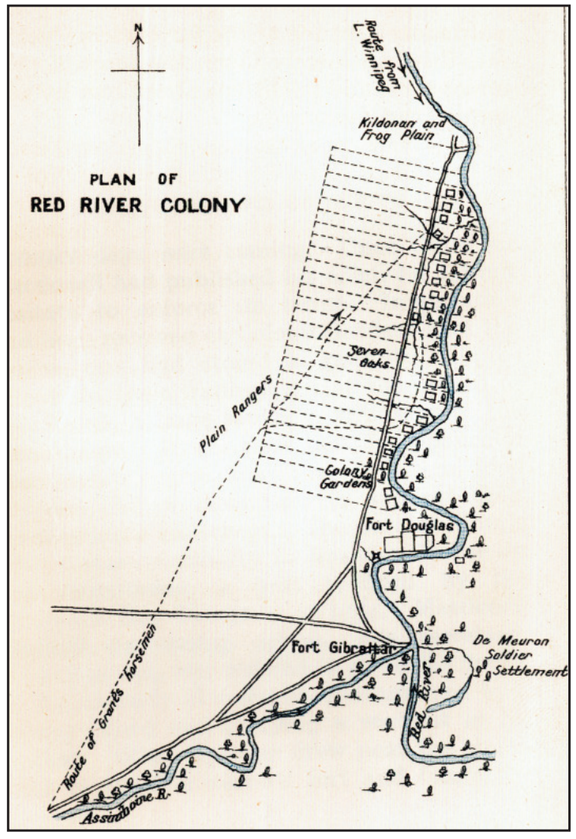

Figure 4.15. Above: Selkirk's settlement. Map entitled "Plan of Red River Colony" showing Lord Selkirk's settlement circa 1816. Note the location of NWC Fort Gibraltar at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers; Fort Douglas a short distance to the north; and the settlers' lots along the Red River north of that. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :188.)*

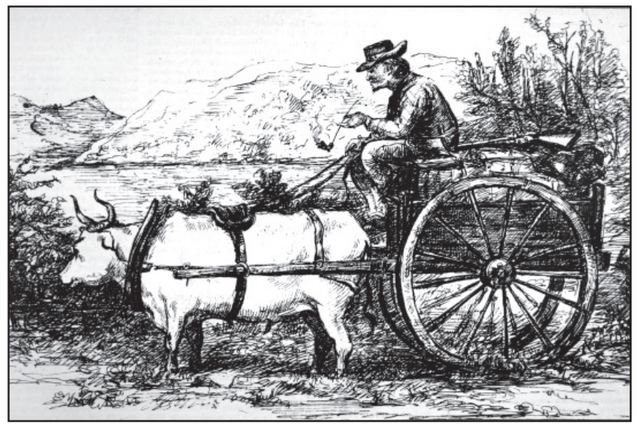

Figure 4.16. Above: The Red River cart. Red River cart brigades were a fixture on the northern plains region during the mid- to late-1800s. Illustration by Henri Julien. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 4.17. Above: Red River Settlement. A view of part of the Red River Settlement, drawn from nature, looking west from the forks of the Seine and Red Rivers. Note the Indigenous family watching the people in the boat fishing with net and pole, settlers' cabins on both shores and Fort Douglas in the distance. This scene was painted by colonist Peter Rindisbacher in July, 1822. *(A of MB.)*

A New Sort of Cart

Following the relative failure of the Scratching River wintering house, Henry decided to try the Hair Hills district again. In late September 1802, "Hair Hills III" was built at a trail ford across Dead Horse Creek. The site was known as "Pinancewaywining" and was located a short distance south of present day Morden. The sub-post at Pinancewaywining and another at Red Lake were significant by the fact that they could only be reached overland. All supplies and property had to be brought in using horses rather than canoes.

To this end, Henry mentions the use of a "new sort of cart." He wrote this cart: "*…facilitates transportation, hauling home meat, etc. They are about four feet high and perfectly straight wheels; the spokes are perpendicular, without the least bending outward, and only four to each wheel. These carts carry about five pieces* (500 lb.) *and are drawn by one horse.*" Historians have noted this as the first written reference to the now famous Red River cart. The carts used to supply the post at Henry's Pinancewaywining post are generally regarded as the direct prototype for the Red River cart, though they are quite clearly not the same vehicle. As among other things, the wheels of this cart were not "dished", and the spokes were far fewer than on the later-style Red River cart. These and other modifications would occur over the years as the cart became more commonly used. *(Couers'97 :205.)*

The NWC and the XYC merged on November 4, 1804. News of this merger would have arrived in the west with the arrival of the 1805 spring canoe brigades. Henry responded to the news by closing down half the number of posts he formerly maintained. The former XYC posts along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers were also closed and absorbed into the NWC operations. Without local XYC competition, Henry realized there was less need to go out and actively pursue his clientele. They had to once again go to him, as sub-posts were no longer needed or built. The NWC posts still outnumbered HBC posts by a significant number at the time, thus NWC business improved considerably after the merger. Nevertheless, as a result of the merger, sub-posts like those in the Hair Hills, Red Lake and elsewhere along the Red River and throughout the west soon disappeared, by-products of a passing phase in the fur trade.

Arrival of the Selkirk Settlers

After the 1805 merger, the new NWC continued their often-friendly relations with their HBC rivals, until the establishment of the HBC-supported Red River Colony in 1812. In 1810, the Earl of Selkirk bought a controlling interest in the HBC and used his power to obtain a large grant of land, including all of present day southern Manitoba and parts of Saskatchewan, North Dakota and Minnesota. He then put into effect his plan to settle displaced farmers, "crofters", from the Scottish Highlands, at HBC Fort Garry, the first contingent of which arrived during the summer of 1812. His plan and the settlers were strongly opposed by the NWC and the Métis, both of whom saw their way of life being threatened. When a second group of 100 settlers arrived in 1813, the NWC and their Métis employees became very agitated and prepared for possible trouble. Figure 4.14.

The HBC Governor, Miles Macdonell, fueled that trouble in 1814 when, during a food shortage, he issued a proclamation forbidding anyone but the HBC to export pemmican from the Red River region for one year. For decades, pemmican had been the staple food supply of the fur trade and even temporary enforcement of this proclamation would mean financial ruin for the NWC and private traders. So trading in pemmican continued and, before long, the so-called "Pemmican War" erupted. The HBC raided independent and NWC posts and seized pemmican supplies. In 1815, NWC employees, or Nor'Westers, as they were known, attacked and burned the Red River settlers' post, Fort Douglas, along with the colony's windmill, stables and barns, scattering the settlers. The new colony governor, Robert Semple, on his way to the settlement with 100 new settlers, met the refugees, brought them back and re-established the settlement.

Hostilities only increased the next summer. On June 1, 1816, armed Nor' Westers led by Cuthbert Grant looted and burned HBC Brandon House. On June 19, Grant and his men were intercepted and confronted by Governor Semple and about two dozen armed settlers when they attempted to transport pemmican past the settlement to a NWC post on the Winnipeg River. During a heated verbal exchange, someone fired a shot and a deadly fire fight ensued. After the battle, Governor Semple and 20 of the male settlers lay dead, along with a single Nor' Wester, in an event often referred to as the Massacre of Seven Oaks. The surviving settlers were sent to Lake Winnipeg where they regrouped and camped. In the fall of 1816, upon hearing of the killings at Red River, Lord Selkirk recruited a private army in Montreal and set out for the Red River Colony, capturing the NWC headquarters at Fort William along the way. In the spring of 1817, he recaptured Fort Douglas, temporarily immobilized the Nor'Westers, and re-established his settlers at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers.

HBC-NWC Merger

The competition between the HBC and the NWC had been mutually ruinous and, in 1821, they amalgamated, under the HBC banner. With an end to the competition, the new HBC reorganized its vast network of posts and many employees were let go. Especially affected were the Métis and First Nations freighters and food suppliers. While large numbers were still employed, many lost their livelihoods. Some of the Anglo-Scottish employees returned home, others retired to the Red River Colony. Métis settlements, of mostly former fur trade employees, were soon after established at St. Vital and St. Norbert on the Red River and at St. Francois Xavier on the Assiniboine River. There was also a substantial population of Métis living at Pembina and nearby St. Joseph (now Walhalla, N.D.). In 1822, one year after the HBC and the NWC merger, the American Fur Trade Company began trading in Minnesota developing posts at Red Lake, Sandy Lake, the Minnesota River, Rainy Lake and Lake of the Woods. American presence and territorial authority increased rapidly thereafter. In 1849, Pembina and, by extension, the Pembina Métis become part of Minnesota Territory prompting many to move north of the international border into British-administered territory.

The population at Red River at this time was less than 2000, most of whom were Métis and Country Born, but also included retired British soldiers and officers, retired or unemployed former HBC and NWC employees, various small groups of Indigenous residents, and several hundred Selkirk settlers. The Europeans farmed along the Red, but most of the Métis and Indigenous population lived by the twice-annual buffalo hunt that, for years, produced the Colony's only cash crop. The new HBC still required pemmican and furs as well as workers, especially York-boatmen on the northern waterways and ox cart drivers on the growing network of overland trails. Some Métis became illegal independent traders; however, due to its virtual monopoly over the fur trade, the HBC remained profitable for its shareholders for decades to follow, even though demand for furs in Europe was beginning to slow.

After the HBC absorbed the NWC in 1821, the new HBC obtained, from the British monarchy, a license extension for 21 years, extending the amalgamated Company's monopoly on trade for the entire British North West Territories. In 1838, the HBC licence was renewed, for an additional 21 years. However, on the expiry of this in 1859, the license was not renewed and trade in the British North West became open to all.

British and Canadian political interest in the territories steadily grew as the fur trade began to decline and the American presence on the Great Plains increased. Scientific expeditions were sent out by both the British and Canadian governments, in particular the "Palliser and Hind" expeditions of 1857–60, to assess the resource and agricultural potential of the North West.

New HBC Freight Routes and Modes

In 1852, the westward expanding railway network in the US reached the banks of the Mississippi River and, within a few short years, steamboat and stagecoach connections reached as far north as St. Paul, Minn.. With these developments, the HBC soon determined that it would be cheaper to transport fur packets and trade goods to and from its main distribution headquarters at Fort Garry to England, south though the US rather than using the original and arduous Lake Winnipeg/Nelson River/Hudson Bay route. In 1857, the HBC arranged with the US Treasury to allow a shipment of 40 tons of HBC goods from England through the US, via St. Paul, as sealed, bonded and duty free goods. The packets would be transported by ship from England to New York and from there by railway to steamboat connections at Savanna and La Crosse, Minn. on the banks of the Mississippi River. They would continue on by riverboat to St. Paul, Minn. with the last 500 mile leg to Fort Garry completed by ox cart brigade owned and manned by Métis freighters under contract to the HBC. The experiment proved successful and, before long, the amount of goods being shipped by this route increased tenfold. Figure 4.20.

In the spring of 1859, the first steamboat on the Red River, the *Anson Northup* was built on the east bank of the Red River near its confluence with the Sheyenne River. In June, the steamboat made a triumphant trip to HBC Fort Garry at The Forks. The *Anson Northup* was soon acquired by the HBC and, as the rechristened *Pioneer*, began to take over some of the transport duties of the ox cart brigades. The ox cart brigades nevertheless continued to be a major component of the HBC freighting network for many years. In 1862, after the *Pioneer* capsized and sank in its winter berth near present day Selkirk, the HBC contracted the construction of an impressive 137 ft., (41.8 m.) 133 ton twin-engine paddlewheel steamboat, that was christened the *International*. As owner of the only steamboat on the Red, for the next decade, the HBC enjoyed a monopoly of the freight and passenger business on the Red River. Figure 4.22.

Reorganization and Post Closures

The HBC was not without competition in the taking in of furs and the selling of merchandise during this period. Independent Métis traders were also travelling to St. Paul to sell furs and purchase goods to be sold or traded in settlements and camps across the Prairies, as well as for personal consumption. Additionally, a few American-owned posts were established just south of the border, including St. Joseph (now Walhalla, N.D.) and Pembina, N.D., which attracted clients from north of the border. The border at this time was still open and unsecured.

Although the amount of fur and pemmican being taken in had dropped substantially during the 1860s due to the region being hunted out, the HBC maintained some of its Red River region posts. In 1850, when the location of the boundary was determined to be two mi. (three km.) north of the Pembina River mouth, the HBC was obliged to move its post to the north side of the border and changed the name to "North Fort Pembina." During this later fur trade period, Upper Fort Garry became the HBC's main interior supply depot and distribution centre. York boats still transported goods on the northern waterways, but ox cart brigades increasingly took over the job of freighting for the HBC in the prairie and parkland regions. Virtually all of the freighters employed by the HBC at the time were of Métis or Indigenous background.

Pemmican and other types of "bush meat" were still needed to feed the men of the freight brigades who had no time to hunt for food. The Métis' twice-annual bison hunts continued to be an important source of food for the HBC; however, by the early 1860s, the bison herds indigenous to the Red River region were disappearing and hunters had to travel further south and west to find the large herds. Most of the activity in the fur trade at this time was shifting to British Columbia and the Athabasca region. Fort Edmonton became the main distribution point for these northern posts. It was supplied from Fort Garry by an annual ox cart brigade using the Saskatchewan Trail. Fort Ellice (near St. Lazare) and Fort Carlton (near Saskatoon, Sask.) became major stopping points along the Saskatchewan Trail. Figure 4.19.

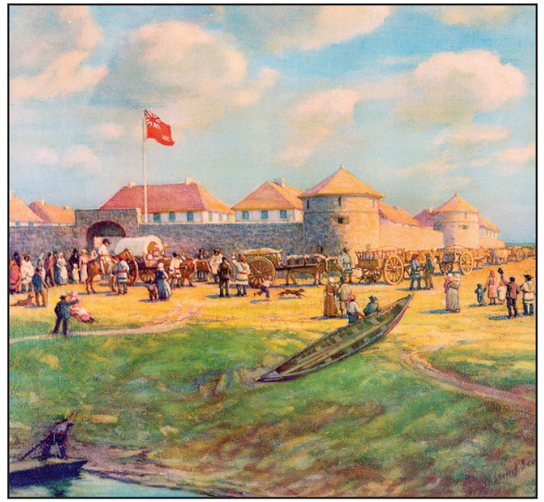

Figure 4.18. Above: HBC Cart brigade departure. Red River carts leaving Fort Garry, 1863, as imagined by artist C.W. Jefferys. *(HBCA.)*

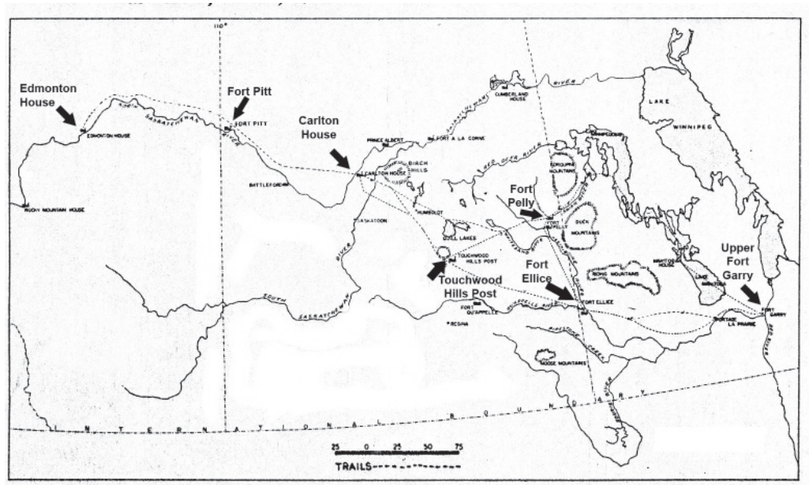

Figure 4.19. Above: Saskatchewan Trail. Map showing the network of developed trails connecting HBC forts Garry, Ellice, Pelly, Carlton, Pitt and Edmonton. Cart brigades departing Fort Garry travelled as far as Fort Carlton where the crew exchanged their loads of post supplies for loads of furs and pelts transported by cart brigades departing from Fort Edmonton. The return trip to Fort Carlton and back took the brigades most of the summer to complete. *(The Beaver'66.)*

Figure 4.20. Above: Brigade campsite. Cargo-laden Red River carts near St. Paul, Minn. During the 1860s, consignments of HBC trade goods from England were shipped to St. Paul via sailing ship, railway and Mississippi steamboat. The final leg to Fort Garry was undertaken by cart brigade and later by Red River steamboat. *(HBCA.)*

Figure 4.21. Above: A Red River cart train. HBC cart brigades normally travelled in groups of three, with the driver walking alongside and steering the lead cart and the two trailing carts tied one behind the other using the ox's harness reins. The unlubricated wooden cart axles made a distinctive high-pitched screeching sound that could be heard from a great distance, and no doubt drove many a driver slightly mad. HBC brigades were frequent sights on the Pembina Trail and the Crow Wing Trail in the eastern part of the BTNHR. *(HBCA.)*

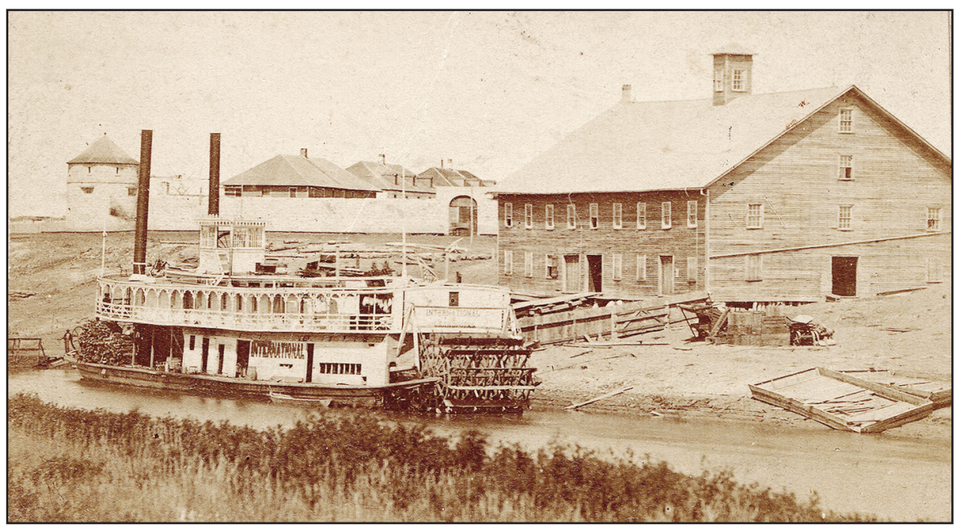

Figure 4.22. Right: Steamboat era. The *International* tied up next to a large HBC-owned warehouse, with Fort Garry visible in the background. The HBC controlled the riverboat transport industry for many years giving itself preferential transport rates. Steamboat connections to the US midwest rail network helped bring to an end the Company's traditional transport route using the northern rivers to Hudson Bay and from there to England. Note the "flatboat" and pile of freight on the bank at right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 4.23. Above: Fort North Pembina. In 1850, the HBC abandoned its long-standing post at the mouth of the Pembina River and constructed a stockaded post (called Fort North Pembina) just north of the international boundary on the west side of the Red River. At the time, the Sioux were still a serious threat and the post required a stockade for protection from attack. With the demise of the fur trade in the early 1870s, the post operated primarily as a store and post office. The postal district name was later changed to West Lynne because of the frequent confusion with Pembina, North Dakota. In 1871, the fort was captured briefly by a group of Irish Fenians from the US. The fort was largely demolished during the mid-1870s, except for the main store building, which continued to operate until the mid 1880s. Painting, circa 1873, by Washington Frank Lynn. *(A of MB.)*

MANITOBA

— AND THE —

North-West Territory.

FARMING AND STOCK-RAISING LANDS

FOR SALE

— BY THE —

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY.

Under agreement with the Crown, the Hudson's Bay Company are entitled to one-twentieth of the Lands in the Fertile Belt, estimated at about seven millions of acres, and they are now prepared to offer these Lands for sale.

☞ Full information in regard to these Lands will be given by the undersigned at the Offices of the Company.

C. J. BRYDGES, Land Commissioner, MAIN STREET, WINNIPEG, — and — ST. ALEXIS STREET, MONTREAL.

W. ARMIT, Secretary, 1, LIME STREET, LONDON, E. C., ENGLAND.

3RD EDITION.

Figure 4.24. Right: HBC lands for sale. A copy of an 1882 advertisement offering HBC lands for sale in Manitoba and the North-West Territory. *(HBCA.)*

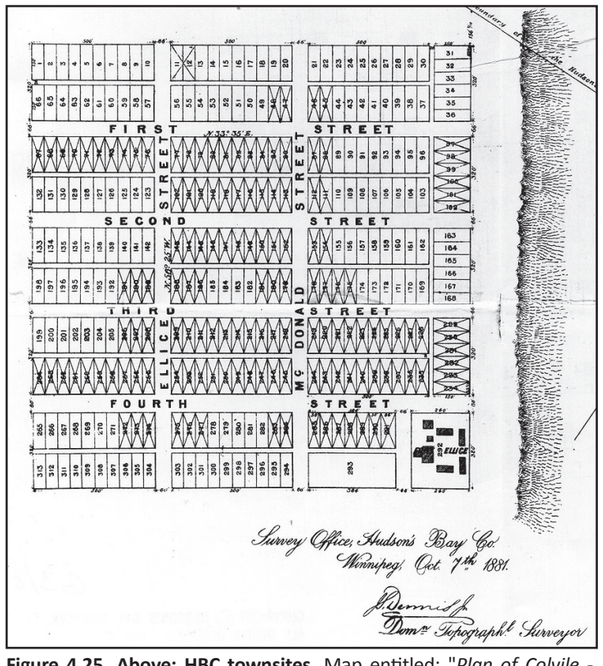

Figure 4.25. Above: HBC townsites. Map entitled: "*Plan of Colvile - Being a subdivision of part of the Hudson's Bay Company's Reserve at Fort Ellice, Manitoba. October 7, 1881.*" The area around Fort North Pembina was similarly subdivided into town lots and registered with Manitoba Land Titles as the community of "West Lynne." Unlike HBC West Lynne, the HBC-owned community of Colvile did not materialize when the townsite failed to attract a branchline railway connection. *(HBCA.)*

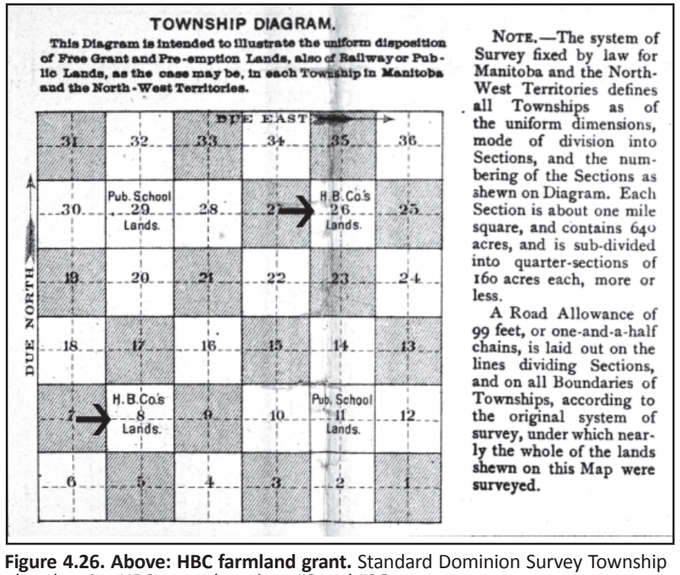

Figure 4.26. Above: HBC farmland grant. Standard Dominion Survey Township plan showing HBC-owned sections #8 and #26. *(MHS: Historical Atlas of Manitoba.)*

HBC Rupertsland Sold to Britain

The outbreak of the American Civil War in 1861 further delayed US expansion in the Dakotas and also delayed British action on acquiring the HBC's "Rupertsland" territories. However, after the war ended in 1865, the British Government moved to take over administration from the HBC and to transfer authority over the west to the newly established Canadian Dominion Government. This action was prompted by a growing manifest destiny and Irish Fenian movements in the US, both of which were possible threats to Canadian sovereignty.

The fur trade was dying anyway, so HBC did not protest, but rather sought ways to profit by the settlement to come. In 1869, the Company's territorial possessions were officially surrendered to the British government for a consideration of 300,000 pounds (approximately $1,500,000) and 1/20 of the lands in the fertile belt, which amounted to almost 3,000,000 acres of potential farmland.

In addition, the HBC was also able to retain sizable land reserves around existing posts. In Manitoba, these included Upper Fort Garry, Lower Fort Garry, Fort Ellice, Riding Mountain House, and Fort North Pembina. The HBC reserve at North Fort Pembina was surveyed into town lots and registered in the Manitoba Land Titles as the townsite of West Lynne. The HBC also established a number of stores in selected communities across the Prairies, including in Manitou, Morden and Deloraine in the BTNHR. Later, a chain of HBC department stores was established in the principal western cities and, thus, for many decades after the end of the fur trade, the HBC continued to be a major presence in the west with stores in many towns and cities. Large department stores, such as Winnipeg's landmark structure, were a far cry from the small isolated woodland posts where basics such as tobacco and tea, blankets, knives, and firearms were bartered for pelts and pemmican. (Figure 4.27.)

Figure 4.27. Above: Hudson Bay Company - general merchants. During the settlement period the HBC built and operated stores in many of the new communities being established along the expanding railway network across the Canadian prairies. The HBC store above was photographed in Manitou during the early 1890s. *(A of MB.)*

Dominion Survey, Red River Resistance & the First Homesteaders

As part of its plans to facilitate the acquisition and settlement of the HBC's western holdings, the new Canadian Dominion Government proposed the construction of a railway linking eastern Canada with the colony of British Columbia on the west coast. It also proposed the surveying of the entire west into uniform "townships and sections" to quickly and efficiently facilitate the settlement and agricultural development of the west. However, neither the HBC nor the Dominion Government thought to officially inform the people already living in the west of the land transfer and forthcoming pre-settlement Dominion Survey.

When survey crews suddenly began staking survey lines near the Red River settlement during the summer of 1869, the resident population and, in particular the Métis, protested and then resisted by forcibly stopping the survey crews. The Red River Resistance or "Rebellion" ensured. The political crises ended a year later, with the arrival of the soldiers of the "Red River Expeditionary Force" (the Wolseley Expedition), and the news of the Red River Settlement joining Canadian Confederation as the new Province of Manitoba.

The first fully surveyed townships were opened to homesteading in 1872 and within a few short years, agriculture and forestry had overtaken the fur trade as the primary resource-based industries of the economy in both the BTNHR and southern Manitoba.

End of the Fur Trade Era

By the early decades of the twentieth century, all traces of the early fur trade posts, even the larger forts, had disappeared from the landscape. Only written journals and underground archeological remains exist to testify to the wealth of history and human experience that occurred in the BTNHR region and southern Manitoba, in general, during the 200-year-long fur trade era.

The fur trade era has passed into history, but the individuals referred to above were all real people; the events described really occurred at sites that still exist today in the BTNHR, and in many places with views very much the same as back in the days of the fur trade. To appreciate the BTNHR's rich fur trade era history, one needs only to learn the stories to be able to appreciate the variety of colourful, interesting and, on occasion, even wondrous people and events that occurred. The references and overviews related above provide but a very brief overview of fur trade history in the BTNHR. Further information can be obtained through the sources and documents listed in the bibliography section of this publication, and on the BTNHR website.

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5.0 POST-CONTACT INDIGENOUS 1730 to 1870 AD

Territorial Pressures, Treaties and Reservations

5.1 INDIGENOUS POPULATIONS

The so-called "historical", or "post-contact" period as it is known by many historians and for Indigenous populations residing in what is now the BTNHR, began with the arrival from Quebec of the French explorer Pierre Gaultier, Sieur de La Vérendrye in 1738. He and his companions were the first Europeans to explore what is now southern Manitoba, and his journals were the first written records to describe the locations, movements and lifestyles of the Indigenous population in the BTNHR region. Subsequent observations by other early explorers and HBC fur traders, such as Alexander Henry Senior in the 1770s, Alexander Henry the Younger during the early 1800s, and the 1857–59 scientific expeditions of Henry Youle Hind and John Palliser, added to the body of recorded information related to the historical period of Manitoba's Indigenous people. At least from the perspective of the European visitors, if not the Indigenous populations themselves.

Unfortunately, few if any recorded traditional Indigenous oral histories from the early period for the BTNHR exist to provide an Indigenous perspective. The recently published Doris Pratt - Sioux Elder autobiography was a BTNHR-led project specifically designed to help alleviate this imbalance in the historical record. The following is a brief overview of what is currently known about the Indigenous history of the BTNHR based on available written records. The Region possesses a very rich and interesting Indigenous history, even with much of it remaining unrecorded and unknown.

Arrival of the Europeans

After travelling to and exploring what is now southern Manitoba during the 1730s, La Vérendrye noted the following Indigenous territories. He noted that, generally, the Ojibwa/ Saulteaux occupied the Rainy River-Lake of the Woods region; the Cree occupied the wooded districts north of the Winnipeg River; in the Interlake region, and the districts north of the Assiniboine River, the Assiniboine occupied the open prairie region south of the Assiniboine River, particularly the Souris Plains region; the Mandan had the territories to the south of the Assiniboine lands along the Missouri River; the Gros Ventre were west of that; and the Dakota Sioux occupied the upper Red River region and the wooded areas of what is now western Minnesota. After the capture of New France by the British in 1759, a mix of trading companies and interests soon entered the Lake Winnipeg drainage basin. The number of Europeans in the region slowly but steadily increased during this period and, by the mid-1700s, a sizable and growing mixed-blood (Métis) population was being established in the Red River region. Figure 5.1.2.

After Treaties 1 and 2 were negotiated and signed during the early 1870s, several First Nation Reserves were established in the BTNHR including Swan Lake I.R. #7 (Ojibwa), Roseau River I.R. #2 (Ojibwa), and the short-lived Turtle Mountain I.R. #60 (Sioux), the smallest I.R. in all of Canada. Located just north of the BTNHR are three Sioux reserves, including Oak Lake #59, Birdtail #57A and Sioux Valley #58. Despite this limited current presence, many different cultures are known to have had a presence in the current BTNHR. Following is a brief overview of what is currently known of the BTNHR's Indigenous populations during the post-contact historical period.

Indigenous Migrations and Territories

Indigenous-European contact for native populations living on the northern Great Plains was initially indirect and occurred soon after the HBC erected their first fur trading posts on the shores of Hudson Bay during the early 1670s. Trade at these posts was primarily conducted with the Woodland Cree who inhabited the regions south and west of Hudson Bay. Before long, the Cree began to travel south to trade with the parkland and prairie region tribes, which, at the time, included the Assiniboine, Mandan, and Gros Ventre. When La Vérendrye first visited present-day southern Manitoba in 1738, he found it inhabited by the Assiniboine who wandered the Souris Plains territory between the Missouri and the Assiniboine Rivers. The Cree, long-time allies of the Assiniboine, occupied much of the territory immediately to the north and northwest of the Assiniboine lands, in the Riding and Duck Mountains, the Interlake, and what is now northwestern Ontario. The Ojibwa or Saulteaux (despised by the Assiniboine and the Sioux for forcing them out of their traditional Great Lakes territories during the French period) occupied the Rainy River-Lake of the Woods region east of the Red River-Lake Winnipeg watersheds. To the south and southeast of the Assiniboine territory, in the upper Red River Valley and eastern Minnesota regions, lived the feared Dakota Sioux. West of Sioux lands, in the upper reaches of the Missouri, were the agriculture-based villages of the Mandan. West and northwest of the Mandan lands, in what is now southern Saskatchewan and northern Montana, were the Blackfoot and Gros Ventre.

Indigenous populations on the prairies and parkland regions were in a continuous state of flux during the early post-contact period. Prior to the fur trade, all these tribes occupied territories much farther to the east, in the areas north and south of the Great Lakes. Over the next 150 years of the post-contact period, all of these tribes continued to migrate slowly westward. This movement was prompted by tribal warfare, disease, and declining wildlife populations, and much of that was fueled by the effects of a growing fur trade economy. Two hundred years of records from this same fur trade show that the Cree, Assiniboine, Sioux, Ojibwa, and the Mandan, at one time or another, hunted and/or camped, or raided in, or simply travelled through, what is now the BTNHR. The early eyewitness written accounts testify to a very rich and complex history of indigenous populations during the post contact period in the BTNHR.

The Woodland Cree

The Cree people are originally of Algonquian origins in eastern Canada, like the Huron and Ojibwa. They moved westward over centuries. After coming into what is now Northwestern Ontario and Manitoba, the Cree soon separated into two geographical and lifestyle groups. The Muskeg nation (Muskegoes) or "Swampy Cree" lived in northern and central Manitoba and became the "Home Indians" for the HBC, many being employed as guides and retainers. The Plains Cree moved on to the open prairie and became expert buffalo hunters. The Swampy Cree found

Figure 5.1.1. Above: Chief Peguis. Peter Rindisbacher sketch of an Ojibwa warrior, believed to be Chief Peguis. 1820s. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.3. Above: Winter clothing. Peter Rindisbacher's watercolour sketch of a Saulteaux (Ojibwa) in winter, 1820s. Note the buildings on the riverbank, in the background. *(L&AC.)*

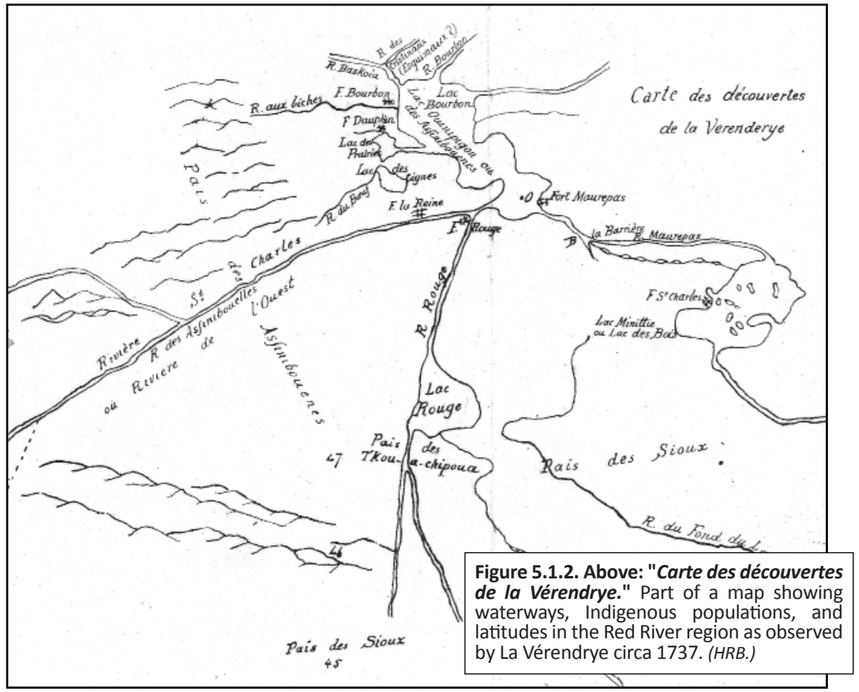

Figure 5.1.2. Above: "*Carte des découvertes de la Vérendrye*." Part of a map showing waterways, Indigenous populations, and latitudes in the Red River region as observed by La Vérendrye circa 1737. *(HRB.)*

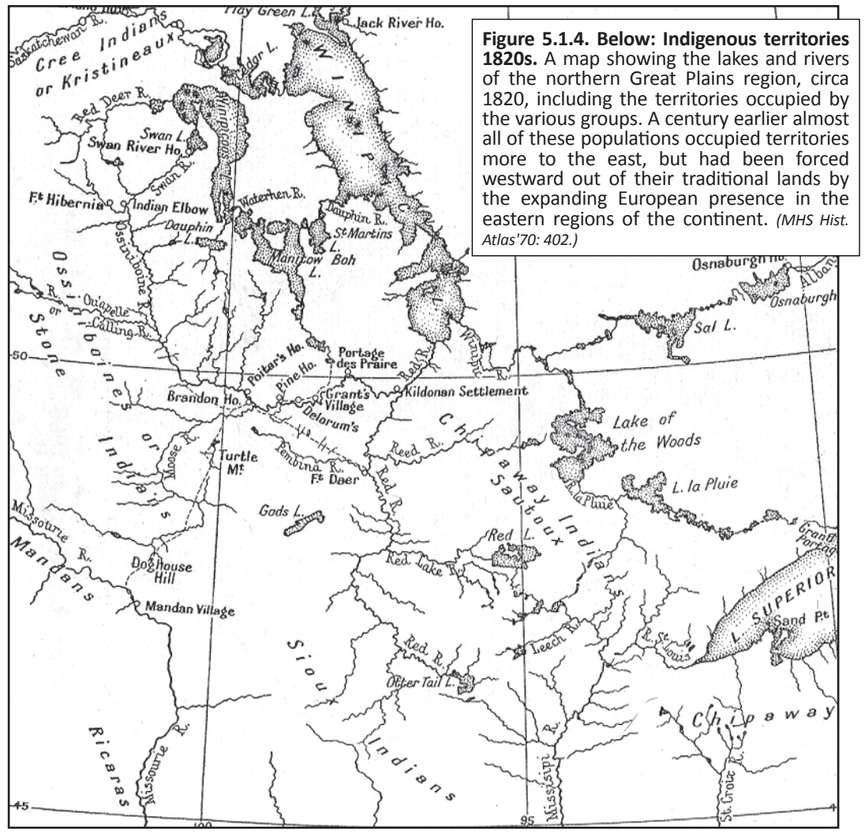

Figure 5.1.4. Below: Indigenous territories 1820s. A map showing the lakes and rivers of the northern Great Plains region, circa 1820, including the territories occupied by the various groups. A century earlier almost all of these populations occupied territories more to the east, but had been forced westward out of their traditional lands by the expanding European presence in the eastern regions of the continent. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70: 402.)*

Figure 5.1.5. Above: "*Indians Hunting The Bison.*" Illustration by Swiss artist and adventurer Karl Bodmer of a bison hunt. Following their migration onto the open grasslands, the Assiniboine quickly established what could be termed a pure buffalo (bison) economy. Buffalo meat provided them with their staple food, buffalo hides gave them clothing, shelter, horse and dog harness, war shields and boats, and buffalo sinew provided thread for sewing and strings for their bows. Buffalo ribs glued together were used to make bows and other buffalo bones were used to make short spears and knives, while buffalo "bellies" were kettles to carry and boil water. Last but not least, dried buffalo dung provided an important fuel supply. *(HRB.)*

Figure 5.1.7. Above: "*Skin Lodge of an Assiniboine Chief.*" Another Karl Bodmer image. From 1832 through 1834, he accompanied German explorer Prince Maximilian zu Wied-Neuwied on his Missouri River expedition to record images for the Prince. Note the buffalo skin tents, dog travois, the brave on horseback, and what appear to be scalps and dream-catchers fastened to some of the tipis poles. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.9. Above: "*Ojibwa birch bark tents.*" An 1862 pencil sketch by William Hind of an Ojibwa encampment at Portage la Prairie. *(L&AC.)*

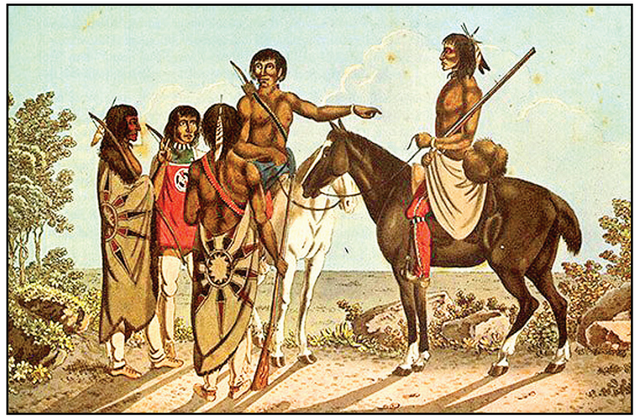

Figure 5.1.6. Above: "*Party of Assiniboine Indians.*" An 1820s watercolour by Peter Rindisbacher showing a group of Souris Plains Assiniboine. Note particularly the clothing and weaponry portrayed. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.8. Above: Ojibwa winter wear. An 1857 watercolour by Wm. Napier showing a group of Saulteaux/Ojibwa with Upper Fort Garry in the background. Note the winter clothing being worn, pipes being smoked, the child in the cradleboard, the team of dogs and loaded toboggan at the left, and in the distance at right, the dog team on the move and many tipis with smoke trails above them. *(L&AC.)*

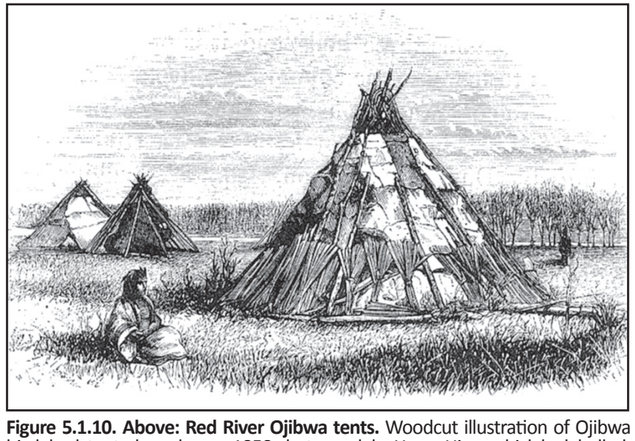

Figure 5.1.10. Above: Red River Ojibwa tents. Woodcut illustration of Ojibwa birch bark tents, based on an 1858 photograph by Henry Hime which he labelled, "*Ojibway tents on the banks of the Red River, near Middle Settlement.*" *(L&AC.)*

that being middlemen traders was a more profitable lifestyle than hunting and trapping and, to a large extent, gave up hunting and trapping to become agents of the fur trade. It was the "Swampys of the Woods" who travelled the northern waterways to reach the HBC posts on Hudson Bay to trade furs provided by the Assiniboine, Ojibwa and Mandans, and return south with trade goods. Star Mound in the western part of the BTNHR is said to have been the site of major trading events with southern tribes travelling there to meet with the Cree. When La Vérendrye arrived at The Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers in 1738, he found "*ten cabins of Cree, including two war chiefs, awaiting me.*" Later that summer, when he travelled across the current BTNHR region on his way to visit the Mandan villages, he had with him a Mandan-speaking Cree translator, suggesting there was fairly significant interaction and trade between the Cree and Mandan at the time. *(PB'79 :63.)*

In 1805, Alexander Henry the Younger recorded that he had ordered the erection of a "wintering post" in the Hair (Pembina) Hills "*where the Cree, Assiniboine and Saulteaux were present and hunting in districts south of the Assiniboine River",* indicating continued Cree presence in the lower Red River Valley and Pembina Hills areas during the early 1800s. By the 1820s, however, as shown on the map in Figure 5.1.3., the Cree largely abandoned the Assiniboine River region and moved west into what is now central Saskatchewan. In his 1860 expedition report, regarding Cree presence east of Lake Winnipeg, Henry Hind noted, "*The Swampys have a tradition that at a remote period they drove the Ojibways from the lower Winnipeg to the country bordering on the Lake of the Woods, and since that time they have maintained their footing in the conquered territory.*" *(Hind'60 :112.)*

- John Palliser, who explored the prairie-parkland region of the HBC's "Rupert's Land" territories the same time as Henry Hind in the late 1850s, described a Cree nation on the decline: "*The Cree nation was at one time very numerous, and as they were the first of the Rupert Land Indians to obtain fire-arms, they overran and made a temporary conquest of the greater part of the country. They are still the most numerous tribe of the Saskatchewan country, and number in all, perhaps, about 12,500 souls. They are, however, rapidly on the decrease, as the smallpox and other diseases annually sweep them off in great numbers.*" *(Palliser'63 :202.)*

- Henry Hind similarly observed that "*Some 20 years ago, before the smallpox and constant wars had reduced the Plain Crees to a sixth or eighth of their former numbers, this post was often the scene of exciting Indian display. Formerly, Fort Ellice used to be visited by the Crees alone, now it numbers many Ojibways among the Indians trading with it.*" Although there is no Cree presence in the BTNHR today, they played a prominent role in the fur trade in southern Manitoba, were often in the BTNHR, and are, therefore, part of the story of the BTNHR. *(Hind'60 :311.)*

The Assiniboine

The Assiniboine were formerly a branch of the Dakota Sioux, but became their bitter enemies sometime during the late 1600s. During that time, both the Assiniboine and the Sioux lived south of the Great Lakes on the western fringes of the French fur trading network. However, with the opening of fur-trading posts on Hudson's Bay by the English in 1670, both the Sioux and the Assiniboine slowly moved westwards. This was done for more direct trade contacts with the English posts on Hudson Bay and to escape the better armed and supplied Ojibwa (or Saulteaux), who were trading directly with the French based in New France. The Cree, as well, were pushed westward by the more powerful Ojibwa. By the 1690s, this movement west reached the Lake Winnipeg region. After establishing and cultivating ties with the HBC traders on Hudson Bay, the Cree became heavily involved in the fur trade as middlemen and labourers. The Assiniboine, on the other hand, chose to abandon their traditional woodland culture in favour of prairie habitation and, by the early 1700s, had moved into and occupied the Souris plains region. They soon established a primarily bison-based lifestyle. The Sioux, who were similarly pushed out of their woodland territories south of Lake Superior, also took to the open prairie in the upper Red River region. In their new territories, the Assiniboine and Sioux remained bitter enemies.

When La Vérendrye first reached Kaministiquia (Thunder Bay, Ont.) in 1730, he noted that the Assiniboine had entirely departed the Great Lakes region and were instead living "*in the level country to the west.*" Eight years later, when he crossed the Souris Plains region on his first journey to meet with the Mandan on the Missouri, he noted in his journal of having encountered a village of 102 Assiniboine lodges between Turtle Mountain and the Souris River. He also noted the Assiniboine were not engaged in trapping but hunted bison and traded pemmican. In 1743, La Vérendrye's son "The Chevalier" spent a month with the Turtle Mountain Assiniboine on his return to Fort La Reine after an extended trip to the Mandans and the upper Missouri River region, to regain his strength and better learn the Assiniboine language. In 1776, Alexander Henry the Elder, a prominent HBC trader and explorer, during a trading mission to the Mandan villages on the Missouri River, recorded that the "*Assiniboine were now in possession of horses and that they still seemed quite indifferent to the white man's trade goods, having all they needed in the buffalo.*" *(Nicholson'85 :3.)*

Just a few years later in 1780, half to two thirds of the Assiniboine population on the Souris Plains was wiped out by a smallpox epidemic. Thirty years later, the population appeared to be recovering, as when Alexander Henry the Younger explored the Turtle Mountain region in 1809, he reported encountering between eight and ten thousand Assiniboine in the area. However, the Souris Plains Assiniboine were again decimated by an 1819 epidemic of measles and whooping cough. The final blow occurred in 1836 when a second smallpox epidemic struck the Assiniboine and upwards of 80-90% of the population on the Souris Plains is believed to have perished. A so-called "Indian cemetery" located south of Wassewa on the northern slopes of Turtle Mountain bears evidence of mass burials, likely related to the 1836 smallpox epidemic. After the 1836 epidemic, what remained of the Souris Plains Assiniboine moved west and south into what is now Saskatchewan and Montana, leaving the Souris Plains open to incursion by the Sioux and the Métis. *(Wright'51 :15.)*

- John Palliser explored the Souris Plains region In 1857, and noted the following in his expedition account, "*At one time the Plain Stonys or Assiniboines were a very powerful tribe in the Saskatchewan district, and inhabitants of the country between* (HBC fort) *Carlton and the Missouri Coteau; indeed, even so late as 1821, they were the terror of the traders from their daring attacks and plundering propensities. But when the small-pox commenced its ravages among the aborigines of this part of North America, it seemed to single them out for more severe visitation than any of the other tribes, till at length they were almost extirpated,*

the northern part of their country (now) *being occupied by the less mischievous Crees. They still, however, dwell in the plains along the boundary line to the south of Fort Ellice, at which post they trade in the winter, as also at the American Mandan Forts in the Missouri; and along this latter river they yet form a numerous tribe. Those in the British territory still preserve their old character of being the greatest scamps and horse stealers of the prairies. The expedition only met with one small band of them, numbering about 1000 souls, but ascertained that their present haunts were to the west, along the boundary line, nearly to the Cypress hills.*" *(Palliser'63 :202).*

- Reverend John West, was assigned to the Red River Colony by the HBC during the early 1820s, and made note of the Assiniboine's love of horse stealing and their reliance on the bison. He wrote of the Assiniboine, "*Many of these Indians were strong, athletic men, and generally well-proportioned; their countenances were pleasing, with aquiline noses, and beautifully white and regular teeth. The buffalo supplies them with food, and also with clothing. The skin was the principal, and almost the only article of dress they wore, and was wrapped round them, or worn tastefully over the shoulder like the Highland plaid. The leggings of some of them were fringed with human hair, taken from the scalps of their enemies; and their moccasins, or shoes, were neatly ornamented with porcupine quills. They are notorious horse-stealers, and often make predatory excursions to the Mandan villages on the banks of the Missouri, to steal them. They sometimes visit the Red River for this purpose, and have swept off, at times, nearly the whole of our horses from the settlement. Such indeed is their propensity for this species of theft, that they have fired upon, and killed the Company's servants close to the forts for these useful animals.*" *(West'24 :116.)*

The Assiniboine, like the Cree migrated westward and, as noted by Reverend West, also south close to and into the Mandan territories along the upper Missouri River. Currently, there is no Assiniboine Indigenous presence in southern Manitoba or the BTNHR. Most reside in Montana and, to a lesser degree, in southeastern Saskatchewan. The Souris Plains Assiniboine were also notable as the first suppliers of pemmican for the fur trade. Pemmican was made by pounding bison meat with stone mauls (hence Stony Indians) and mixing with grease and berries. It was increasingly used as food for the members of the transport brigades carrying furs and trade goods, as there was little or no time to stop and hunt for a meal. Also, it kept for long periods of time without spoiling. The French fur traders were quick to recognize the advantage of pemmican as a "travel food" and quickly established a trade to acquire as much pemmican as they could. The Souris Plains Assiniboine were the principal suppliers of pemmican to the fur trade until the 1830s when they largely departed the Souris Plains and the Métis took over that role.

The Saulteaux/Ojibwa

The Ojibwa, (also known as the Saulteaux, and in the US as the Chippawa) are of the Algonquian bloodline and are believed to have emigrated to Sault Ste. Marie, Ont. area during the 1500s. From this area, they divided into three distinctly different tribes, the Ottawa, the Potawatomi and the Ojibwa. French Jesuit missionaries visited with the Ojibwa people who lived around lakes Huron and Superior in 1642. The Ojibwa tribe slowly continued to wander westward along the shores of Lake Superior. They traded furs for firearms with the French after which they battled with the Sioux and the Assiniboine, driving them out of the Lake of the Woods region into the western plains. Attracted by the superior fur and game resources of the Red and Assiniboine watersheds, the Ojibwa eventually began to push into the Red River region. The noted Ojibwa, Chief Peguis, moved his band from Lake of the Woods to the Red River during the later 1790s. He was soon followed by other bands. There is little indication in the traders' journals of any serious conflict between the Cree and Assiniboine and the immigrant Ojibwa who had begun to move into Assiniboine territory. The reason for this might have been a smallpox epidemic that claimed two-thirds of the Cree and Assiniboine during the years 1780–82. The Cree and Assiniboine concluded an alliance with the newcomers, thereby gaining valuable allies in the war against the common enemy to the south, the Dakota tribes. By the early 1800s, the Ojibwa were well established in the eastern region of the great plains and had adopted the plains way of life. They used the bison as their main source of food and used its hide for their tipis. The horse became their main source of travel and the main source of conflict with other tribes as horse-stealing was a major pastime for young men seeking glory and recognition.

That the Ojibwa and Sioux were bitter enemies during the early 1820s was evident when Reverend West visited Fort Daer at Pembina and later noted: "*On my return to Fort Pembina, I had an opportunity of hearing from a chief of a small tribe of Chippewas, surrounded by a party of his young men, a most pathetic account, and a powerful declaration of revenge against the Sioux Indians, who had tomahawked and scalped his son. Laying his hand upon his heart as he related the tragical circumstance, he emphatically exclaimed, 'It is here I am affected, and feel my loss.' Then raising his hand above his head, he said, "The spirit of my son cries for vengeance. It must be appeased. His bones on the ground uncovered. We want ammunition. Give us powder and ball, and we will go and revenge his death upon our enemies.*" *(West'24 :120.)*

Later, while back at Fort Douglas, Reverend West revealed that the Ojibwa would sometimes ally with the Assiniboine in attacks against the Sioux. He noted: "*There is a general talk among the surrounding tribes of Indians of going to war against the Sioux nation. A strong band of the Assiniboines are directing their course towards Pembina and Peguis, who is by no means a war Chief, is setting off in that direction to join them. Their rage of vengeance towards the Sioux Indians appears to know no bounds, but the scalp of some poor solitary individuals among them will probably terminate the campaign. They cannot keep long together in numerous parties from the want of foresight to provide for their subsistence; and accordingly a little more than a week's absence brought Peguis back again, with his party, without their having seen an enemy, and in the destitute condition of being without food and moccasins.*" *(West'24 :121.)*

- Henry Hind, in 1858, noted the following concerning Ojibwa westward migration,"*The Ojibwas of Lake Winnipeg may now be discovered, summer and winter, near the Grand Forks of the Saskatchewan, having emigrated 400 miles west of Red River, where they have permanently established themselves. All the Ojibwas now found west of the Lake of the Woods, and the east coast of Lake Winnipeg are invaders of the country. The real home of the Ojibwa is the region about the south, west, and north of Lake Superior; the habits of life of the emigrants or invaders have been adapted to the character of the country they now occupy, and being no longer dependent upon the forest for food and clothing, many of them, on the banks of the Assinniboine, Red River, Lake Manitobah, and Dauphin Lake, possess horses, and join the half-breeds in their annual spring and fall hunts. Notwithstanding this intercourse and blending of different nations, most of the superstitions and customs peculiar to each are still maintained and practised.*" While visiting Fort Ellice in 1857, Hind noted that for years the post had been experiencing increasing numbers of Ojibwa and fewer Cree

Figure 5.1.11. Above: Interior of a Sioux Lodge. 1820s. Although feared warriors during much of the BTNHR's early post-contact period, the Sioux were not always on the war path and welcomed into their settlements traders and visitors like Peter Rindisbacher from the Red River Colony who sketched this interior view of a Sioux tent during a visit. Circa 1825. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.1.12. Above: 1863 Sioux refugees. In 1862 and 1863, many hundreds of Sioux refugees arrived in Fort Garry seeking sanctuary and citing their help to the British in the War of 1812 and British promises of assistance if needed in return. In November 1863, a large group of more than 600 men, women and children straggled into the Red River settlement. Forced to flee the US without time to prepare for the trip, they arrived in a state of utmost destitution. *(CDN ILL NEWS.)*

Figure 5.1.13. Above: The Ojibwa, 1860s. An Ojibwa family photographed at Fort Dufferin, near present day Emerson. Note the construction of the Red River Cart at left. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.1.14. Above: Ojibwa beadwork. Photograph of an unidentified Ojibwa mother and child in an ornate beaded cradle board. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.15. Above: Ojibwa family. Undated photograph in the National Archives entitled simply, "Family de Saulteaux du Manitoba." *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.16. Above: What once was. Striking photograph of two mounted warriors surveying the open landscape of the Souris Plains and perhaps contemplating the rapid changes occurring to their traditional nomadic way of life. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.1.17. Above: "*Boundary Post Between the United States and Rupert's Land at Pembina, Red River.*" An interesting sketch and description, prepared by a US soldier, while stationed at Fort Pembina during the 1860s. "*We have to thank Major G. Seton, who was lately in that part of the world, for a view of the plains near Pembina. The boundless level of rich grass is here traversed by the road, or track, which appears in the foreground. Major Seton's sketch is also an illustration of the habits and costumes of the Cree Indians. These are represented as walking in procession, headed by the Medicine Man, with the sacred rattle in hand, within which is celebrated a 'Dog Feast', so called from their eating dogs on the occasion, and being a mixture of religious ceremony and social mirth. In the half-distance are their tents, made of dressed bison leather, with their badges or armorial bearings painted upon them, beside which stand their carts, made without a particle of iron, and which are very strong and so light as to be serviceable as rafts when deep water has to be crossed. In the foreground is a group of two young Indians in their gala costume, with their dogs, which in winter are used to drag sledges.*" *(NDSU-IRS.)*

Figure 5.1.18. Above: Sioux camp at Turtle Mountain. 1874. Sioux Chief H'damani and part of his band photographed on the slopes of Turtle Mountain by members of the 1874 International Boundary Commission expedition. H'damani is identified as the individual with the white sash, third from right. *(A of MB.)*

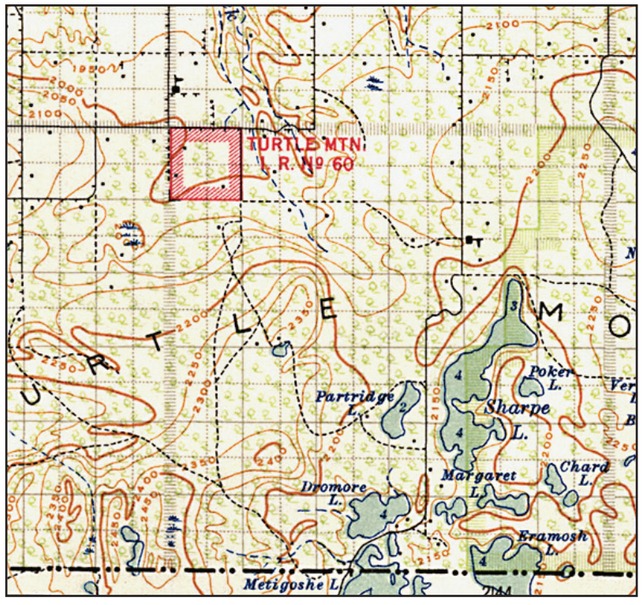

Figure 5.1.19. Right: Turtle Mountain I.R. #60. In 1862, Chief H'Damani sought refuge for his small band of Dakota Santee by fleeing to Canada and settling down on the northwestern slopes of Turtle Mountain. The district offered prime hunting and fishing opportunities and they petitioned the Canadian government for 15 years for a land base before their request base was grudgingly recognized in 1877 with the creation of Turtle Mountain I.R. #60. At one square mile in size, it was the smallest First Nation reserve ever established in Canada. By 1884, the eight Turtle Mountain Dakota families had broken 35 acres of land using a single yoke of oxen. The government was still distrustful of the Sioux having a reserve located so close to the still restless American border and, in 1909, started to relocate the Dakota families living there to other Sioux reserves, encouraged by a $200 payoff. H'damani and his family held on to their land for many years before finally caving in to pressure, accepting the $200 and moving to Oak Lake Reserve #59. Turtle Mountain Sioux Reserve #60 officially ceased to exist in November 1913. Years later, H'damani's grandson, Sitting Eagle moved back and lived out the final 12 years of his life in a small log cabin on his family's originally allotted parcel of land, hunting, trapping and travelling the region. He is said to have been well known throughout the Turtle Mountain region and was well liked by everyone during that period. *(Sectional Map 1912 series - Turtle Mountain sheet.)*

among the Indians trading with it. He added that: *The Ojibwas have been driven from the woods by the scarcity of game, the large animals, such as moose, deer and bear, having greatly diminished in numbers. Many of the wood Indians now keep horses, and enjoy the advantage of making the prairie and the forest tributary to their wants.*" *(Hind'60 1:311.)*

By the time the treaties were negotiated and signed during the early 1870s, the Ojibwa had become the dominant Indigenous population in southern Manitoba. The two existing First Nation I.R. communities located on the edges of the BTNHR, Roseau River I.R. #2 and Swan Lake I.R. #7, are Ojibwa communities.

The Santee Sioux

During the pre-contact period, the Sioux occupied the region west and south of Lake Superior. For the 400 or so years that they occupied this territory, many tribes tried to dislodge them but were unsuccessful until the balance of power was altered in the 17th century. Their eastern neighbours, the Woodland Ojibwa, acquired firearms from the white traders in the east. By the 1700s, the Ojibwa were forcing the most easterly living Sioux, the Santee, to re-locate further west. By 1770, the Santee began vacating their core homeland in central Minnesota and began a transition to Plains Indian culture, accomplished earlier by their more western Teton and Yankton cousins. However, once established on the prairies west of the upper Red River, the Sioux refused to move on and fiercely defended their territory from all incursions, becoming one of the most feared of the prairie tribes. They began moving into British Canada on annual summer raids to fight the Cree, Ojibwa and Assiniboine. It is said that many battles with the Assiniboine took place along the Souris and along the slopes of Turtle Mountain. By 1800, after years of bloody warfare, the Sioux had given up all their lands east of the Mississippi and north of the Crow Wing River to the Ojibwa.

When the French first arrived in the Lake of the Woods region, they became accidental victims in the Sioux vs. Ojibwa blood feud. In June 1736, because the men at Fort St. Charles were badly in need of food, La Vérendrye sent three canoes under the command of his son down to Kaministiquia (on Lake Superior) for supplies. With Jean went the Jesuit missionary, Father Aulneau. On an island in Lake of the Woods, the French were attacked by a party of 100 Sioux warriors. Taken completely by surprise, Jean and his men offered only a feeble defence. All were massacred and decapitated, even Father Aulneau. The island to this day is known as Massacre Island. This apparently unprovoked attack was later explained. Earlier in 1736, a party of Sioux on the way to Fort St. Charles had been fired upon by Chippewa in ambush. When the surprised Sioux had shouted "*Who fires on us?*" the Chippewa are said to have replied, "*The French.*" The Sioux, believing what they had heard, made a vow to avenge themselves. *(A of MB, Imperial Oil Collection.)*

- Hind also made note of large Sioux raiding parties travelling to the Lake of the Woods to attack the Ojibwa. He wrote in 1857, "*Here and fifty years ago, so runs the tradition, a large party of Sioux had penetrated from the south-west into the hunting grounds of the Ojibwas, to make war upon them in the heart of their country and at their best fishing station. The Sioux were driven back, but with terrible loss to the Ojibwas.*" The Roseau River was a favourite route or "war-road" for the Sioux into the Lake of the Woods district. The community of Warroad, Minn. was named in recognition of that fact. *(Hind'60 Vol.1 :90.)*

- Henry Hind, following his expeditions of 1857 and 1858, noted the following concerning the Sioux in his official report, "*The Sioux do not exceed 25,000. Hunting-grounds range from Mississippi River to the Black Hills in Nebraska, and from the mouth of the Big Sioux River to Devils Lake. They have no dealing with the HBC or the half breeds, yet often cross the 49th in pursuit of buffalo, and more frequently in search of a scalp from their hereditary enemies the Ojibwas and Crees.*" Regarding Sioux incursions into HBC trading areas, he added, "*The Hudson's Bay Company have a post on the* (Souris) *River among the Sand Hills, which is maintained only during the winter; the Sioux in summer and autumn being altogether opposed to the approaches of civilization in their hunting grounds, and entertaining besides a feeling of deadly hostility to the Red River half breeds.*" *(Hind'59 :158.)*

During the early 1860s, the Santee Sioux had to flee north into their rival's territories to seek sanctuary from American military troops. In 1862, after decades of broken treaty promises, territory violations, and growing hunger and desperation, a relatively minor chicken-stealing incident escalated and a family of settlers were killed. Before the US authorities and settlers could react, almost 200 more settlers were killed. US troops and militia regrouped to evoke a terrible vengeance on the Sioux. Regardless of their complicity, all Santee Sioux were considered responsible. Some fled further west, others escaped north into British territory. In 1862 and 1863, several thousand destitute Dakota crossed into what is now southern Manitoba seeking refuge and citing the Sioux's help to the British in the War of 1812 and British promises of assistance if needed in return. After receiving some food and aid from the HBC Governor at Fort Garry, they moved on west to White House Plains where they separated into smaller groups in order to hunt and fish, and then headed west into the open plains to pursue bison. The Dakota living north of the border avoided contact with settlers. Some returned to the US after the furor over the Minnesota uprising had subsided and resigned themselves to living on reservations. Those who remained hired themselves out as farm labourers and suppliers of firewood and fish. In working for the white settlers, the Dakota proved themselves to be hard working and soon came to be trusted and respected by their neighbours. *(Borutski'86 :69.)*

Most of the Dakota remained in the vicinity of Portage la Prairie, living in four separate camps, High Bluff, Poplar Point, Portage and Rat Creek. During the winter, the camps moved near the Turtle Mountain region to hunt and trap and petitioned for reserves in Turtle Mountain, but were refused so as to avoid any trouble with the Americans. When Treaty No. 1 was negotiated in 1871, the Cree and Ojibwa were included but not the Dakota, as they were viewed by Dominion officials as refugee American Indians. Finally, in 1873 federal officials set aside land for them "*as a matter of grace, not right.*" Three smaller reserves were established: Birdtail #57A, Sioux Valley #58 and Oak Lake #59. One group chose to remain in the vicinity of Portage and continued to support themselves by fishing and trapping, and hiring out their labour to farmers. In 1891, when the government attempted to relocate the band to one of the other reserves, the Dakota offered to purchase their own land at $5.00 an acre. Title to 25 acres on Lot 99 was awarded to the band in November 1893 and the status of "special reserve" to be called Long Plains Sioux or Sioux Village. The Sioux, no doubt aware of the conditions under which they were allowed to remain in Canada, took care to conduct themselves carefully, and were reported to be intelligent, industrious and self-reliant. *(Borutski'86 :72.)*

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5.2 THE RED RIVER MÉTIS

The first major settlement of French-Indigenous peoples was at Detroit, followed by other settlements at Michilimackinac, Sault Ste. Marie and Prairie du Chien, all in the Upper Great Lakes peninsula, where the soil was fertile and fish and game were abundant. Here the "coureurs de bois", as the French traders became known, were beyond the influence of the missionaries. They became an essential moving force in the fur trade, acting as middlemen, and threatening the trade of the English, based on Hudson Bay.

In 1777, there were 5000 French-Canadian voyageurs in the region between the Great Lakes and the prairies. The name "Métis" (meaning "mixed" in French) began to be used by travellers to the region to describe the people they found living there. By the late 1820s, it was estimated that 10–15,000 Métis were living southwest of Lake Superior and Lake Huron. Between 1815–1850, the mixed-blood frontier communities in the Great Lakes region began to feel uncomfortable under pressure of American immigration and its capitalist society. More importantly, the fur bearing animal supply was largely depleted. Like the Indigenous populations before them, the French-speaking white fur-traders and their Indigenous families were pushed ever westward, bringing them into the territories of the Mississippi and Red Rivers. A new race of people, no longer tied to their fathers' families in Quebec nor their mothers' families in the Ojibwa villages of the Great Lakes region, began to emerge. In 1807, Alexander Henry found 45 "Canadian freemen" and their families gathering near his post at the confluence of the Pembina and Red Rivers, an area near the annual gathering points of bison herds. The need to provision the new NWC organization created an opportunity for the Métis who, in increasing numbers, were migrating into the area from the Great Lakes.

Children of the Fur Trade

There were two mixed-blood groups at Red River — the "Métis" and the "Country Born." The first and largest group were the French-speaking Roman Catholic Métis, who were of French-Indigenous ancestry. The second mixed-blood group were the children of Indigenous women and HBC employees or Selkirk Settlers. The Country Born residents were English-speaking and of the Protestant faith. By 1870, the Métis were the predominant cultural group living in the Red River region, numbering about 10,000 individuals. The main livelihood of the Métis and Country Born had been provisioning of the fur-trading posts of the North West and the Hudson's Bay companies. For decades, the life of the community revolved around small farming operations, the annual buffalo hunt, and working in the fur trade. The Métis are best known for their involvement with the HBC brigades of Red River oxcarts and the freighting life of the Saskatchewan, Pembina and Crow Wing trails.

1818 Arrival of the Quebec Missionaries

An important element in the growth and solidification of the Métis population in the Red River region was the arrival of Francophone missionaries in 1818. The Métis had petitioned the Bishop in Quebec to send them a priest, insisting that they were peaceful people who had been led astray by others at Seven Oaks. Lord Selkirk, too, wanted the peaceful influence that a priest could bring to the colony, and granted land for a large seigneury to support a mission along the east bank of the Red River. Two priests, Joseph-Norbert Provencher and Sévère Dumoulin, were sent from Quebec with instructions to minister to the Native, French-Canadians and Métis. While Provencher undertook to build the Church's institutions at Red River, Dumoulin spent his time with the Métis at Pembina, a spot vital to the bison hunt, but with limited agricultural resources. The site was known to be flood-prone and the priest did not work to encourage the Métis to become farmers since the bison hunt was considered the primary "breadbasket" item of the entire HBC "Rupert's Land" territories.

The Red River and Pembina Métis

By 1821, when hostilities between the NWC and the HBC were finally extinguished by their merger, the missionaries had spent three years teaching the Catholic faith and practice to the Métis. This faith had drawn some families to settle at Red River. Many of the Métis from the Great Lakes region had been persuaded to come to Red River by Lord Selkirk's agent. But the mission at Pembina, where a church and priest's residence were built, in many ways overshadowed the mission at St. Boniface. All these labours were jeopardized in 1818 when the international boundary between the US and British North America was set at the 49th Parallel, leaving Pembina in American territory, although for a short time the border was believed to be slightly south of the Pembina River mouth. Because it was the principal rendezvous point for the summer buffalo hunt, Pembina was more populous than the Red River settlement. In 1821, there were 419 people at Red River and 500 living at Pembina. The core of the Métis community and culture in Manitoba was the Red River settlement, particularly St. François Xavier and St. Norbert parishes. However, as early as the 1820s, a handful of small riverfront settlements were being established in selected areas along the banks of the upper Red, the Seine, the Rat, and the Morris rivers. These loosely-knit communities were initially established as family wintering locations where shelter and firewood could be found and hunting was possible to help sustain the family over the difficult winter months. These increasingly became year-round permanent settlements.

The amalgamation of the two fur companies in 1821 resulted in massive operational redundancies and soon many posts ceased or merged operations. Many employees, as a result, were let go. At least half the entire workforce engaged in freighting and provisioning, virtually all Métis, were suddenly out of work and large-scale migration of former HBC and NWC employees to the Red River settlement began. The retired HBC traders tended to take their Scottish-Indigenous families to live in the northern parishes of the Red River settlement. The French-speaking Métis,who had formerly worked for the NWC, tended to settle south of the Forks, creating the parishes of St. Boniface, St. Vital and St. Norbert.

The First Métis Bison Hunting Expeditions

Since many of the Métis had served at the parkland provision posts, they were quite familiar with the Plains Indian way of life. The meat of the bison was their favourite food and, in summer, they organized the now famous Red River buffalo hunts. There was also a market for pemmican that the HBC relied upon to feed the York boat brigades transporting goods on the northern trade route waterways. The hunts were similar to those of the various Indigenous groups with the exception that the Métis used the two-wheeled Red River cart to transport their kill. Soon after the inception of this annual hunt around 1820, these hunts became a central feature of the Métis culture and provided them with their principal source of income. As the hunt increased in importance, its

Figure 5.2.1. Above: "*A Halfcast with his Wife and Child.*" Peter Rindisbacher illustration of a Métis family, circa 1824. Note the clothing styles, the musket and bow, husband and wife smoking pipes, and the buildings a short distance back from a pond at the far right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.2. Above: "*A Halfcast and his two Wives.*" Peter Rindisbacher illustration, circa 1824. Rindisbacher's paintings suggest that by the early 1820s the Métis had already developed a distinctive culture of their own that set them apart from their Indigenous and European ancestors. Even their own distinctive language evolved, known as "Michif", which was a blend of Cree and French. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.3. Left: "*Buffalo Hunting in the summer.*" 1822. Peter Rindisbacher illustration of Métis hunters, circa 1824. Note the clothing worn by the riders. While bison hunting, muskets were held low to prevent the lead ball from rolling forward in the barrel. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.2.4. Above: Métis campsite. A watercolour illustration of a bison hunt circular campsite. Note, on this occasion, the carts were placed within a circle of tents, creating a corral for the oxen and other livestock. In areas prone to possible encounters with the Sioux, the circle of carts would have been on the outside. This illustration was painted by William Napier in 1858. *(L&AC.)*

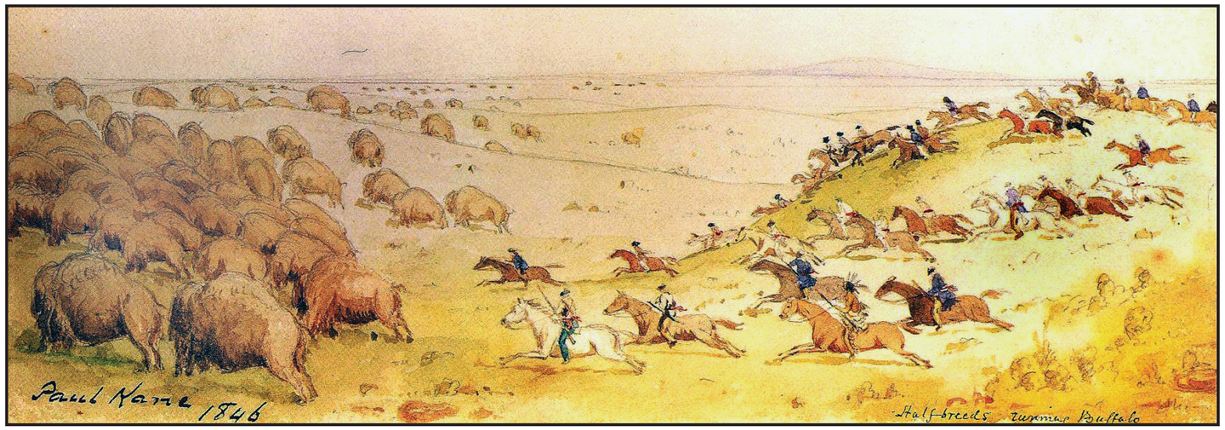

Figure 5.2.5. Above: Métis bison hunt. In May 1846, Paul Kane, a talented young artist from Toronto with a desire to portray the Indigenous peoples of the North West, travelled to the Red River via the arduous Kaministiquia River/Rainy River/Lake of the Woods/Winnipeg River route arriving just in time to join a large group of Métis hunters and their families departing on their annual spring buffalo hunt. His impression of his Métis companions is noteworthy. In part, Kane described them as, "A *race, who, keeping themselves distinct from both Indians and whites, form a tribe of themselves; and although they have adopted some of the customs and manners of the French voyageurs, are much more attracted to the wild and savage manners of the Red man. These descendants of the white men in the Hudson's Bay Company's employment and the native Indian women proved to be a very hard race of men, capable of enduring the greatest hardships and fatigue, but neglecting their* (farm) *land for the more exciting pleasures of the chase.*" *(MHM'59-12.)*

Figure 5.2.6. Above: Red River Jig. Undated pencil sketch, no doubt drawn from life, with the simple caption "Pembina Métis dancing." Note all the men on the left side along with the two fiddle players, and the women and family groups on the opposite side of the room. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.2.7. Above: A Métis carpenter. An illustration made during the early 1860s by William Hind of a Red River Cart under construction. Note the plane on the work bench, the scarf joints on the wheel at left, and the two unfinished curved felloe sections at the lower right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.8. Above: Métis cart brigade. A photograph showing a long line of loaded Red River carts temporarily stopped on the trail, likely to help facilitate the taking of this photograph. Each driver was typically responsible for three carts, leading the oxen pulling the first cart, with the other two oxen tied to the cart in front of it, as can be seen in this image. *(L&AC.)*

scale also increased. In 1820, 540 carts were dispatched from the Red River colony. By 1830, the number had risen to 820 and, by 1840, to 1210. Thus, the Métis emerged as serious competitors with the Aboriginal population for the fur trade provision market. By 1840, the Assiniboine population on the Souris Plains had declined drastically partly through constant war with the Sioux but mostly by European diseases, such as smallpox, which decimated 90% of their former population. This opened up the Souris Plains to the Sioux and the Red River Métis. This lasted until 1851, when the Métis won the Battle of Grande Coteau, after which the Sioux avoided encounters, and the Métis went on to dominate the Souris Plains region. Figure 5.2.5.

By the early 1830s, the herds were becoming more scarce and the Métis hunters were ranging as far south as the Cheyenne River in North Dakota. The 1840 Red River hunt numbered 1630 Métis hunters with their families in 1210 Red River carts. The route taken from the Red River settlement followed what then was known as the "North West Fur Trail", later the Commission Trail to the Turtle Mountain region and beyond. The north shore of Whitewater Lake was a favourite camping area during this period. The size of the hunt later increased to over 4500 carts. The meat was mostly made into pemmican for the fur companies and it usually took ten bison to fill one cart with pemmican. By the late 1860s, the bison had disappeared from the Souris Plains. During the pioneer settlement in the BTNHR, in the 1870s, only odd groups of two or three bison would be seen in the prairie west of Turtle Mountain to the Souris River, and these would usually be rounded up and killed as soon as they were sighted. *(Wright'51 :20.)*

The Red River "Bois-Brûlés"

- B.L.H., a reporter from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine,* identified only by his initials, journeyed to Pembina and the Red River settlement in 1858 and published an article in the January 1859 edition of the American magazine entitled "The People of the Red River." In it, the reporter, he described the Métis (or in his words the "Bois-Brûlés") settlements he visited and included a description of the sights and sounds of a Métis bison hunt. His interesting account, in part, read, "*The Bois-brûlés and Canadians, with their descendants from their more recent inter-marriages with Indian women, are of the Catholic faith, and gain their subsistence by hunting. Their dwellings, as well as those of the agricultural portion of the colony, are scattered over the country, between and along the banks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers, from their confluence southward, beyond the international border, into Minnesota. The neat little white frame and log cottages, with their well-cultivated garden lots and field enclosures, have an air of charming and quiet repose. Here and there a wind-mill, or a pointed church-spire, lends an additional and suggestive beauty to the landscape. Here, they live in peaceful simplicity, and in all the rural quiet of their ancestral village hamlets among the Highlands of Scotland.*

The life of the hunters is just the reverse of this quiet simplicity; their time is alternatively spent in the excitements and adventures of the chase, or in indolence and festivity. While the products of their last excursions hold out, they are the gayest of the gay. They nightly dance to the fiddle or to the drone of the bagpipe; or with gambling, drinking, song and amatory sports, help the whirling hours speed by. As spring advances, however, they go to work in real earnest, to be ready for the opening expedition against the buffalo. As they are all taught the use of their rude implements, the building of new carts and repairing of old ones fill the settlements with the rattling of a thousand hammers. These carts are curious and ingenious contrivances, built entirely of wood; not a nail, or screw, or particle of metal being used in their construction. But such is their strength and durability that they last for several years, and carry heavy loads on journeys of a thousand miles every season. Harnesses are manufactured of raw hide cut into strips and adjusted to fit any ox. The old ones are mended up; buffalo skins are stitched into tents, and put into readiness for the long trip and sojourn across the plains.

At length, usually about the 1st of June, the appointed day for starting arrives. Sometimes over a thousand of their carts are gathered together and go out in a single train, stretching far over the waste of prairie, like the caravans in the Eastern stories. They are accompanied by the women and children, who pitch the tents, and attend to the cooking and other light duties about the camp. The hunters elect captains, and the camp is divided into bands under them; while a chief captain, or commander, controls the whole company. The captains form a council, and adopt rules to govern the camp, which are usually obeyed to the letter. The following were some of the rules of the camp: 1. No buffalo to be run on the Sabbath-day; 2. No party to fork off, lag behind, or go before, without permission; 3. No person to run buffalo before the general order; 4. Every captain, with his men, in his turn to patrol the camp and keep guard; 5. For the first trespass against these laws, the offender to have his saddle and bridle cut up; 6. For the second offense, the coat to be taken off the offender's back and cut up; 7. For the third offense, offender to be flogged; 8. Any person convicted of theft, even to the value of a sinew, to be brought to the middle of the camp, and the crier to call out his or her name three times, adding the word 'Thief' at each time.

When they halt at night, the carts are arranged in the form of a circle, with the shafts projecting outward; and within this wooden cordon the tents are pitched at one end and the animals tethered at the other extremity. Sentinels, who are regularly relieved at intervals, patrol the camp; and not infrequently the hunter's sound slumber is broken by the alarm cry to repel the stealthy attack of the treacherous Yanktons. Raising the flag is the signal for starting in the mornings, and when struck at evening is the signal to halt and encamp." *(HNMM'59-01.)*

- "Kootenai Brown" participated in some of the last major Métis bison hunts in western Canada and provided a vivid personal account which was later published in the *Family Herald* magazine. In part it read, "*When the hunting season opened, everybody — men, women, and children — left the wintering places in carts, wagons and some even with the old travois. We took all our belongings which sometimes did not mean much, but we took them anyhow. After we had travelled out of range of winter quarters in which we had killed off all buffalo, scouts were sent ahead on horseback to find where the buffalo were in numbers sufficient to move the whole camp. Sometimes, these scouts would have to travel 100 miles before returning to report that it was worthwhile making camp. Often it would be several days before we would make our first stop, but after that we would not need to travel far. You understand a little hunting was done all winter and because of this buffalo did not live in large numbers near the camp.*

When the scouts returned, they met the camp which had been following them up and, when near the point where the buffalo were found in numbers, all the riders — between 150 and 300 in number — would range themselves abreast to give every man a fair chance. With the captain of the hunt about the centre of the line and about three horse lengths ahead, we would advance at a slow walk towards the buffalo who would huddle together and show signs of alarm and finally break into a fast walk. The leader of the hunt would yell 'Trot!' About this time, we would be 300 yards from the herd. They would shortly break into a slow gallop and the chief hunter would give his final command 'Equa, Equa!' meaning 'Now, Now!' and every one of the long line of hunters would spur their runners into a gallop at full speed. From this time on, it was every man for himself. Those who had the fastest horses got to the buffalo first and got their pick of the herd. Sometimes a hunter on a very fast horse would have three or as many as five buffalo shot before the main body of the hunters got up. A great deal depended on the horse he was riding. Some of them were the best race horses that could be bought on the prairie. Some hunters in a drive of this kind would kill as many as 10 buffalo and the whole camp would probably total 1000 head.

It was some experience for a new hunter—dust flying, horns clashing, buffalo bellowing, men yelling, and all going at top speed. The buffalo dared not stop as the rest of the herd would trample over them. There was hardly ever a drive in which someone was not hurt. It rarely ever happened that a hunter was shot, but sometimes he would be knocked off his horse and another rider would run over him. We had to be very careful and at the same time we had only a few minutes to do our executions. The run of the herd would average about one mile. Some of the slow or long-winded horses might run a couple of miles, but most of the killing was done within 500 yards.

A hunter would occasionally be hurt, as I said. I remember once breaking my shoulder blade. I had killed six buffalo in a drive, which should have been amply sufficient for the day, but I was riding a fast horse, was too greedy, and rode into a bunch of buffalo that crowded into my horse and he stumbled and fell. I don't know how many animals ran over me. When I was picked up by the other hunters I was unconscious and I was taken back to camp in a meat cart. I was only laid up for a week but was not able to hunt for the remainder of the season.

The next thing to do after killing a buffalo was to get it to camp. After that, the hunter's work ended. The women did the rest. First, they had to cut the meat into strips. No salt was put on this meat cut in these strips, but it would have kept for centuries. It was sun dried, that is it was hung on a fence or on a wagon, on a tent rope or anywhere that sun could get at it. Or, if there was no sun, it was hung in the house and heat-dried till it would break off like brittle candy. It took about three days to dry it if weather was favorable. It was always taken down at night, thrown in a heap somewhere and covered to keep it from night dews. After it was dried, some of this meat was tied like lariat rope and held tightly by raw-hide cord. This was used for travelling food if we had no pemmican. The roll so tied would weigh about 60 pounds and was made of an assortment of fat and lean meat. When flies were bad in hot weather, it was our custom to smoke the meat a little before putting it out to dry." *(FHM'68 Feb.8.)*

Pemmican

- Kootenai Brown also described, in detail, how pemmican was made, "*When it came to the making of pemmican, the men of the camp had to help. Pemmican was made out of dried meat and was made at a time when there was nothing for the men of the camp to do. The dry meat was taken and spread out on wagon sheets or old buffalo skins, or dressed moose hides or deer skins. Well, these were spread out on the ground and the dried meat put on them in rows and pounded with a flail until reduced to a dry powder almost as fine as flour. The fat was boiled in huge copper pots, or cauldrons, which took four men to lift. Bones and all were put into the pot to boil and every bit of grease that was possible to get out was taken out for the pemmican.*

When the hides were taken from the carcass, a certain number of bags were made by sewing up the hide into fashioned parts with sinews from the back part of the animal. These sacks would measure about 2½ feet long and about 18 inches across the mouth. The pemmican, while still hot with the boiling grease, was shovelled into the sacks and pounded down with blunt sticks to make it a solid mass. The bag was filled to the top and then stitched up with the sinew. A full sack would weigh over 100 pounds. A finer grade of pemmican was made up by the addition of berries flailed to a pulp with the meat. When the whites joined in the scene, they began improving pemmican still further by adding currants, raisins and sugar. These were boiled and pounded before they were put in. You can make a sort of pemmican out of any sort of meat except bear, but buffalo and beef are the favored meats. Pemmican was always considered a very highly nutritious food. Three pounds a day was considered all the food necessary for a man under the hardest conditions of travel." *(FHM'68-02-08.)*

The 1869 Red River Resistance

The first of a series of momentous events having disastrous effect on the Red River Métis occurred in the spring of 1869. The new Dominion of Canada government, led by Sir John A. MacDonald, purchased from the HBC its vast "Rupert's Land" territories and, without consulting or notifying the resident population of this transaction, sent land surveyors to prepare the territory for "white" agricultural settlement. With the lack of communication and information, and fearing the loss of their homes, language, lifestyle and culture, the residents of the Red River settlement, particularly the dominant population group, the French-speaking Métis, organized a resistance to these activities. Lead by Louis Riel, the Métis and their allies established a legal, temporary, provisional government to negotiate terms and protections for the resident population.

The small but vocal "Canadian" (WASP) population at Red River at the time strongly opposed the provisional government, leading to arrests and imprisonment of English speaking "belligerents." When Thomas Scott, a particularly vocal and hostile prisoner, was tried and executed by firing squad, many Anglo-Canadian groups in Ontario and Quebec accused the Red River Métis of armed rebellion against Her Majesty and demanded retribution on the traitor Louis Riel and the Métis inhabitants of Red River. In 1870, the "Red River Expeditionary Force" was sent to put down the resistance and establish Dominion Government administration over the territories. With a price on his head, Riel was forced to flee the region, but his negotiating

Figure 5.2.9. Above: Métis encampment. An 1850s studio painting by Paul Kane, based on sketches he made in 1846, of Métis hunters gathering at Pembina prior to departure on the annual spring bison hunt. A defensive, circular campsite, was not necessary while in the safety of their home territories. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.2.10. Above: Freighters. Métis freighter in St. Paul picking up orders and merchandise to be hauled 500 km. to Red River. The US merchants viewed the Métis as "*curious but friendly.*" *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.11. Above: Red River Métis home. A photograph of a typical Métis residence at Red River circa 1870. Note the log construction and thatched roofs, the rail fencing, the family group by the doorway, and the ox hitched to a Red River cart. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.12. Above: Freighting. Freighters resting by fully loaded carts along the trail somewhere between St. Paul and Red River. *(L&AC.)*

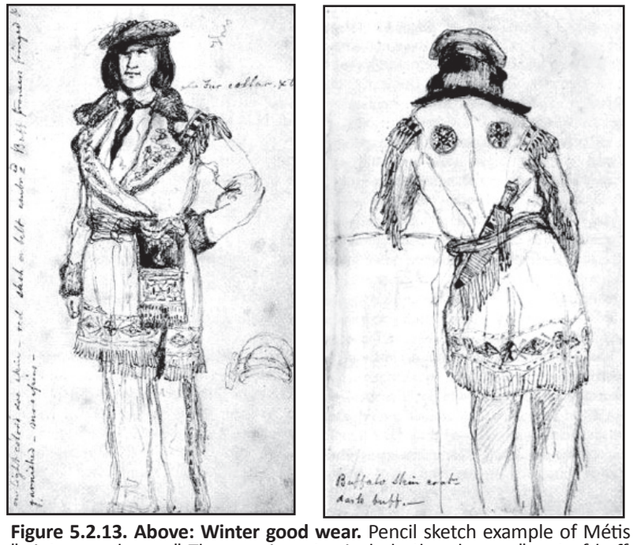

Figure 5.2.13. Above: Winter good wear. Pencil sketch example of Métis "winter good wear." The margin notes include the phrases "*coat of buff, lapels embroidered on light coloured doe skin, red belt sash, buff trousers fringed and garnished, fur collar.*" *(L&AC.)*

Figure 5.2.14. Above: 1869 provisional government council. A photograph of Louis Riel and the councillors and ministers in the provisional government established to resist unilateral takeover of the Rupert's Land without consulting its residents. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.15. Left: Boundary Commission scouts - "The 49th Rangers." From the pages of the *Manitoban and Northwest Herald,* May 17, 1873: "*The English Boundary Commissioner, Capt. Cameron, has engaged some thirty English and French Half-Breeds to go with the Boundary Commission, which is expected to start on the 25th inst. These men will be on horseback and under the leadership of Mr. William Hallett, who will, we are sure, prove most efficient in anything he undertakes. The party are under engagement for five months, about which time the Commission will probably be seeking its winter quarters. The Commission will, necessarily, travel very slow, not making, in all probability, more than about 300 miles during the season.*" Identified, back row left to right, are: William Hallett, William Gaddie, Gabriel La Fournaise, Francois Gosselin and Donald McDonald. *(A.of MB.)*

Figure 5.2.16. Right: Métis settlements. As early as the 1820s, a handful of small riverfront settlements were being established by Métis families in selected areas along the banks of the upper Red, the Seine, the Rat, and the Morris Rivers. This woodcut is based on a John Fleming sketch, entitled, "*The Red River at Pierre Gladieux's.*" It shows Métis homes on the banks of the Red River eight km. (five mi.) south of Fort Garry circa 1857. *(Hind'60 :165.)*

Figure 5.2.17. Above: Winter hermitage. Métis settlement and camp at Wood Mountain, Sask., located just west of the BTNHR region. Circa 1870. Similar such winter encampments also existed in earlier years in the Turtle Mountain, Lauder Sandhills and Rock Lake districts within the BTNHR. *(L&AC.)*

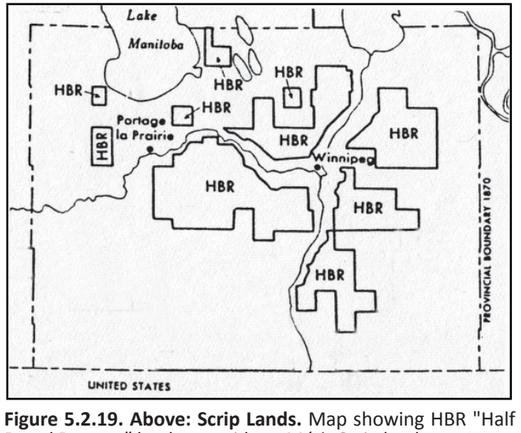

Figure 5.2.19. Above: Scrip Lands. Map showing HBR "Half Breed Reserve" lands set aside as Métis Scrip land. *(HRB.)*

Figure 5.2.18. Above: Scrip certificate, 1885 Issue. "*Dominion of Canada Department of the Interior. Issued under order of the Privy Council the 30th March 1885 by the North West Half Breed Commission. The Bearer hereof is entitled to an allowance of One Hundred and Sixty dollars in any purchase of Dominion Lands.*" *(HRB.)*

Figure 5.2.20. Above: Métis Settlement in Southern Manitoba. A painting of a Métis home by William Hind. Circa 1862. Note the whitewashed walls on the house and the rail fencing. *(L&AC.)*

team, which included Roman Catholic Bishop Alexandre Taché, succeeded in negotiating the entry of the Red River settlement into Canadian Confederation as the Province of Manitoba, including French language protection and Métis land rights.

Under the terms of *The Manitoba Act of 1870,* several million acres of land in southern Manitoba were set aside as Métis "scrip" land reservations. Eligible members of both the Métis and Country Born community were granted 100 hectare (240 acre) parcels of land. Much of the scrip was allotted by random selection, resulting in family members receiving land in widespread locations. Few Métis chose to settle on the property granted to them. Most traded with others or, more often, sold their land to real estate agents, individual settlers, and even the Catholic Church in St. Boniface that purchased large amounts of scrip land. No doubt, some were also swindled out of their land or lost it as a result of non-payment of municipal taxes, etc. A great many families chose to simply move west to less-populated and less "civilized" regions, particularly in the Batoche district near the forks of the North and South Saskatchewan Rivers. This out-migration, during the late 1870s, greatly reduced the Métis presence in the Red River valley. With the arrival of many French-Canadian settlers, the remaining Métis in the Red River valley largely merged with the more populous Francophone community. Métis presence and culture in southern Manitoba never completely died out however, and in recent years, has experienced a dramatic cultural comeback.

The Lauder Sandhills Métis Community

The Turtle Mountain and nearby Lauder Sandhills region, in the western portion of the BTNHR, had long been a favorite bison hunting and, later, an "overwintering" area, for the Red River Métis. Located about 35 kms. northwest of Whitewater Lake, on the west side of the Souris River, the Lauder Sandhills is a former glacial-era sand delta deposit. Its hilly uneven topography resulted in the development of wetlands and a rich biodiversity, that in turn attracted bison and other wildlife, as well as Aboriginal and Métis hunters. Local history records indicate that in 1837, with the Assiniboine presence in the region waning, a group of 60 Métis families from St. Francois Xavier began travelling to the sandhills area in search of bison. Soon, the group was making twice-annual trips, arriving every spring and fall. They developed a hunting circuit that included hunting around Turtle Mountain and then going north past Whitewater Lake to establish camps in an area known as the "chain lakes", near present-day Dand. These small, connected lakes situated in a former river channel made for an ideal camping area. Here they camped twice a year while hunts were conducted in and around the Lauder Sandhills just a short distance to the northwest. The annual bison hunts continued into the late 1850s before the bison numbers began to fall and the herds failed to appear, forcing the Métis hunters to seek new hunting areas further west and even southwest into Sioux territory.

The lifestyle and economy of the Métis changed drastically after they could no longer rely on the bison; however, not all Métis abandoned the Lauder Sandhills district with the departure of the bison herds. Year-round permanent Métis settlement in the area began shortly after the closure of HBC Fort Grant on the Souris River in 1861, when some of the former Métis employees and provisioners settled in and around the sandhills and took up mixed farming, augmented by hunting and trapping. Their descendants along with later arrivals, still live in the region and, although small in number, the Métis presence and association with the Lauder Sandhills district is still well-known and celebrated.

The Turtle Mountain Métis Community

The Métis began settling permanently on Turtle Mountain in more recent times, despite the area being a favorite hunting area for many decades. The Turtle Mountain Métis community began in 1908, when a group of four Métis families, originally from St. Francois Xavier, settled near Lake Metigoshe and adjoining Lake Dropmore where land unsuitable for farming became available for purchase and even homesteading. The rough "bush and wetlands" landscape attracted game and trappable animals and was seen as a sustainable resource for the community, who for the most part, preferred hunting and trapping to farming.

The community's growth was helped in 1913 when the HBC and railway sections that had been reserved became available for settlement, and a fairly significant number of both Métis and European settlers took up land in the area. Lake Metigoshe was long known for harbouring a large quantity of fish in its waters, unlike the smaller, shallower, lakes on the Turtle Mountain uplands. It was even known as "Fish Lake" in earlier days and was one of the reasons for the establishment and early success of the community. The cutting of timber for fence posts and firewood was also an important local industry and many sleigh loads of wood were hauled down the mountain "into town", Deloraine or Mountainside, to be sold or exhanged for groceries. Berry picking was also a way to earn cash and for home preserving. Whole families went on berry picking expeditions, picking pails of highbush cranberries, chokecherries, saskatoons, pincherries, strawberries, raspberries and wild plums. Hunting and trapping were the most favoured activities for the men of the community.

The Marsden School District #1247 was formally established in October 1903 near the community, but a proper school building was not erected until five years later. The schoolhouse was situated on a hill along the "Firebreak Trail" that made it visible from miles around. There was a small lake just to the east that became known as "Schoolhouse Lake." Marsden School is remembered as having been blessed by very good and dedicated teachers who, among other services, offered night classes for adults and taught the girls to knit and sew. Because of the high number of Métis students, the school functioned for decades as essentially a "Métis only" school. The school house became an important feature to the community and doubled as a community centre. Marsden School was closed in 1966, along with most other rural school houses, as part of the province-wide "school consolidation" program initiated during the early 1960s. After the closure of Marsden School, the local children were transported by bus to schools in Deloraine. The sudden change from attending a small school with mostly Métis students to a large one where they were a distinct minority was a drastic and distressful experience for many of the children. Today, the Turtle Mountain Métis community, like that in the Lauder Sandhills, is well-integrated into the region's cultural and economic mosaic. A Métis cultural centre was recently built at "Billy's Point" on the shores of Dropmore Lake and has become a focal point for the community, much as Marsden School had been in earlier days. *(TM-SPHA).*

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6.0 GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY EXPEDITIONS 1857-1874 AD

Scientists, Surveyors and Mounties

6.1 THE CANADIAN AND BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN EXPLORING EXPEDITIONS

The BTNHR played a significant role in many important expeditions, including the Canadian and British North America Exploring Expedition (1857–59), the Dominion Survey (1869), the Red River Expeditionary Force (1870), Her Majesty's North American Boundary Commission (1873–74), and the NWMP Great Trek West (1874), among others. Its strategic location at the eastern edge of the Canadian prairies and its central location within the Hudson Bay watershed made what is now southern Manitoba a natural meeting and jumping-off point for western exploration and travel. Fort Dufferin served as the headquarters for both the Boundary Commission and the NWMP 1874 Trek West. The first survey stake, or point of beginning for the entire Dominion Survey, occurred in the BTNHR in Section 1, Township 1 and Range 1. Few, if any, other regions in western Canada were party to the number and variety of Canadian "expedition" events that the BTNHR was. An overview of some of the more significant expeditions follows including, where available, journal entries by the participants themselves.

The monopoly of the HBC to exclusive trade and jurisdiction in the British Northwest Territories was due to expire in 1859. In the years leading up to that date, the Company indicated that it would be officially requesting an extension of its charter. However, the Canadian colonial government indicated to Britain that it was extremely interested in extending its administrative jurisdiction over the interior and opposed an extension of HBC's Royal Charter. It requested a scientific expedition be launched, pointing out that no appropriate information on the resources west of the Great Lakes existed, arguing that, "*Settlement of the interior and a communication link over all the British possessions in North America* [Canada, Rupert's Land and British Columbia] *seemed desirable imperial goals, but their feasibility was uncertain without more thorough investigation of the area*." *(Huyda'75 :3.)*

The British government agreed and, in 1856, planning began for two separate "scientific" expeditions to assess "*Populations and fauna, the potential for roads and navigable waterways, and of the possibilities for farming and mining*." There were several reasons behind the British and Canadian governments sponsoring exploring expeditions into the western interior. There was growing imperial concern for more secure links with the far western colony in British Columbia, where gold had been discovered. The Pacific coast was of growing importance to British trade interests due to the growth of trade with the Orient. In the interior, the small settlements along the Red River had been growing slowly, and it was undesirable that they should remain isolated and exposed to American westward expansion. The growing closeness between Americans and the Red River Settlement, coupled with a lack of an all-Canadian route to the west, threatened the security of the entire British Northwest Territories. The British-sponsored expedition was officially known as "The British North American Exploring Expedition of 1857–1859", but is more commonly referred to as "The Palliser Expedition." Similarly, the Canadian expeditions are officially known as "The Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857" and "The Assiniboine and Saskatchewan Exploring Expedition of 1858", but are better known simply as the "Hind Expeditions."

Palliser Expedition

John Palliser was born in Dublin, Ireland, in 1817, the son of a rich Irish landowner. After having studied in several European countries, he attained the rank of captain in the British army without ever having had to serve. After a tour of service, he left the military and spent his days travelling the world and hunting big game. In 1847, he came to hunt bison on the western plains and to observe the way of life of the Indigenous peoples and fur traders. His adventures, published as "*Solitary Rambles and Adventures of a Hunter in the Prairies*", were published in London in 1853, to great acclaim. Upon learning of the British government's need for an expedition to Rupert's Land and wishing to see the west again, Palliser presented an exploration plan to the London Royal Geographical Society. The Society, of which he was a member, was enthused by the project and recommended that the Colonial Office send a scientific team, with Palliser as its leader. His mandate was to explore the plains and mountains close to the 49th parallel, to examine the possibility of building a road between Lake Superior and the Red River and between the Prairies and the Pacific, and to observe the natural and human environment. The Colonial Office agreed to sponsor the expedition and the HBC provided transport and lodging. Captain Palliser was accompanied by James Hector, a geologist, naturalist, and doctor; Eugène Bourgeau, a botanist-collector; and John William Sullivan, a secretary and astronomer. Lieutenant Thomas Wright Blakiston of the Royal Artillery, a specialist in magnetic variations and ornithologist, joined them along the way.

Palliser's team passed through New York and then stopped for a month at Sault Ste. Marie to study and map the route of the voyageurs from Lake Superior to Lower Fort Garry on the Red River. Leaving Fort Garry on July 21, 1857, the group skirted the international boundary area in the current BTNHR. Palliser then travelled up to the area of the Saskatchewan River to winter at Carleton House on the North Saskatchewan. In the spring of 1858, the group split up to look for practicable passes in the Rockies. They all met back at Fort Edmonton during the winter of 1857–58. Palliser, and two friends who had joined him, went hunting and visited Indigenous people while James Hector conducted explorations in the district. In 1859, the group returned to exploring the Rockies, this time along the 49th parallel where they encountered Americans working on delineating the Canadian-American border and who told them of a track from Fort Langley, on the lower Fraser River, to Lake Osoyoos. After ascertaining that this track was entirely north of the 49th parallel, Palliser considered his mission completed. He then made his way to Victoria, British Columbia where he boarded a ship headed for Montreal and, after spending the winter there, he returned to England arriving on June 16, 1860. He produced a series of reports, which were published in 1859, 1860 and 1863, proclaiming them as the first environmental and human observations ever published on the southern prairies and the Rocky Mountains of Canada. He also identified "Palliser's Triangle", a large area of shortgrass prairie in southern Alberta and southwestern Saskatchewan that later proved suitable for cattle grazing, but which he described as semi-arid and unsuitable for farming.

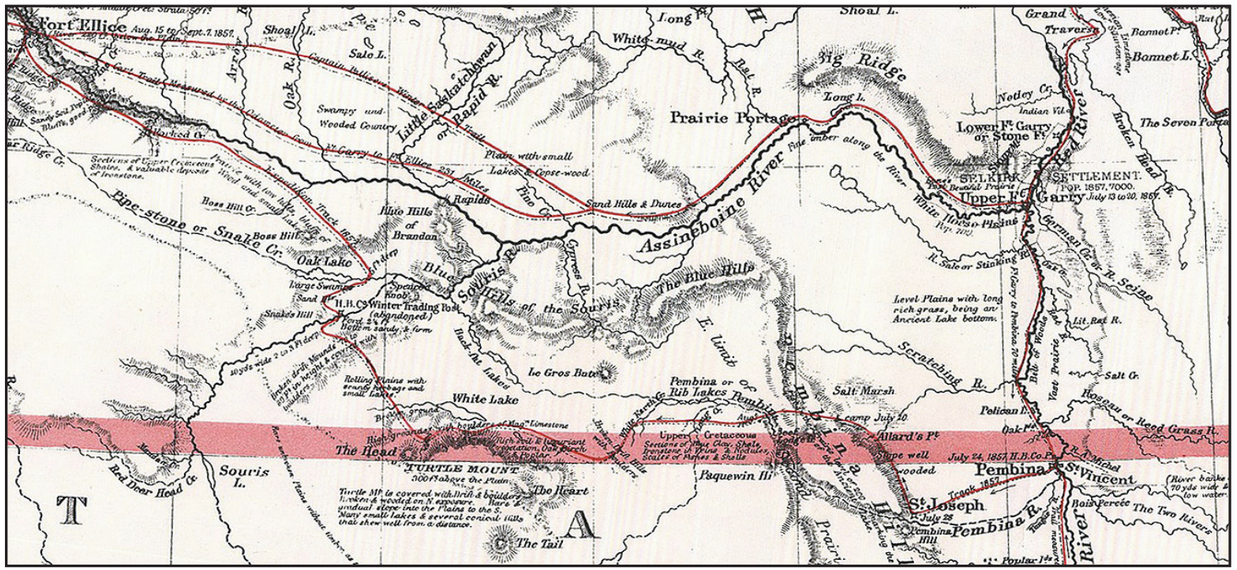

Figure 6.1.1. Above: Palliser's BTNHR explorations. Detail of map produced by the Palliser expedition during the summer of 1857. The expedition explored the Pembina Hills and Turtle Mountain region in late June and early August 1857. Campsite locations were marked with dates on the route map. *(A of MB.)*

July 29, 1857 – St. Joseph. *St. Joseph's has been established for several years, and consists of numerous detached dwellings, which, however, are well arranged on a regular plan with a view to the after-construction of streets. There is abundance of enclosed land, and the whole is prettily situated at the base of what is known as Pembina Mountain, just where the river of that name issues from it through a large deep valley coming from the west. To the north and east bare plains extend as far as the eye can reach, while to the south thick woods run along the base of the hill and out into the plain to the south of the river, consisting principally of poplars, but with a few oaks and ash intermixed. Altogether, the position of this place is well adapted for a settlement; wells sunk anywhere in the neighbourhood yield readily ample supplies of excellent water. The neighbouring prairies are admirably suited for grazing, and its capabilities, from the swamps which skirt the base of the hill plenty of hay can be obtained. The fields are very fertile, and there is no lack of wood for all purposes. Notwithstanding all this favourable concurrence of circumstances for the agriculturist, the inhabitants, who are chiefly Red River half-breeds, were at this time all off to the prairies in search of buffalo, leaving their houses and fields deserted during that season of the year when their labour would be most productive.* *(Palliser'63 :37.)*

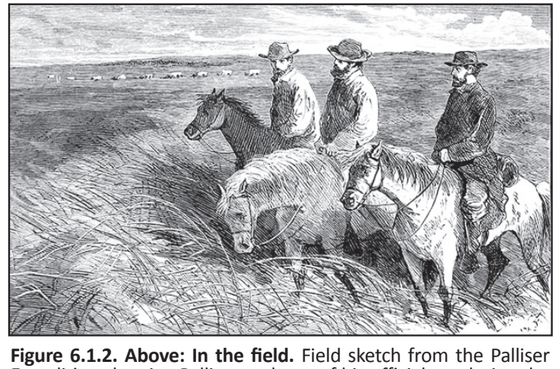

Figure 6.1.2. Above: In the field. Field sketch from the Palliser Expedition showing Palliser and two of his officials exploring the Souris plains. *(Palliser'60, Vol.1 :285.)*

August 1, 1857 – Pembina Crossing. *In about one hour and a quarter, we arrived at the brink of the wide valley through which Pembina River runs. The descent to the river margin is very precipitous, but there is a tolerably good road, winding through copse wood, formed by the hunters, who resort annually to the plains beyond. The flat in the bottom of this valley is about one mile wide, and through this, the small stream, not more than 10 yards broad, follows a very circuitous course. Its depth at the ford where we crossed is not great, only rising to the axletrees of our carts, and the only inconvenience we experienced was in ascending the declivity with our laden wagons. The vegetation in the base of the valley seemed to be very rich and the left side especially is well wooded. We have had a long pull in reaching the opposite brink of the valley and, although the road takes advantage of a lateral ravine, the ascent still remains steep.*

August 9, 1857 – Turtle's Head. *As we neared the hill or mountain as it is called, in common with every little rising ground in this flat prairie country, the altitude which it apparently possessed when viewed from a distance has dwindled away very considerably; and now that we were close under its flank it seemed to be nothing more than a dense forest, covering a gentle swell in the prairie, and which rises from 250 to 300 feet above the general level. In the course of our ride this afternoon, we encountered nothing but broken ground, covered by impenetrable thicket, and studded with innumerable lakes, which form the breeding-places of many kinds of water fowl, — swans, geese, ducks, coots, divers, etc. I tracked up and got a shot at a wapiti* (red deer), *but missed him. The dense thicket and the absence of all tracks through the woods, so different from the valley of the Missouri, renders the hunting here very arduous. This hill, however, had once a great name as a hunting ground, and abounded with moose, wapiti and bears; but as the buffalo resort here every winter and bring in their trail numerous camps of Indians and companies of half-breed hunters, the game has been either exterminated or driven away. We have been disappointed by the entire absence of buffalo from the plains in this neighbourhood where they are so frequently found, but, perhaps, it is as well for us that it is so, as we are now on the confines of the Sioux country and we shall be less likely to see Indians, or get our horses stolen.*

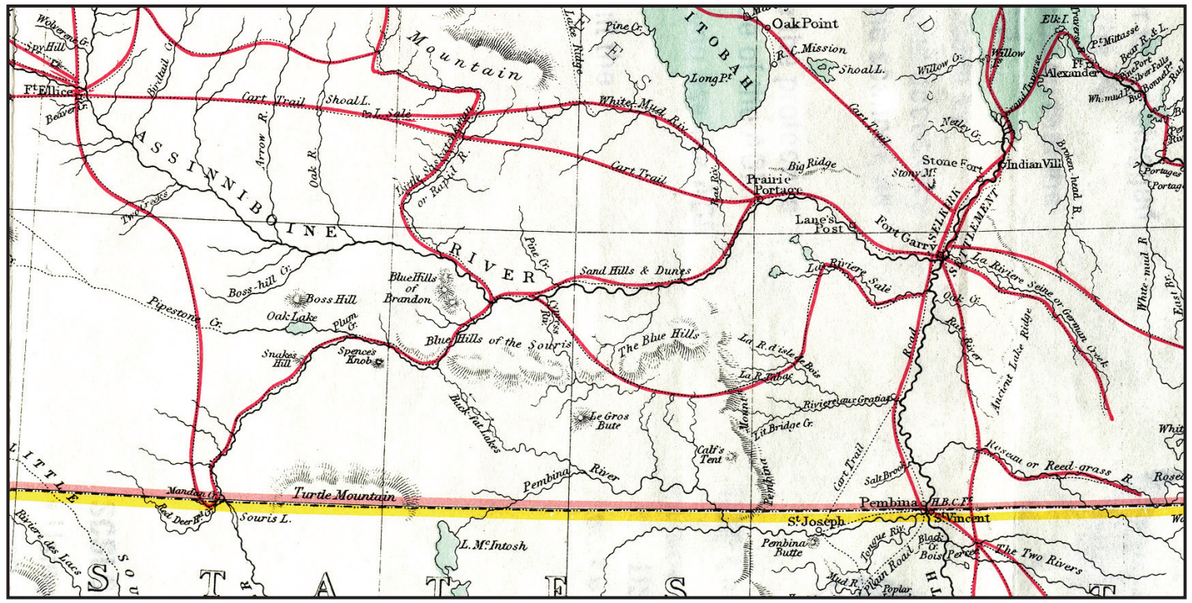

Figure 6.1.3. Above: Hind's BTNHR explorations. Detail of map produced by the Hind Expedition during the summer of 1858. The Expedition explored the Pembina Hills and Turtle Mountain region in late June and early August. *(A of MB.)*

Hind Expedition

The second scientific expedition, sponsored by Britain and the Canadian colony, was conducted in 1857-1858 by Henry Youle Hind, starting from Upper Canada. Born in Nottingham, England in 1823, Hind studied in Europe before immigrating to Toronto in 1846. He was teaching chemistry and geology at Trinity College when the Geological Survey of Canada asked him to accompany an expedition whose mandate was similar to Palliser's but somewhat more modest. He left Toronto at the end of July 1857 with a former fur trader, George Gladman, and an engineer, Simon James Dawson. For the next three months, after having examined the length of the Kaministiquia route to the Red River, the explorers conducted surveys in the Red and Assiniboine River valleys.

During the summer of 1858, Professor Hind explored west along the Assiniboine River, to its confluence with the Souris River, and then south up the Souris River to Antler Creek near the US border, before heading northwest to Fort Ellice and the Qu'Appelle and Saskatchewan River districts beyond. His work, *Narrative of the Canadian Red River Exploring Expedition of 1857* published in 1860, is still a classic description of the prairies before they were colonized. During the 1860s, while still pursuing his teaching career, Hind conducted geological surveys in Labrador in 1861 and later in the Maritimes to where he moved. He would write numerous works on geology, the natural sciences, and agriculture. He died in Windsor, Nova Scotia in 1908.

After leaving the Red River on June 15, 1858, Hind's division (including 14 men, six Red River carts and 15 horses) travelled up the Little Souris River, below present-day Brandon, Manitoba. He had James Austin Dickson as his surveyor and engineer, John Fleming as assistant surveyor and draughtsman, and H.L. Hime as photographer. The summer of 1858 was exceedingly dry and their impressions of the land south of the Assiniboine River was generally negative. Hind noted they had travelled through a country whose "*general character is that of sterility.*" However, the Turtle Mountain district received praise for its fertility.

On June 27, 1858, they ascended "*the last of the Blue Hills*", near modern day Margaret, Manitoba. There they looked out onto "*one of the most sublime and grand spectacles of its kind, a boundless level prairie on the opposite side of the river, one hundred and fifty feet below us, of a rich, dark-green colour, without a tree or shrub to vary its uniform level.*" *(Hind'60, Vol 1 :291.)*

As a result of the Canadian Exploring Expedition's glowing reports about the Pembina Hills - Turtle Mountain region, and of the whole prairie parkland region in general, increased interest in the west developed in colonial Canada. While acclaimed for its useful content, the expedition reports did not generate immediate interest in settlement and development in the British North West and the HBC charter was renewed for another 10 years. Nevertheless, the reports of the Canadian and British Exploring Expeditions were to form the basis of the Canadian government's plans for the transcontinental railway and the subsequent settlement of the west. Excerpts from both Palliser and Hind's final reports describing their explorations and impressions of the current BTNHR can be found on the Region's website.

***

June 24, 1858 – Souris Mouth. *Directed course towards the Assiniboine and Souris Forks, reaching the Assiniboine opposite the mouth of the Little Souris, 146 miles from Fort Garry at 5:40 a.m. Halted to make observations, graze the animals, and breakfast. Warned this morning to prepare for an attack by the Sioux. The smoke of two fires in the valley of the river indicating their presence. Grasshoppers very numerous and destructive to baggage and harness. Effected the crossing of the Assiniboine, after completing observations; swimming the horses, ferrying the baggage in canoes, and towing the carts and wagon over. Proceeded up the left bank of the Souris, camping four miles from its mouth. Mounted guard during the night to avoid a surprise by the Sioux. (Hind'60 :149.)*

June 26, 1858 – Back Fat Creek. *Terrific thunderstorm last night, accompanied by boisterous wind and heavy rain. Remained at preceding camp the greater part of the day, in order to refresh the horses and make geological examinations and sketches of the valley. Resuming march at 4 p.m., travelled over two hours and camped at a beautiful point in the Souris valley, opposite Back Fat Creek, a tributary rising in the Back Fat lakes, from which the North Branch of Pembina River also issues. Crossed a rolling prairie of light sandy loam, with occasional stony ridges and small lakes. Obtained a magnificent view of the boundless, south-western prairies, with Turtle Mountain in the distance, before descending into the valley. Men and animals suffer much from the attacks of mosquitoes surrounding them in clouds. (Hind'60 :150.)*

July 1, 1858 – Plum Creek. *Struck camp and started train at daylight. Halted for dinner at an old log house on the banks of the Souris, a winter Trading post of the honourable Hudson's Bay Company. Crossed the Round Plain in the afternoon, a beautiful grassy area about four miles in diameter, level as a bowling green, and surrounded by thickly wooded sand hills. Camped on a level plain, supporting luxuriant grass. This plain was flooded in 1852 to a considerable depth, and occupies an area of about a mile in width between the Souris and a range of low sand hills. (Hind'60 :152.)*

July 9, 1858 – Two Creeks. *Striking tents early, the horses were caught, and the train, with the exception of one cart, equipped for travel at 2:45 a.m. The ox, although hobbled, could not be found, and three of the party, accompanied by the wagon and driver, hastened on to Fort Ellice, leaving the train to follow after recovering the ox, which was accomplished after a search of seven hours. Crossed an undulating prairie extending to the Assiniboine, with light sandy soil, except in the hollows, where a thin coating of vegetable mould is found. Halted to camp at a gully with stagnant water in the bottom, leading to the Assiniboine. Grass abundant and rich in the depressions. Plenty of water and wood. Buffalo seen again today. (Hind'60 :155.)*

July 10, 1858 – Fort Ellice. *Fort Ellice was reached early. Before fording Beaver Creek, a level prairie, with soil of light, sandy loam was crossed. The monotony of the plain relieved here and there with clumps of light poplar and low sandy hills. Between Beaver Creek crossing and the fort, a well-beaten track passing over a sandy plain and hills or dunes of white sand were traversed. Encamped within half a mile of the fort. Remained quietly encamped today (Sunday) much to the advantage of the wearied animals. Thunderstorm and rain in the afternoon. (Hind'60 :157.)*

Figure 6.1.4. Above: Fort Ellice. Woodcut illustration originally published in Harper's Monthly Magazine in 1860 showing HBC Fort Ellice as it appeared during the time of the Palliser and Hind exploring expeditions. *(HNMM'60-10 :594.)*

Figure 6.1.5. Above: Assiniboine River. Copy of the original watercolour sketch, by the Hind Expedition's field artist John Fleming, showing the expedition's afternoon meal campsite in the "Bad Woods" along the Assiniboine on June 23, 1858. Note the four Red River carts, two with canoes, a covered wagon, and the two "hobbled" horses grazing at the left. Also of interest is the campfire with a cooking pot suspended from a tripod. *(Hind'60, Vol.1 :283.)*

Figure 6.1.6. Left: Souris River valley. Original watercolour sketch by the Hind Expedition's artist John Fleming entitled "*Valley of the Souris - Valley of Back Fat Lakes, June 23, 1858.*" *(Hind'60 Vol.1 :289.)*

Figure 6.1.7. Right: Souris River mouth. Original watercolour sketch by the Hind Expedition's artist John Fleming entitled "*Confluence of the Little Souris and the Assiniboine. June 23, 1858.*" *(Hind'60 Vol.1 :285.)*

6.2 DOMINION LAND SURVEY AND THE PRIME MERIDIAN

The BTNHR and its adjacent areas possess significant connections to the history of land survey in western Canada. The Region includes areas of "river-lot" survey, initially laid out at The Forks for the Selkirk settlers after their arrival in 1812, and later extended up both the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Also, the "prime meridian" or "first principal meridian" survey line, upon which the entire Dominion survey in western Canada is based, commenced in the BTNHR just west of present-day Emerson. Thus, from that perspective, it can be claimed that all agricultural settlement in western Canada began in the BTNHR in the spring of 1869 with the pounding of survey stake No.1 marking the intersection of the principal meridian and the international boundary on the 49th parallel. All property lines in western Canada stemmed from that initial point of beginning or "POB."

The Parish River-lot Survey System

The first system used to demarcate and describe land parcels in what is now Manitoba was proposed by Lord Selkirk for use by the Selkirk settlers and was based on the Québec "long-lot" system. Two mi. long (3.2 km.) narrow lots, fronting on the Red River, came to be the standard type of land parcel in the Red River colony. Divided into parishes with a centrally located church, the system was retained when the Dominion township survey commenced in 1869. It was expanded up the Assiniboine River as far as Portage la Prairie, and up the Red River as far south as the American border. In 1874, a number of the older parishes in the Winnipeg area were enlarged, by extending the original two-mile-deep lots a further two miles. This was done to accommodate claims to hay-lands, which the settlers of the Red River colony had used and informally held for two generations.

Principal Meridian and Point of Beginning

The Dominion survey in western Canada began in the spring of 1869, in preparation for the transfer of the territory from the HBC to the Dominion of Canada. The first line to be staked out was the principal meridian, which runs in a straight line north and south from a point selected somewhat arbitrarily by the survey team, some 10 mi. (16 km.) west of the present location of Emerson. This was done in order to avoid running the meridian through any part of the river lot survey hugging the route of the Red River.

The prime meridian is the baseline from which all of western Canada was subsequently sectioned-off into square "townships"; each comprised of 36 one-mile square "sections" and thus the POB is a heritage site of national significance. The townships were numbered according to their position north of the US border and east or west of the principal meridian. Each section was divided further into "quarter-sections" of 160 acres. The POB marks the southeast corner of Section 1 in Township 1 Range 1 West.

The standard homestead claim consisted of a quarter section containing 160 acres, which could be obtained for a 10 dollar administration fee and by meeting basic residency and land-improvement requirements.

The Township Grid

The Dominion survey system, with its section, township and range coordinates, was quite different from the county and long-lot systems used in Ontario and Québec. The Dominion Government wanted a quick and effective system for partitioning and administering the land, thus facilitating the rapid settlement and development of the Canadian prairies and, with the revenues created, help to pay for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). While several different options were considered, the township system ultimately used was based on the system the Americans incorporated to the settlement of the US Mid West, with some minor adjustments, particularly the inclusion of a 99-foot road allowance around each section.

At first, it was intended that each township would consist of 64 square-mile sections, so that they would be large enough to serve as local government units. This "large-township" survey was used during the first summer of surveying, in 1869. Before long, however, the decision was made to use instead the smaller, American-style, 36-section sized townships. Other variations on the township plan also considered included larger 800-acre sections rather than 640 acres; long-lot quarter sections 1/4 by one mile in size rather than 1/2 by 1/2 mile square, and various patterns and widths of road allowances within each township. Several railway and government officials also suggested several rather imaginative township plans, that were considered but never implemented. Figures 6.2.1 and 6.2.7.

The Red River Resistance

The running of the principal meridian survey line and the first east-west offshoots set in motion a series of events that led to a political crisis known as the Red River Resistance and, ultimately, the creation of the new Province of Manitoba in the newly established Dominion of Canada, as its fifth province. The well-known "stopping of the survey" by Louis Riel and his Métis companions during the autumn of 1869, the first major event in the Red River Resistance, occurred in the present Whyte Ridge area in southwest Winnipeg. The surveyors and their largely white/Anglo-Saxon/protestant work crews falsely informed the Métis residents of the area that they were to be dispossessed of their land. They also underpaid the Métis workers for their labours, over-charged for goods sold to them, and generally taunted and ill-treated the Métis residents of the area, leading ultimately to a confrontation and the stopping of the survey incident.

The Red River settlement, at this time, was essentially without a local government, with the HBC in the process of giving up its authority and the Canadian government representatives not yet present in the region. The deteriorating situation made the Métis believe they had no choice but to try to safeguard their lands and traditions by rising up and establishing a legal, provisional government. With these events unfolding, the Dominion survey was abruptly curtailed. It did not start up again until 1871 after the passage of *The Manitoba Act* and the creation of a Manitoba provincial government, with its guarantees of French language and Métis land rights.

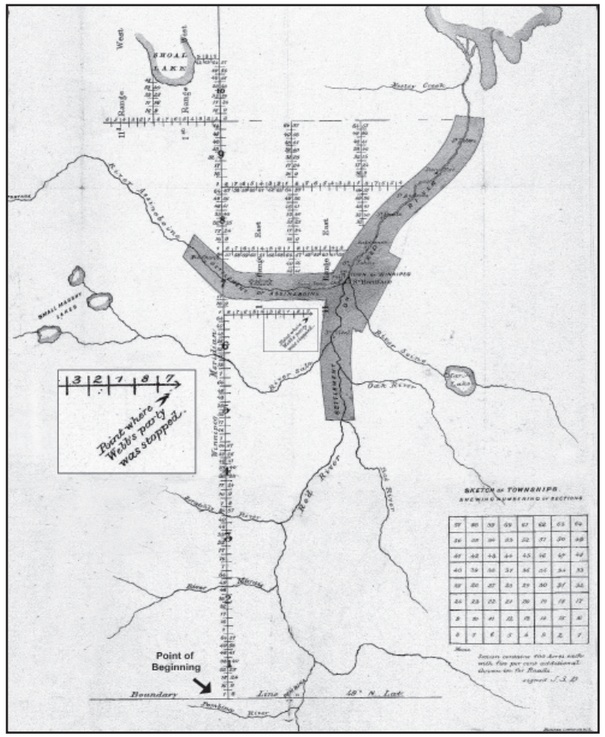

Figure 6.2.1. Above: The principal meridian and the start of the Dominion Survey. This map, dated February 12, 1870, shows the surveys completed by Lt. Col. JS Dennis and his survey crews in 1869, before Rupert's Land was transferred to Canada. Among several noteworthy elements portrayed are the north-south Winnipeg or principal meridian baseline, the initial 64 section-sized townships with 800 acre sections, the existing parish settlements along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and, most interesting, the "*Point where Webb's Party was stopped*", by Louis Riel and his men initiating the so-called "Red River Resistance." Inset details added. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :246.)*

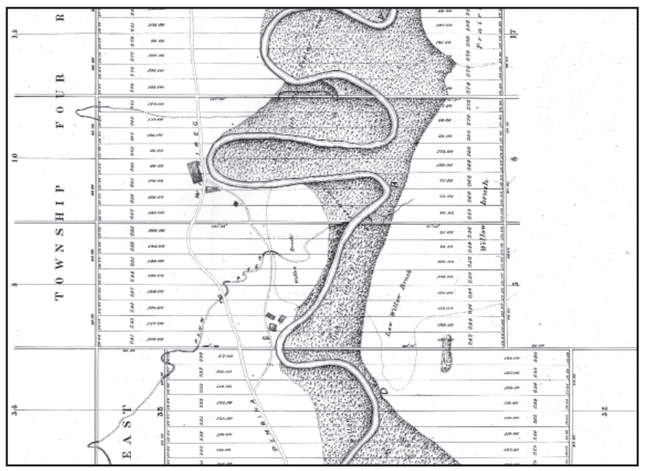

Figure 6.2.4. Above: River-lot survey. 1875 Map showing the river-lot survey in the area where the community of Morris soon after developed. *(HRB.)*

Figure 6.2.2. Above: Invisible lines on the ground. Dominion surveyors taking readings and placing stakes on the open Manitoba prairie, circa 1890. *(HRB.)*

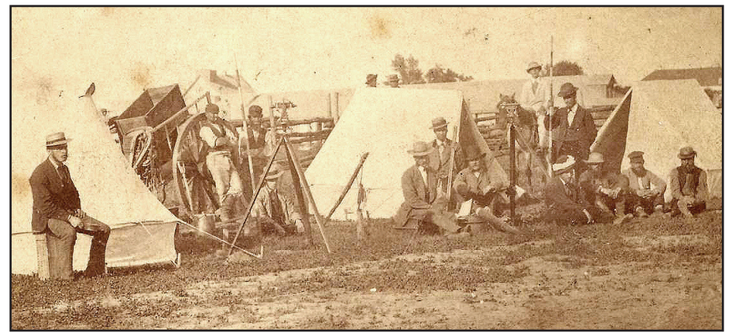

Figure 6.2.3. Above: Survey crew camp. A photograph of a Dominion surveyors' camp, circa 1875. *(HRB.)*

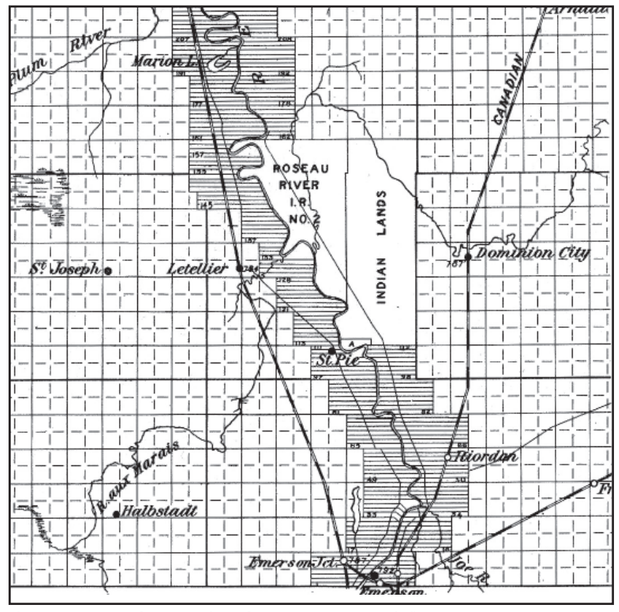

Figure 6.2.5. Above: River-lot survey. Detail from a 1913 Dominion sectional map showing the township and river-lot surveys in the Emerson and Roseau River I.R. area. *(HRB.)*

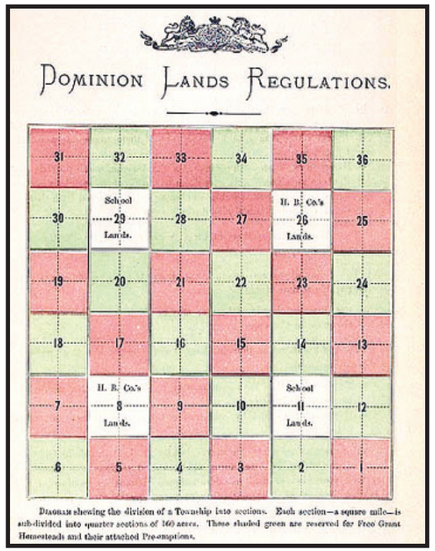

Figure 6.2.6. Above: "*Diagram showing the division of a township into sections.*" Those shaded Green are reserved for Free Grant Homesteads and their attached Pre-emptions. Red for Railway or Public Lands. "*This diagram is intended to illustrate the uniform distribution of Free Grant and Pre-emption Lands, also of Railway or Public Lands, as the case may be, in each Township in Manitoba and the Northwest Territories. Each Section is about one mile square and contains 640 acres, and is sub-divided into quarter-sections of 160 acres each, more or less. A road allowance of 99 ft., or one-and-a-half chains, is laid out on the lines dividing sections, and on boundaries of townships.*" *(HRB.)*

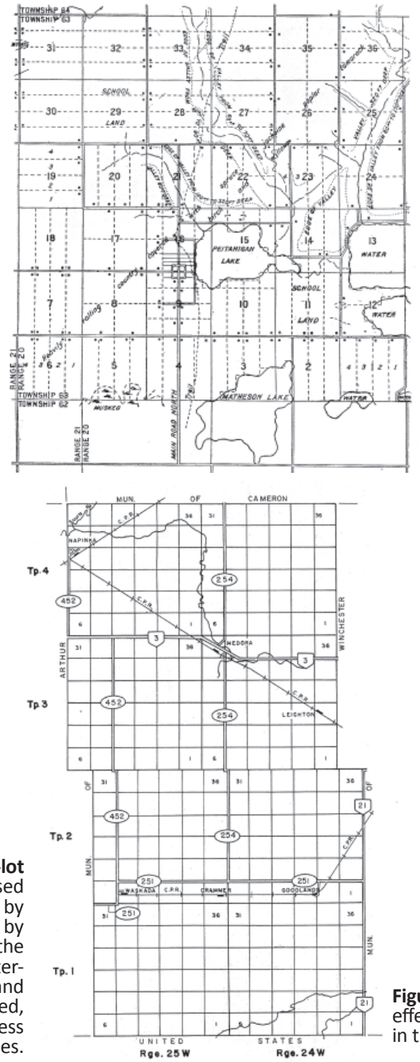

Figure 6.2.7. Above-right: Proposed long-lot township plan. Township plan showing a proposed variation to the standard township plan with 1/4 by one mile quarter-sections, rather than the 1/2 by 1/2 mile, square, quarter-sections which was the format adopted. In hindsight, the long-lot quarter-section would have been far more effective and resulted in linear, rather than widely scattered, farmyard locations, and would have been much less costly in the provision of future roads and utilities. *(HRB.)*

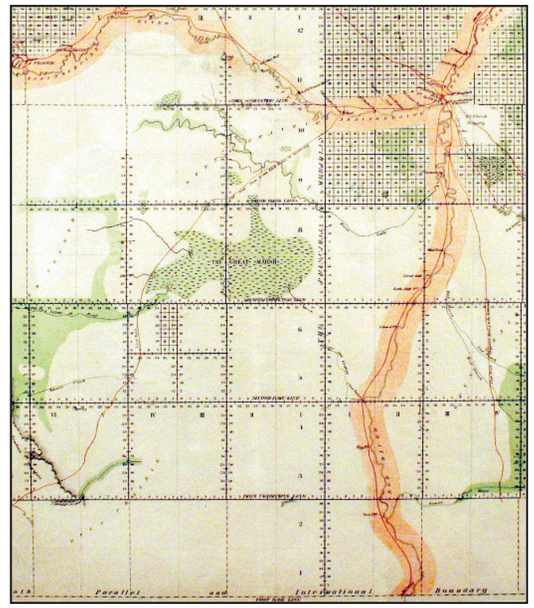

Figure 6.2.9. Above: Survey sequence. Part of an interesting map entitled, "Showing the Surveys Effected in 1871." It shows the Dominion survey in its very early stages with very few areas completed. The map also illustrates how the survey was undertaken in two parts. One set of crews marked the outline of a four township grouping (12 miles by 12 miles). The grouping was later subdivided by a different crew into townships and sections and quarter-sections. Note, at the time that the prime meridian is still the only survey line running north from the border (from Stake No.1); the townships around Winnipeg were the first to be completed; the area around present day Carman was being completed before the area around it was; and survey work along the border townships hadn't yet even begun at end of the 1871 season. The reddish areas along the Red and the Assiniboine rivers indicate the area to be surveyed into river-lots. *(MHS Hist. Atlas'70 :264.)*

Figure 6.2.8. Left: RM of Brenda, 1968. Map showing the effect of the First Correction Line on the municipal boundaries in the BTNHR. *(Manitoba Dept. of Highways.)*

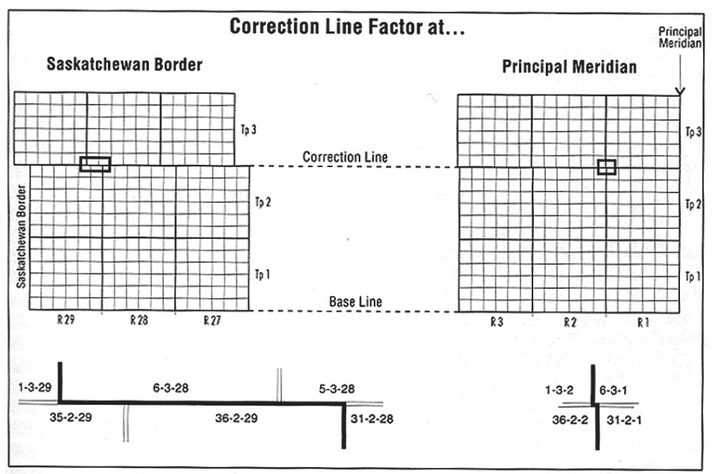

Figure 6.2.10. Right: Township survey correction lines. This illustration shows the effect of the correction lines on the landscape of southern Manitoba. Correction lines were an important component of the township survey system, needed to help fit a square survey system onto a round earth. All the north-south meridians on either edge of the township are meant to point true north and south, and therefore necessarily converge slightly. Making the northern edge of each township 61 ft. shorter than its southern boundary solved part of the problem. To further compensate for the convergence of the meridian lines, new baselines were established every fourth township north, (except for the first correction line, which is only two townships north of the US border). Townships located along the correction lines jog to the right, east of the principal meridian, and to the left, in areas west of the principal meridian, which is the only perfectly straight north/south meridian in Manitoba. As the illustration shows, the greater the distance from the principal meridian, the greater the jog in the alignment. At the Saskatchewan boundary, the left-handed jog is over 1 1/2 mi. (2.4 km.) wide. In some areas of the province, further adjustments were required and resulted in townships less than 36 sections in size, and sections less than 1 mile square. *(Welsted' 96 :103.)*

The Survey Resumes

When surveying resumed in 1871, the smaller sized townships and sections were used because they would allow for more farmsteads on the same amount of land. The new system was deemed better for business. A proposal to have fewer road allowances, that would have similar advantages, was considered but rejected, as was the use of long-lot quarter-sections. This final, last minute decision, to retain the square quarter-section over the long-lot quarter, had immense future implications in terms of dispersed farmstead locations, the pattern and cost for the construction of roadways, and the provision of utilities and services. The cultural landscape of all of western Canada would have been radically different had the long-lot quarter section been adopted. Development patterns would have been linear and "fishbone", rather than dispersed and "checkerboard." So, when the survey resumed, starting from the Principal Meridian once again, the Dominion surveyors laid down the now familiar 36-section township, with 99 ft. road allowances around each section, westward right across the Canadian prairies, with only a few exceptions and variations.

In all river-lot settlements along the Red River, the combination of the long-lot parcels, running perpendicular to the local watercourses, and meandering trails, running roughly parallel to the riverbanks in these communities, gives these settlements an unusual and characteristic linear look about them. While survey lines are, in truth, invisible lines marked only by small metal pins at the corners of land parcels they, nevertheless, had a major influence upon the development and look of the physical landscape in the region. During the early decades, roadways, fence lines, and tree belts delineated the presence of the survey. This clear presence lessened over time as adjoining parcels were purchased and consolidated into larger-sized and more efficiently farmed fields, eliminating many of the early fence and treelines. In other cases, river lots were sub-divided into numerous smaller parcels for rural residential development. The addition of new access roads and additional lot lines, created by these subdivisions further masked the original rural river lot landscape.

Currently, the unusual mix of survey types and their resulting development patterns, are best seen from the air. From ground level, the surveys are manifested primarily by occasional, unusual road configurations not seen in most other areas of Manitoba. Overall, landscape elements relating to the study region's survey history are not obvious to the untrained eye. The above discussion will, hopefully, provide some insight to the significant role the Dominion survey played, and continues to play, in the lives of the residents of the BTNHR.

Some of the existing landscape elements noteworthy for their portrayal of land survey features in the BTNHR, and worth seeking out on the landcape, include the roadways paralleling the watercourses in all the long-lot parish surveys, the instances of unusual road configurations found along the outer edges of the parish settlements, and the series of T-junctions and right-hand jogs occurring along the first and second correction lines.

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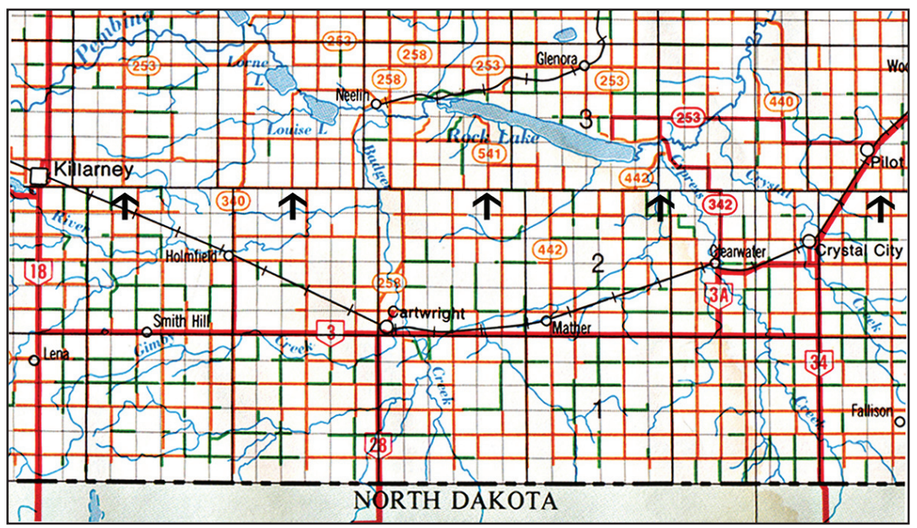

Figure 6.2.11. Above: First correction line. Detail of a map, printed in 1977, showing the Rock Lake district including the township grid, waterways and transportation routes. Note correction jog (arrows) resulting in a misalignment of the road allowances between townships 2 and 3. Correction lines were needed to compensate for the curvature of the earth and the resultant convergence of north-south lines at the poles and resulted in sometimes bewildering roadway intersections. *(Manitoba Map Sales.)*

6.3 THE RED RIVER IMPERIAL EXPEDITION

The Canadian government decided, early in 1870, to send a military expedition to Red River because of the disturbed state of the Red River Settlement resulting from the transfer of Rupert's Land to Canada. This expedition of brigade strength was under the command of Colonel Garnet Wolseley of the British Imperial Army. The force was composed of three battalions, one from the British regular army garrisoned at Quebec, a few Royal artillerymen, and two Canadian militia battalions, in all consisting of approximately 1450 men.

The most direct route to the Red River Settlement from Canada was through American territory, but the US government refused to grant passage to armed British and Canadian troops. As a consequence, the expedition faced an arduous journey across the rugged wilderness of the Canadian shield following the old fur trade route west from Lake Superior to the Prairies via Rainy River, Lake of the Woods, Winnipeg River and Lake Winnipeg to the mouth of the Red River. The expedition is considered by military historians to have been among the most arduous in history.

Expedition members transported all their provisions and weaponry, including several 200 lb. cannons, over hundreds of miles of wilderness and traversing 47 portages. They also blazed trails through seemingly endless forests, laying many miles of corduroy roads and erecting dozens of timber bridges. In addition to quelling the Red River Resistance, this road building work was because of instructions to the Wolseley Expedition to construct an "all-Canadian route" to the newly-acquired North West Territory along the route first surveyed by the Hind Expedition a decade earlier. As these jobs were being done, the troops had to endure life in the bush, the summer heat, and plagues of blackflies and mosquitoes.

The expedition left Toronto, May 10, 1870, and reached Fort Garry 14 weeks later, on August 24. Their approach had been observed and, when they arrived, they found that Riel and his lieutenants had departed, leaving the fort essentially deserted. So ended the Red River Expedition rather anticlimatically and without a single shot being fired. Wolseley stayed for only a few days, returning to Eastern Canada with his regular forces, undertaking the return journey over the same labourious route they had just come. Wolseley left a provisional force in Manitoba made up of the militia battalions, who went into garrison for the winter. This force was relieved by the Provisional Battalion of Rifles that came in 1872. The continued presence of a militia force was meant to counter growing American annexationist interest in the Red River Settlement, especially as the Dominion government was unsure of the loyalties of the local Métis, Country Born, and Aboriginal residents. This proved to be counter productive as militia harassment of Métis during this period only exacerbated already intense feelings and assaults and at least one Métis death resulted. Nevertheless, with the active involvement of Bishop Taché in negotiations with the federal government, in 1870 Manitoba became the first western province to join Confederation. Despite this, the Red River Expeditionary Force was not formally disbanded until 1877.

The sudden departure of Riel and most members of his provisional government in the autumn of 1870 effectively ended the so-called Red River Rebellion. This left the men of the expedition free to return to their homes in Ontario and Quebec. Many did so; however, expedition members were rewarded for their service with free homesteads of any surveyed and available lands. A considerable number remained, or later returned, and became important elements in the population of the new province and western Canada. One of the most prominent was Hugh John Macdonald, only son of Prime Minster Sir John A. Macdonald. He was a member of the 1st Ontario Rifles and later premier of Manitoba. Private William Alloway, 2nd Battalion Quebec Rifles, became one of the first and most successful bankers in Winnipeg. Other members of the force went on to distinguished careers in the NWMP including Captain William Herchmer (Ontario Battalion), Captain MacDonald and Lieutenant Jack Allan (2nd Quebec). Captain Herchmer was involved with the International Boundary Commission in 1872 and 1873, became Commissioner of the NWMP in 1886, and served in the South African War in 1900.

In rural Manitoba, members of the force were outstanding pioneers of several communities. Expeditionary Force member Thomas Cave Boulton, for example, was one of the first settlers in the Pembina Mountain country. The wide open life of the prairies had gotten into his blood and, in 1872, he returned west and established a homestead along Silver Creek in what later became the Nelsonville area. Other members of the Wolseley expedition who became neighbours of Boulton included John Cruise and Charles Viney Helliwell of the 2nd Battalion Quebec Rifles. Descendants of another member of the Wolseley Expedition are still living in the Manitou district. Samuel Forrest, from Renfrew, Ontario, came to Manitoba as a voyageur with the Force. He initially returned to Renfrew; however, in 1879, came back west and took up a homestead in the New Haven district, northwest of Manitou.

Several of the first residents of the Emerson community and neighbouring districts also came out with this force, William Nash being one of the most prominent. He served as Ensign of No. 1 Company of the 1st Ontario Rifles, having previously served in Ontario expelling the Fenian Raid of 1866. He later served in the Northwest Rebellion of 1885 as a Captain in the Winnipeg Light Infantry and was promoted during the campaign to the rank of Major. In civil life, Major Nash was a solicitor and barrister and the first member for Emerson in the Manitoba provincial legislature. He later became Registrar of Deeds in Emerson and later accepted a position in the Land Titles Office in Winnipeg.

The Fenian Raid of 1871

The members of the Red River Expeditionary Force, while stationed at Fort Garry, played a part in other important events in the Province's early history, including the Manitoba Fenian Raid of 1871. The Fenians were a secret society of Irish patriots who had emigrated from Ireland to the US. Some North American members of this movement were intent on taking Canada by force and exchanging it with Britain for Irish independence. The society suffered a blow in 1865 when Britain crushed the Ireland-based independence movement, scattering its leaders. This situation left many Irish veterans of the American Civil War harbouring considerable ill will toward Britain. Membership in the American Fenian movement quickly grew to around 10,000 men and a sizable reserve of raised funds. From 1866 to 1871, the Fenians launched a series of small, armed incursions of Canada, each of which was put down by government forces, at the cost of dozens killed or wounded on both sides.

Figure 6.3.1. Above: Wolseley Expedition camp. A few days of rest. General Wolseley's tent at the expedition campsite at McVicar's Creek, Thunder Bay. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 6.3.2. Above: A very arduous journey. A 1913 watercolour by expedition artist William Armstrong, based on his original 1870 sketches. It shows the Ontario Battalion struggling to cross a steep-sided gulley at Portage des Deux Rivières (between Sturgeon and Pickerel lakes, Ont.). *(TPLA.)*

Figure 6.3.3. Above: Constructing slipways. The five-week, 650 mi. long journey from Thunder Bay to Fort Garry involved 47 portages where trails had to be cut and log slipways constructed, across largely rough, marshy, terrain. *(HW'71-12-2 :1140.)*

Figure 6.3.4. Above: Wolseley Expedition camp. A woodcut showing Red River Expedition camp at "Matawan Bridge" somewhere along the Dawson Route west of Lake Superior. *(NDSU.)*

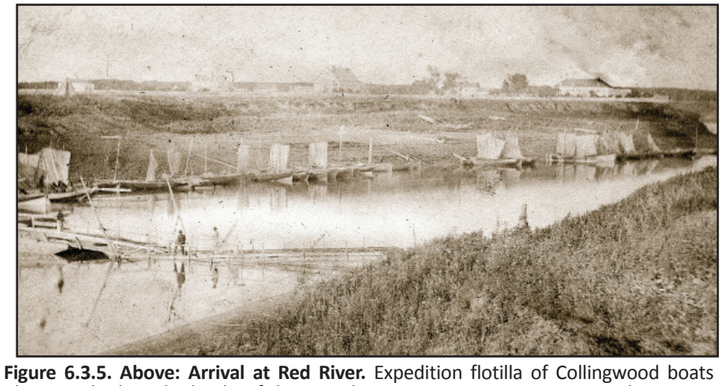

Figure 6.3.5. Above: Arrival at Red River. Expedition flotilla of Collingwood boats photographed on the banks of the Assiniboine River. August 1870. Note the Roman Catholic church and Grey Nuns convent, in St. Boniface in the distance. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 6.3.6. Above: On parade. Wolseley Expedition troops at attention fronted by a mounted flag bearer. In the summer of 1870, the village of Winnipeg consisted of only 215 residents and about 30 buildings, including eight stores, two saloons, two hotels, one mill, one church and nearby Upper Fort Garry. *(L&AC.)*

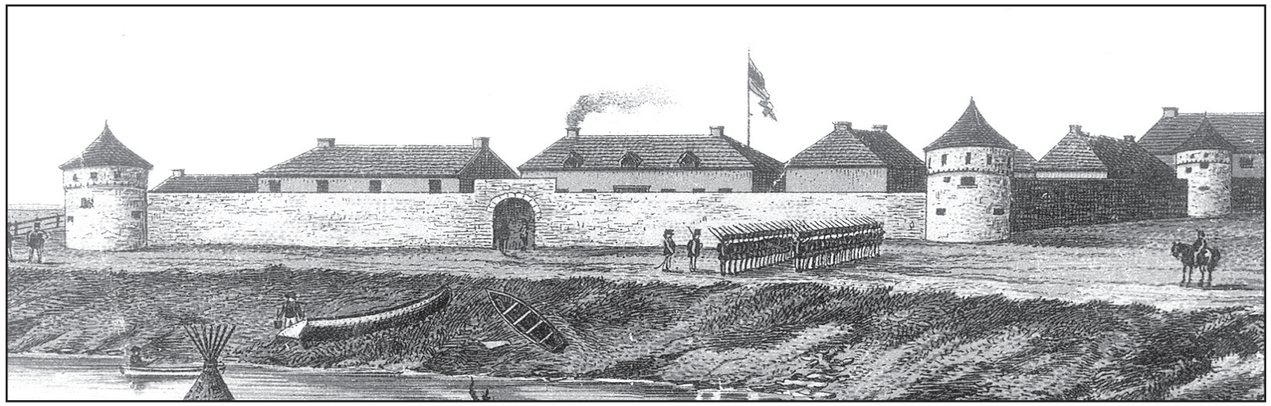

Figure 6.3.7. Above: Drilling at Fort Garry. Woodcut engraving illustration of Red River Expeditionary Force members at drill near Upper Fort Garry made from an original 1870 sketch by expedition member Sargent Douglas. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.3.8. Above: HBC North Fort Pembina. A circa-1870 photograph of HBC North Fort Pembina located just north of the border and occupied by the Fenians during their 1871 armed incursion into Manitoba. Note the piles of wooden crates and barrels at a riverbank landing site and the well worn path leading up to the fort. *(A of MB.)*

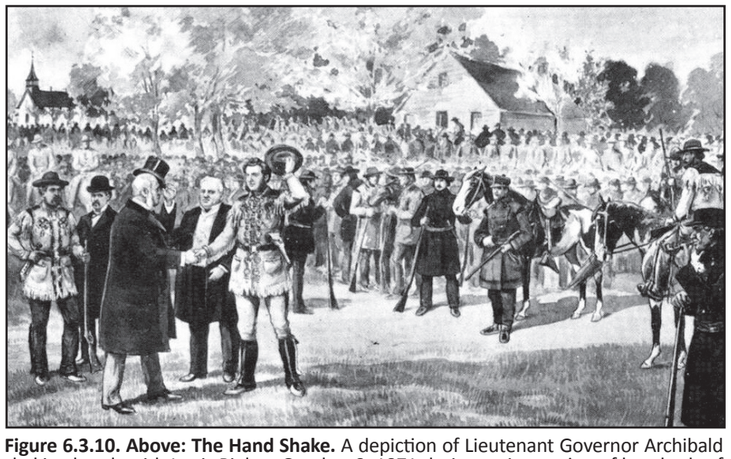

Figure 6.3.10. Above: The Hand Shake. A depiction of Lieutenant Governor Archibald shaking hands with Louis Riel on October 8, 1871 during an inspection of hundreds of Métis troops in St. Boniface, which Riel rallied to defend Fort Garry against the Fenians. The Lieutenant Governor lost his posting not long after for showing open support for Riel. *(WFP'20-07-10.)*

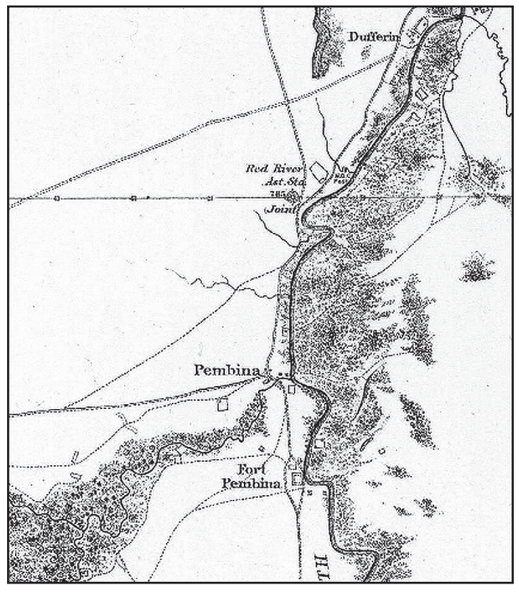

Figure 6.3.9. Below: Pembina area. Detail from an 1873 Boundary Commission map of the Pembina River mouth area, located at the southeastern extremity of the BTNHR, showing the scene of the 1871 Fenian invasion of Manitoba. At the top of the map is the Boundary Commission's Fort Dufferin and, nearby, just north of the international boundary, is HBC North Fort Pembina. South of the boundary, is the village of Pembina and the US Calvary's Fort Pembina. Note the many trails in the area. *(A of MB.)*

In the spring of 1871, William O'Donoghue, a fiery Irishman, one-time Riel ally, and member of the provisional government, travelled to New York. He was pressing the Fenian Brotherhood to assist him in his plan, calling for the annexation of Manitoba and union with the United States. Aided and encouraged by Enos Stutsman, a prominent Pembina lawyer and politician, O'Donoghue drew up a constitution for the Republic of Rupert's Land. Among other things, this constitution proclaimed O'Donoghue president of the new Republic. According to the plan, General John O'Neill, president of the Fenian Brotherhood, General J.J. Donnelly, and General Thomas Curley, also prominent Fenians, would recruit up to 2000 Irish nationals and invade Manitoba.

At the time, a real fear existed in Manitoba that, if Louis Riel and his Métis supporters joined the Fenians, the Province would be lost to the Americans. Riel was still at large at Red River and had been in communication with Reverend Bishop Taché who informed the Dominion government during the summer of 1871 that, "*The Métis were intensely agitated over the unfulfilled promises of the Government and the harsh and insulting conduct of the more recently-arrived Canadians from Ontario.*" The Bishop added that he, "*...apprehended troublous times and feared great trouble was about to ensue forthwith.*" The Fenians were counting on Métis support to help ensure success. Fenian "officers" had been sent to American and Métis settlements south of the boundary to raise armed supporters. There were rumors of 1500 Métis already encamped near the boundary at St. Joseph. The various groups were to meet up at the International Boundary on Tuesday October 4, 1871. Marching north from Grand Forks with a troop of only 40 men, Major Watson encouraged his men that, "*It would be all right at Fort Garry, that O'Donoghue and the whole native population would be ready to greet their arrival and their ranks would be well filled up at Pembina*" and they ought not to forget that, "*rich plunder to be obtained from the Hudson's Bay Company's stores at Pembina and Fort Garry would serve to enrich them all to an unbounded extent.*" *(MHS'88-1-11.)*

On Monday October 3, 1871, having been informed of the Fenian "army" gathering at the border, Lieutenant Governor George Archibald issued a proclamation in Fort Garry calling on all inhabitants to volunteer to help the small existing military force of 70 Red River Expedition volunteers in repelling the invasion. Within two days, over 650 men had registered to serve at the command of the Lieutenant Governor, many more than could be armed. On the evening of October 3rd, the first group of 200 men under the command of Colonel Irvine departed for the border, reaching St. Norbert before seeking shelter for the night. On Wednesday, October 5th, while Irvine was still en route, the invasion began. Led by O'Neill and O'Donoghue, the army was not the 2000 strong that had been envisioned. Instead, a ragged band of 40 soldiers marched north. These raiders captured the HBC North Fort Pembina, the Customs House, and took about 20 hostages. Placed under guard and herded into a large log building, the hostages waited. The raiders also waited for the anticipated arrival of the Métis that they expected to join them.

Among the hostages was Mrs. Wheaton, spouse of Colonel Wheaton, commandant of the US Fort Pembina. An American soldier had escorted her to the HBC store. One of the prisoners, a young child, escaped and word reached Colonel Wheaton of the situation. Very quickly, two companies of American infantry, complete with cannons, were marching northward. Surprised by this turn of events, the Fenians were quickly routed. Rounded up by the American military and returned to Fort Pembina, the Fenians were left to ponder why an American military force scattered them from a supposedly Canadian facility. Unbeknownst to them, the US Consul at Fort Garry, Mr. Taylor, and Lieutenant Governor Archibald, had pre-arranged authorization for the 20th US Infantry stationed at Fort Pembina to enter Canadian territory in the event of a Fenian attack. Shortly after their return into US territory on Wednesday evening, Colonel Wheaton sent a telegram to the US consul in Winnipeg, on the just-completed telegraph line, informing him that he had "*captured and now hold General, J. O'Neill, General, Thomas Curley and General J.J. Donnelly.*" He added that "*Anxiety regarding a Fenian invasion of Manitoba is unnecessary.*"

Meanwhile, back on Monday evening in the then hamlet of Winnipeg and nearby HBC Fort Garry, the departure of Colonel Irvine and his men left the settlement relatively defenceless. Rumors began to be circulated that the village was to be attacked by a large force of Métis from St. Boniface led by Louis Riel. Indeed, the day before, on Sunday, at the church door in St. Norbert, Riel apparently addressed his followers. He told them O'Donoghue's invasion would fail and they should offer their services to the Lieutenant Governor. On Tuesday, a large number of Métis turned out on horseback and came up to St. Boniface. Fathers Ritchot and Dugas had been meeting daily with Lieutenant Governor Archibald to negotiate a general amnesty for Riel and his followers in return for their support in repelling the Fenians. With some apprehension, Senator Girard, then a member of the provincial government, and Lieutenant Governor Archibald crossed over the river into St. Boniface and formally accepted the services of Riel and his followers. This was apparently done "*contrary to his personal convictions and better judgment*", but a desire to conciliate prompted the Governor into yielding. The memorable handshaking took place, helping to put an end to both the Fenian and Métis threat of armed insurrection.

According to witnesses, "*a great clamor was raised*" by the volunteers encamped at Crooked Rapids when it was learned that Riel and his Métis had appeared at St. Boniface and been graciously received by Lieutenant Governor Archibald. Many of the men demanded to be allowed to return to attack Riel "*who was held to be accountable*" for the whole trouble the previous year. Colonel Irvine, however, smoothed matters over with his men. Figure 6.3.10.

Thus ended the last incursion by armed foreign nationals into Canada. Still, fears of Fenian raids persisted for many years and soldiers, such as James Masson with the First Ottawa Regiment, were sent west during the early 1870s to guard the border. After his discharge, he homesteaded in TWP 3-11. Also, two local militia units were formed, the West Lynne Artillery Battery and the Emerson Infantry Company. Fortunately, the effectiveness of these militia units was never tested. Two of the structures captured by the Fenians, the former customs and gaol, both log structures, have been preserved by the Town of Emerson in commemoration of their role in the Fenian Raid of 1871 and the district's early history.

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6.4 HER MAJESTY'S BRITISH NORTH AMERICAN BOUNDARY COMMISSION

Had all of North America remained British territory, there would have been no boundary between Canada and the USA and, consequently, never any discussion where such a boundary should be located. That, of course, became an impossibility during the American Revolution. Unfortunately, the Treaty of Paris, signed in 1783 bringing that conflict to an end, addressed the matter in a rather off hand manner by attempting to divide central North America on the basis of the watersheds of the Hudson Bay and the Mississippi Rivers. Using a map drawn up in 1755 by John Mitchell, the authors of this Treaty stipulated that the boundary was a line west from Isle Royal in Lake Superior to the most northerly point of the Lake of the Woods and then due west to the Mississippi River.

Treaty of Ghent and Inaccurate Maps

It was not long before the inaccuracy of Mitchell's map became evident. More careful surveys soon showed that the source of the Mississippi was not on the same parallel as Isle Royal, but some 150 mi. south at Lake Itasca in what is now northern Minnesota. It was only natural that, in 1792, Britain suggested that the boundary west of the Lake of the Woods be adjusted south to the Mississippi. The American interests did not warmly welcome this suggestion and so the matter was left in limbo for another quarter century. In 1815, the Treaty of Ghent, ending the War of 1812, left the boundary issue unaddressed; however in 1818, the London Convention fixed the boundary as a line from the northwest corner of the Lake of the Woods due south to the 49th parallel and from there westward to the Rocky Mountains.

In the Red River Settlement, there was a good deal of grumbling since it gave to the US thousands of square miles of land that had been HBC territory for almost 150 years. Nevertheless, after a short period of initial concern, the boundary question again faded into relative obscurity. Then, in the last half of the 1860s, it looked like the Canadian Prairies might be seized by the Americans.

Britain and the US Civil War

During the American Civil War, Great Britain, although officially neutral, economically supported the Confederate south because it supplied England with thousands of tons of the raw cotton it needed to maintain its massive textile industry. Although direct intervention in favour of the south was out of the question, the English public and, in particular, the Nation's moneyed interests provided assistance in two ways. One was by the purchase of Confederate bonds. The other was by the building or outfitting of ships in British ports for use by the Confederacy. During the war, these British-outfitted vessels inflicted millions of dollars of losses upon the Union. British assistance to the South had been a very sore point among Northern army officers and politicians, so much so that upon the conclusion of the conflict, President Grant demanded restitution from Great Britain for these losses. Voices were raised in Washington demanding that if England refused to accept these demands, the US would be justified in seizing British territory in the central plains as compensation. Railroads were being pushed into the western states with great vigour and the neighbouring British territories, almost without any inhabitants and certainly no military forces to defend them, could well be annexed without too much difficulty.

1867 Treaty of Washington

Fortunately, cool heads prevailed and, on May 8,1867, the two countries signed the Treaty of Washington settling the points of difference between them. Among its stipulations was a provision for the surveying of the Canada-US Boundary from the Lake of the Woods to the height of the Rocky Mountains (from this point west the 49th parallel already had been surveyed and marked in the early 1860s) and the marking of its location with iron posts. This monumental task was assigned to the International Boundary Commission. Under the titles of "Her Majesty's North American Boundary Commission" and the "US Northern Boundary Commission"; this dual organization was staffed by Canada and Britain on one side, and the US on the other and was to co-operate in locating and marking the line agreed upon.

The British Boundary Commission

The British portion of this expedition, Her Majesty's North American Boundary Commission, was much more than just a survey party. To a considerable extent, it was also a scientific fact-finding mission designed to secure precise information about western Canada, especially its suitability for pioneer settlement. Therefore, in addition to the astronomers and surveyors needed to plot the 49th parallel with absolute accuracy and to map a belt from the border six miles north, it also included specialists instructed to prepare lists of all the animals, plants, and minerals found and to collect representative specimens of each. The skins of larger animals were to be salted; smaller creatures preserved in alcohol. A special report was to examine all aspects of the Indian question, citing "*No subject is of more penetrating interest, or of more pressing importance, than the future of the Indians.*" *(Turner'42 :167.)*

Dufferin

A location on the west side of the Red River, three miles north of the boundary, was chosen as the site for the British headquarters of the commission. A compound of multiple structures was constructed in 1872 and received the name Dufferin after the then Governor-General, the son-in-law of Queen Victoria. It was sometimes referred to as "Fort Dufferin", but it was never actually walled or fortified. The US Commission headquarters was located just south of the border at the US Army post Fort Pembina.

The British Boundary Commission arrived at Dufferin during the summer of 1872 and, after freeze-up, completed the survey and marking of the 49th parallel from the Red River to Lake of the Woods, mostly by the British component. Advantage was taken of the lateness of the season to negotiate the many muskegs and swamplands encountered. The winter however, was exceptionally severe and the hardships were extreme. Dogteams and snowshoes were the principal means of travel. In February 1873, having completed the first part of the work, the survey parties returned to Dufferin on the Red River.

Figure 6.4.1. Above: Her Majesty's Boundary Commission. A group of officials from Her Majesty's North American Boundary Commission pose for a photograph at Dufferin before departure west during the summer of 1873. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.2. Above: The Royal Engineers. The Royal Engineers component of the Boundary Commission pose for a photograph at Dufferin before departing to mark and clear a supply train route, construct bridges, and construct supply depots along the route. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.3. Above: Boundary Commission farm. A photograph of the Boundary Commission farm established near Dufferin to provide produce for the Commission members. Note also HBC North Fort Pembina, visible in the centre distance, and to the right of that, some of the tents of the 300-man-strong British-Canadian contingent of the Commission. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.4. Above: Dead Horse Creek, Pembina Hills. A Canadian Boundary Commission supply train photographed at the crossing of Dead Horse Creek, located just a short distance south of present day Morden. This was the same location where Alexander Henry had Fort Pinancewaywining erected for the North West Company in 1802. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.5. Above: Boundary markers. "Sappers" at work making an earth mound along the international border. In the swampy country from the Lake of the Woods to the western boundary of Manitoba, iron pillars were placed at two-mile intervals wherever the nature of the ground permitted it. Westward from Manitoba to the line previously marked from the Pacific coast, stone cairns or earthen mounds were constructed about three miles apart. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.6. Above: Turtle Mountain depot. Boundary Commission photograph of the Turtle Mountain depot and short term blacksmith shop in 1873. Bernard B. LaRiviere, an independent fur trader from Crookston, Minn. seeking new business opportunities, scouted the Turtle Mountain area and, in 1876, purchased the former Turtle Mountain supply depot site from the Dominion government. In 1877, he and his son-in-law returned with several wagon loads of supplies, a herd of cattle and horses and set up a soon-to-be thriving trading post and stopping place on 29-1-18W, which was soon after named "Wakopa." *(A of MB.)*

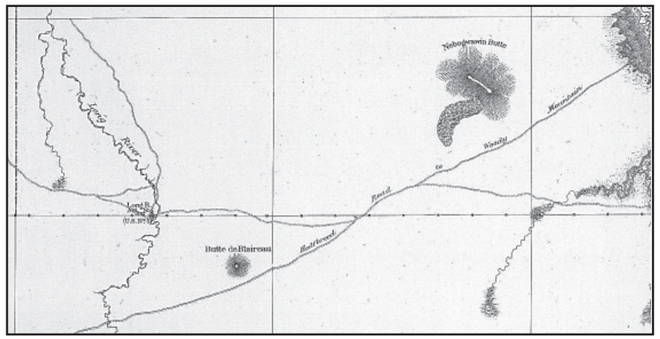

Figure 6.4.7. Above: Boundary Commission trail. British-Canadian Boundary Commission map showing the location of the Long River Depot right on the boundary line and along the Boundary Commission Trail. Although the trail running northeast to southwest on this map is labelled as the "*Halfbreed Road to Wood Mountain*", it was earlier and more commonly known as "*The Missouri Trail.*" As shown in the centre on this map, the newly-created Boundary Commission Trail closely follows the boundary line in this district. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.8. Above: Long River Depot. A Boundary Commission photograph with the title, "*Commission Ox train leaving Her Majesty's Boundary Commission Depot at Long River, 81 miles West of Red River and one mile North of the Boundary line.*" This location is shown on the map detail at left. Note the few solitary trees scattered about an otherwise treeless landscape. *(A of MB.)*

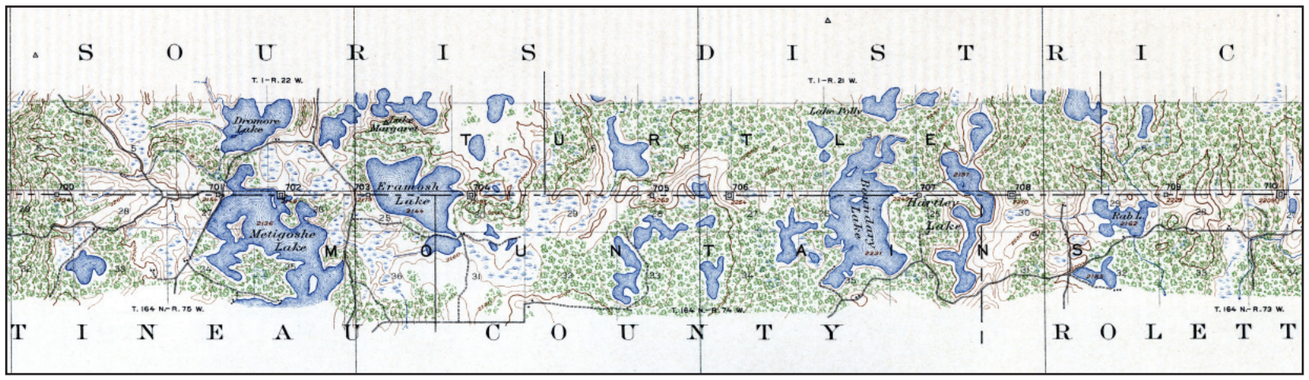

Figure 6.4.9. Above: Turtle Mountain boundary area. Detail of a 1921 map showing the International Boundary slicing through the rugged Turtle Mountain uplands. Note that several lakes, including Metigoshe Lake, are "international" bodies of water. With lake side cottage development in recent decades, this has posed a problem in terms of customs and border crossings. This was the only area between the Red River and the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, where forest and lakes were encountered by the survey crews; the remainder being largely open prairie, easily surveyed and marked. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.10. Above: Cutting slash lines. It took most of the summer of 1873 for Commission axe men to cut the border across the heavily wooded Turtle Mountain. Mosquitoes, rough terrain, and stagnant water plagued the crews and, at times, the men were forced to wear veils. "*The number of mosquitoes is incredible, and the fleas were intolerable.*" was one diary entry. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.4.11. Above: Souris River "second crossing." A photograph of the Boundary Commission camp and depot at Wood End in present day south eastern Saskatchewan. *(A of MB.)*

In April 1873, preparations began for the greater part of the Commission's work. The Dominion Government had deemed it advisable that the Canadian part of the expedition should move through the "Indian country" without show of force. Work parties and individuals undertook their assigned work without escorts or apparent fear. Natives were allowed free access to the camps and frequently visited. Conversely, the US Commission, because of the Indian wars raging on the Missouri plains, saw fit to travel under heavy military escort. In addition to two troops of the 7th US Cavalry, there were five companies of US Infantry providing escort. During the summer of 1876, many of these same 7th Calvary escort soldiers, under General Custer, were fated to fall in the battle of Little Big Horn.

A road building party, preceded by Métis scouts, went ahead of the main body. Rivers that were not fordable had to be bridged, often necessitating wide detours to obtain suitable lumber for the purpose. Along the trail laid out as a supply route, field supply depots and astronomical stations were established at regular points. Two main depots were located in southern Manitoba, the first at the foot of the Pembina Mountains about 40 miles west of Dufferin, and the second at the foot of Turtle Mountain. Cattle were driven to furnish meat until the bison country could be reached. Because traffic between the Commission's headquarters at Fort Dufferin and the various depots was continuous for two years, the trail became a well-defined road that could boast of having the first bridges built in the Province of Manitoba.

In 1873, before the onset of winter, the Commission surveyed and staked out the boundary line from the Red River to Roche Percee, in what is now southeastern Saskatchewan. During the 1874 season, work was completed to the Rocky Mountains. Several different types of boundary markers were posted. In the swampy country from Lake of the Woods to the then western boundary of Manitoba, iron pillars were placed at two mi. (3.4 km.) intervals. Westward from that point, stone cairns or earthen mounds were constructed about three mi. (4.8 km.) apart. Buried in their centres were iron tablets bearing the inscription "*British and United States Boundary Commissions, 1872-74, 49° north latitude.*" Square posts four feet high and tapering at the top were also used in some instances. On the north side each post was marked "*British Possession*", on the south side "*US Territory*."

- L.P. Hewgill, in 1894, penned a short memoir of his time with the Boundary Commission, which he considered a rather enjoyable adventure. In part, he recounted: "*The Commission was formed in 1872; our Commissioner was Major Cameron, R.A., four officers of the Royal Engineers, Major Anderson, Captain Featherstonhaugh, Captain Ward and Lieutenant Galwey, with these officers was a company of the same corps, but they wore no uniform and, to all intents and purposes, were civilians, as amongst them we had photographers, carpenters, astronomers, surveyors and many other trades. We had two Canadian surveyors, Colonel Forrest and Mr. Alexander Russel, a brother of the late Surveyor-General Lindsay Russel, a large number of young Canadians and Old Countrymen were on the staff of the respective parties and added to these were axe-men, picket-men, teamsters, cooks, etc., the total being something under 300 men. Also, Captain East, R.A. was commissioned to engage 40 experienced plainsmen who were to ride in advance of the expedition and report on the country - give the location of streams, lakes, pasturage and wood; and most important of all perhaps, to act as intermediaries in the event of trouble with the Indians.*

Those in authority had done all in their power to look after the comforts of one and all on the commission. Our food was of the very best, and the amount more than could be used, even when we were many hundreds of miles away from semi-civilization. A complaint in regards to the provisions was seldom, if ever, heard, and this may in great measure account for the very successful termination of the work, as it is a well known fact that a hard day's work is soon forgotten over a good dinner. Everything in the way of clothing suitable for the work we were going into was provided and sold very cheaply. Every man was given a plug of pipe tobacco weekly, and also three plugs of chewing tobacco, if he required it.

In 1873, the Commission, completing the work east, started from Fort Dufferin on the Red River, west and at the close of the summer they had established the boundary to a post in the Grand Couteaus of the Missouri, some few miles west of La Roche Percee. From here the Commission returned to Dufferin, their headquarters. We established depots at convenient points, if possible from 40 to 60 miles apart and our transport wagons were continually on the road between these depots and headquarters so that our trail became a well-defined one. During the winter of 1873-74, despite the isolation, there was no lack of diversion. The months passed pleasantly in a continual round of card parties, dinners, dances, get-togethers, sing songs, and various outdoor sports. A free and easy cordiality prevailed and even the natives participated in the dances. The Commission was, I think, without doubt, the best-organized and conducted expedition that ever went out in this country." *(Hewgill'94 :12.)*

- Charles Sibbald, Jr., in 1874, provided similar informative observations in letters written to his parents. On April 1, 1874 he wrote, "*There are 81 teams going out on the first train — 400 miles to go before starting work. This first train was loaded with oats for the stations along the way.*" In his next letter, he remarked that "*nearly all the men are hired, so that as soon as the roads are in a fit state everything is ready for a start.*" His June 7 letter added, "*We have about eighty wagons in our train, over a ton in each, drawn by oxen so that 18 miles is all we make in the day.*" Later that summer he wrote: "*I start back with my train for Dufferin tomorrow expect to be in by middle of October. The Line is already nearly finished, three months sooner than was expected.*" In his last letter written on September 22, 1874 from the second crossing of the Souris River, 200 miles west of Dufferin, he noted that he was "*feeding upon pemmican, dried buffalo beef, and ducks, also hard tack, so you may bet we live well. When travelling near a river, I sometimes bring in 50 ducks, having a good dog and gun and any amount of ammunition. One of the cooks generally carries the game to their wagon and some of the teamsters pluck them for dinner, so sometimes we have a good feed. The pemmican we get here is really excellent. I can do my three helps every meal. I never ate so heartily in my life or never felt better.*" *(MHS Transactions :3-33-1977.)*

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6.5 FORT DUFFERIN

Captain Donald R. Cameron was appointed chief commissioner of the British North America Boundary Commission Survey in the spring of 1872. Arriving at HBC North Pembina, now West Lynne, soon after, his first task was to set up a base camp. Cameron selected river lots 31, 33, 35, 37 and 39. The main buildings were constructed on lot 33. Lot 39 was land that Cameron used for himself to construct his home "Emmadale" The land for the camp was purchased from the Renville family, but the land for Emmadale was claimed by another Métis family named Gosselin. Although this parcel of land had been occupied by the Gosselin family since 1847, Cameron successfully patented these lots in 1874.

The camp was designed to accommodate approximately 300 surveyors. It was to be the winter headquarters and the main supply base. Completed in the late fall of 1872, it was named Dufferin in honour of Lord Dufferin, Canada's Governor-General at the time. Facing the river was a large house used as offices, living quarters and mess room for the staff, who were billetted in several one-storey dwellings. Other buildings housed a mess room and kitchen, barracks for the engineers, surveyors, astronomers, photographers, ax-men, harness-makers, wheelwrights, cooks, picket men, blacksmiths and carpenters. Figure 6.5.5.

In 1874, when NWMP Inspector Francis Dickens arrived at Dufferin, he was angry and upset. First because he had arrived too late to take part in the original trek west; and second, because he would have to remain at what he considered one of the most unpleasant places in the entire British Empire. George A. French, the first commissioner of the NWMP, described the site, where he would assemble nearly 300 people in preparation for a march into Canada's far west, as a "*small shanty town surrounded by a few brothels and grog shops.*" In his memoirs, a young NWMP recruit described Dufferin in similarly unflattering terms. "*Dufferin was of small account, a Government warehouse, a Hudson's Bay Company Store, two whiskey saloons and a few log shanties, inhabited by half-breeds.*" Contemporary photographs do little to alter these descriptions. They show a collection of unpainted buildings in a muddy, bleak, and untidy setting. Yet, it was from this site that two major and very significant events in Canadian history not only began, but also ended. Figure 6.3.9.

The boundary survey was completed in the fall of 1874 and the survey parties returned to Dufferin. In October, the Royal Engineers and most of the men departed the site. In November, Commissioner French, five officers, and 55 non-commissioned officers (NCOs) of "D" Division of the NWMP, arrived after a long, difficult summer on the prairies, to take up winter residence in the recently vacated barracks. In the spring of 1875, the North West Mounted Police left Dufferin and headed back West to their newly constructed headquarters at Fort Pelly.

Commissioner French arranged with Captain Cameron in 1873-74 to use Dufferin to stage the march west. During the brief period that the NWMP used Dufferin in June and July of 1874, the main survey parties were out along the 49th parallel. The police camped out in tents north of the Boundary Commission buildings. When Commissioner French returned in November, the officer and the NCOs made full use of the facilities. Moving into the quarters of the Royal Engineers, they spent a quiet winter in 1874-75.

In the spring, Dufferin was sold, and eventually taken over by Mr. F.T. Bradley the Collector of Customs. The buildings were to be used to house many immigrant Mennonite settlers. These newly arrived immigrants were held here until they could move onto their homesteads in the nearby West Reserve. In the mid-1880s, Dufferin was used as a quarantine station for livestock imported through the customs at Emerson.

Following that, the property was sold to a private individual, who converted the site into a farmyard. The officers' quarters were considerably altered and turned into a farmhouse. Not long afterward, the main buildings were torn down and gradually the historical significance of Dufferin faded. Until recently, Dufferin or Fort Dufferin, as it is often now called, has remained an obscure and unknown site in Manitoba's historical community. The only significant attention given to the site was the erection of a cairn and plaque by the Historic Sites and Monument Board of Canada in 1949. During the 1990s, through the efforts of the Emerson-based Post Road Heritage Group, the site has been developed as a cultural and natural heritage site, and hiking trail, and is gaining the recognition that it deserves. Figure 6.5.7. *(Manitoba History'92 #23.)*

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Figure 6.5.1. Above: Steamboat transport. Photograph of the Red River steamboat *Dakota* unloading cargo at Dufferin. The three-year-long Boundary Commission expedition was frequently resupplied by steamboat and barge from the railway-connected fledgling communities of Fargo-Moorehead 150 mi. (241 km.) to the south in the US. Note the wooden crates and other material on the vessel's deck and the pile of sacks at the extreme left on the riverbank. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.5.2. Above: Fort Dufferin. A photograph, taken during the winter of 1872–73, showing the three identical "men-quarter" structures. They were 24 by 48 ft. (7.3 x 15 m.) in size, and consisted of two rooms providing accommodation for 14 men in each room. Note the firewood piles, and chimneys at the opposite ends of each building. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.5.3. Above: Fort Dufferin, 1873. The officers quarters building was a two-story, 36 by 42 foot, structure, with accommodations for 12 officers, plus an office, mess room, pantry and cellar. During the time that it served as the temporary headquarters of the NWMP, Commissioner French had his office and residence here. His wife and son made their home here while he was on the march west. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 6.5.4. Above: Fort Dufferin, 1873. Buildings erected in 1872 for the Boundary Commission staff included: officer's quarters (1), mess kitchen (1), latrines (2), men's quarters (3), cookhouse and lavatory (1), latrines (2), carpenter, harness maker, tailor, shoe maker and photographers building (1), blacksmith shop (1), bakery (1), 30-stall stable (1), storehouse (1). Added in 1873 were: store houses (3), 44-stall stables (6), farm implement shed (1), slaughter house (1) wheelers shop (1). Note also the many sleds lined up in a row at the centre left, used extensively during the demarcation of the boundary from the Red River east to Lake of the Woods during the winter of 1872-73. *(L&AC; McClelland'75 :108.)*

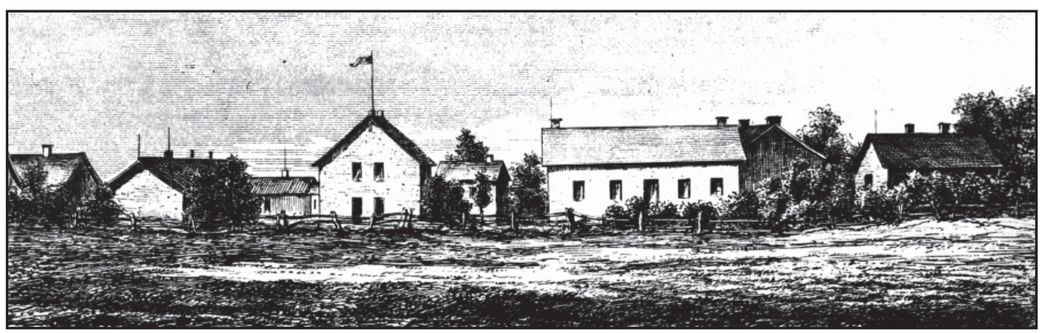

Figure 6.5.5. Above: Fort Dufferin. One of the best known views of Fort Dufferin, sketched by Henri Julien in 1874, shows the site from the north looking south. *(CIN'74-10-03.)*

Figure 6.5.6. Above: Fort Dufferin. A photograph showing staff members of the Manitoba Historic Resources Branch inspecting the surviving structures at Fort Dufferin, circa 2005. *(HRB.)*

Figure 6.5.7. Above: Fort Dufferin: Two of a series of interpretative panels installed at the Fort Dufferin site by the Province of Manitoba. *(HRB.)*

Figure 6.6.1. Above: "*Commissioned and Non-commissioned Officers Of The Force.*" A woodcut illustration of the NWMP's first officers. Three of the officers are identified as Sub-Inspector John French (sitting); Captain James "Corky" Criswell (standing to his left); and Sub-Inspector Francis Dickens, son of the famed novelist (standing to his right). *(CIN'74-05-04.)*

Figure 6.6.2. Above: "*Stampede.*" Woodcut illustration based on a Henri Julien sketch showing the stampede at Fort Dufferin caused by a severe thunderstorm on the evening of June 20, 1874. It took days to round up the horses which were scattered far and wide on the open prairie. *(CIN'75-06-20.)*

Figure 6.6.3. Above: "*The Start From Fort Dufferin.*" A sketch showing the NWMP assembling for departure from Fort Dufferin on July 8, 1874. Note the inclusion of Métis (at left) and Indigenous (at right) as caricature figures. *(CIN'75-06-20.)*

Figure 6.6.4. Above: "*A Lancer Of The N.W. Mounted Police.*" Twenty-two men were assigned to carry a lance with a red and white triangular pennon. The Lancers worked primarily as scouts, and security for lagging convoys, but they were also an imposing-looking military group that much impressed the First Nations, Métis and others who lived in the West. *(CIN'75-02-13.)*

Figure 6.6.5. Above: "*Halt of the NW Mounted Police at the Foot of Pembina Mountains.*" On the morning of Sunday, 12 July, the North West Mounted Police arrived at the Pembina Mountain depot, six miles south, of the present location of Morden. "*Mosquitoes are our plague, we have not much sleep, water is scarce, but for the rest all, is going on very well.*" *(CIN'74-08-15 :108.)*

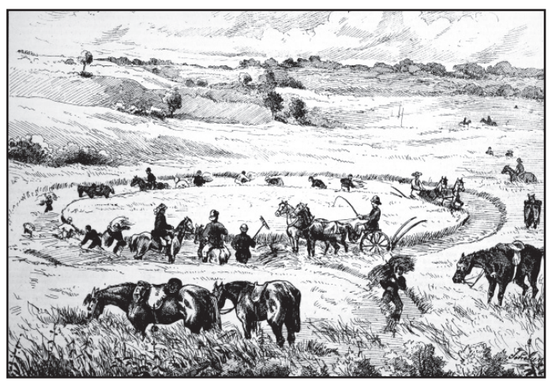

Figure 6.6.6. Above: "*A Halt of Cut Hay.*" On Monday July 13, the force reached the ford at Little Pembina River, just west of Calf Mountain. Here they "*camped and cut a supply of hay for our horses.*" This same vicinity, in 1880, became the original Darlingford townsite location. *(CIN'74-08-15 :109.)*

6.6 THE NORTH WEST MOUNTED POLICE - GREAT TREK WEST

Sir Adams Archibald, first Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, created a commission in 1870 which concluded that an armed force of some kind was urgently required to maintain law and order in the newly acquired Northwest Territories and to bring an end to the growing havoc being wrought among the plains Indians by the American whiskey traders. Matters finally came to a head, in the spring of 1873, when 13 drunk American whisky traders descended on a camp of innocent Assiniboine in the Cypress Hills. On Canadian territory, with repeating rifles, they cut down 30 Assiniboine men, women and children. News of the massacre reached Ottawa in early August. On September 25, 1873, an Order-in-Council Act appointed nine commissioned officers to the new mounted police. Their job was to immediately begin recruitment of 150 men and before winter, to get them to HBC Lower Fort Garry in Manitoba. The first commissioner of the NWMP was Lieutenant Colonel George A. French, the head of the School of Gunnery in Kingston.

In early October, 150 men, newly recruited from the ranks of the Canadian Militia and British army, were sent to Lower Fort Garry for training, by way of the difficult "All Canadian" or "Dawson" route. From North West Angle on the Lake of the Woods, they travelled by cart over the Dawson Trail to St. Boniface where they rested for a day before continuing on to Lower Fort Garry. The expedition, which included future NWMP leaders, Steele, Macleod and Walsh was, by all accounts, a grueling experience and the ill-prepared and ill-equipped men arrived at the Red River Settlement half frozen and almost starving. During the winter of 1873–74, a second contingent was recruited, Troops D, E and F. On June 6, 1874, a special train transported them by rail to Fargo-Moorhead and, from there, they travelled overland to Dufferin where, on June 19th, they arrived and met up with Troops A, B and C, who had already ridden south from Stone Fort to await them. It was the first time the six NWMP troop divisions were united in one location. Three weeks later, at 5 PM on July 8, 1874 the Great Trek West commenced. It was an impressive sight. The tight column stretched back more than four kilometers and consisted of 275 Mounties (including one surgeon and 11 veterinary surgeons), 20 Métis guides and 310 horses, followed by a collection of other animals and equipment that included two mortars, two one-ton cannons, 114 ox carts, 73 wagons, 33 head of beef cattle, 142 work oxen, forges, mowing machines, farm equipment, ploughs and more. Their destination was Whoop-Up country, 1500 km. away.

Although the NWMP may have looked very well organized as they marched away from Fort Dufferin, in realty, the expedition was poorly planned and the men were ill-prepared. The scarlet wool tunics were impractical for prairie conditions; the horses from eastern Ontario were so unsuitable for long prairie treks and pulling wagons that they soon began to die; the rifles were inferior to the repeating rifles owned by the Natives, and many of the first batch of revolvers had arrived damaged. Also, Commissioner French had assumed there would be drinkable water along the way — there wasn't.

On July 24, the Force had reached Roche Percee, 275 miles from Fort Dufferin. Here, Commissioner George Arthur French rested his troops and revised his plans. On July 29, after a few days of rest, French divided his party; sending most of A Troop along with the weaker horses and oxen north to Fort Edmonton where shelter and sustenance were available at the HBC post. He and the rest of the Force pressed on westward. The journey became more difficult throughout August and early September. The summer of 1874 was particularly dry, and the prairies west of the Souris River resembled desert where both grass and water were scarce. Before long, both the men and the animals were desperate for water. When the horses became too weak to carry any riders, the men walked. As the condition of the animals continued to deteriorate, the mounties themselves had to hand-haul the wagons up the hills. Often, there would be no wood or dry buffalo chips for fire fuel, which meant there would be no supper and everybody went to bed hungry - not that the meals were great - "*the staple diet was soggy bread, salt bacon and flapjacks fired in axle grease*." *(Andrea-Warner'04 :36)*

On September 12, after a torturous journey, the Force reached its original destination — the Belly River near the junction with the Bow River, in what is now southern Alberta. To French's dismay, he found neither the notorious whiskey traders nor their forts. Whoop-Up country lay further west. By then, the Force's condition was desperate. Horses and oxen were dying at an alarming rate and the men's uniforms were wearing to tatters. In addition, the weather was growing colder and an early winter was feared. French turned his Force south and, near the Canada-US border, found good camping and grazing grounds in the Sweet Grass Hills. Leaving the Force to rest and recuperate, French and Assistant Commissioner James Macleod headed to Fort Benton, Montana, to purchase horses and supplies and send a telegram to Ottawa. There, French received instruction from Ottawa to leave a large part of his Force in southern Alberta and to return east with some of his men to set up headquarters at the planned seat of government for the Northwest Territories at Swan River near HBC Fort Pelly. He directed Assistant Commissioner James Macleod to lead the remaining Troops B, C and F to deal with Fort Whoop-Up, after which they would stay and build their own fort in the area. The Commissioner then headed back east with D and E Troops.

Arrangement had been made for the construction of headquarter barracks on the Swan River, near HBC Fort Pelly. Upon his arrival, Commissioner French found the barracks incomplete. Leaving an officer in charge of the men, he returned to Dufferin to spend the winter, returning the following spring. The remaining Troops and Macleod were then led by newly hired Métis guide and interpreter, Jerry Potts to Fort Whoop-Up. By the time they arrived, the whiskey traders had left. Colonel Macleod succeeded the command upon Colonel French's resignation on June 20, 1876 and his return east. After the departure of Commissioner French, Macleod and his men began construction of their first post on a island in the Oldman River. Fort Macleod became the first fortified presence of the Force on the frontier. During the next two years, Macleod and his men were busy building themselves posts, establishing supply farms, shutting down the illegal whiskey trade, and exploring the country. The next few years were to be considered by many as the "golden days" of the Force, "*Life was one of constant excitement and adventure, and the duties were almost purely military, for no settlers then went beyond Manitoba*." The NWMP were also very successful in their dealings with the resident "Indian" population. Their recognition of the fact that the Indigenous population had rights that were to be respected was credited as an important factor for that early success. *(Creighton'93 :399.)*

Embedded Journalist

Henri Julien, an artist and journalist employed by the *Canadian Illustrated News*, accompanied Commissioner French from his departure from Toronto on June 6, 1874 until his return to Fort Dufferin on November 24. Some 40 sketches, his accompanying remarks and journal were featured in this Montreal newspaper between June 1874 and April 1875.

The first installment was published on June 25, 1874 and stated, in part, "*We present today, the first of a series of sketches from our representative to which we invite the attention of our readers. These have been taken amid the hardships of prairie life, with no conveniences at hand and under the torment of heat, wind, dust, flies and sickness. Our artist accompanies this expedition and we may expect some new and interesting sketches from him. The object of the expedition is to conclude a treaty with the Indians of that region and to drive thence a nest of American smugglers, who, it seems, are strongly entrenched there. We may expect a lively time.*"

The same article noted: "*The Mounted Police Force consists of 300 men, one half of whom have been stationed at Fort Garry about eight months. The other half were enlisted this summer and just went west out to their destination. They were led by Lieutenant Colonel French who commands the whole force. They left Toronto on the 6th June with 275 horses, 75 wagons and baggage, on two special trains and reached Chicago on the June 7th 1874, St. Paul's on the 9th, and Moorhead on the 12th. At that point, the train was abandoned and horses were mounted. The route lay between Moorhead to Dufferin, a distance of 200 miles, which was accomplished in six days, after much hardship and almost complete exhaustion.*" *(CIN'74-06-25.)*

The prediction of "*a lively time*" was soon realized, as recorded by Henri Julien and other members of the Force in their journals, including: Commissioner John French; Inspectors Severe Gagnon and Cecil Denny; Constables Jean D'Artigue and James Finlayson, and Surgeon Kittson. Their observations are insightful:

June 20, 1874 - Dufferin. "*On the 20th, the day after our arrival at Dufferin, a stampede took place. During the night, about 11:30, a formidable storm arose with such deafening thunder and vivid lighting that 200 horses broke from their fastenings and darted helter skelter over the prairie. Tents were blown down and several of the men wounded, though not dangerously. On the 6th July, the Force left Dufferin and three of the companies are to go direct to the Rocky Mountains, that is to Fort Edmonton.*" *(Henri Julien.)*

July 8, 1874 - Long Lake. "*The column of route presented a very fine appearance. First came "A" Division with their splendid dark bays and wagons. Then "B" with their dark browns. Next came "C" with their bright chestnuts drawing guns and small-arms ammunition. Next "D" with their greys, "E" with their black horses, the rear being brought up with "F" with their little bays. Then a motley string of ox carts, ox wagons, cattle for slaughter, cows, calves, mowing machines, etc., etc. To a stranger it would have appeared an astonishing cavalcade - armed men and guns looked as if fighting was to be done, but what could plows, harrows, mowing machines, cows, calves, and etc. be needed for?*

Our force consisted of 22 officers; 287 men, 310 horses; 67 wagons, 114 ox carts; 18 yoke of oxen, 50 cows, and 40 calves. This long procession filed out of Dufferin in the afternoon of 8 July, and camped about two miles out. We were fairly in for it. Until now, it had been all plain sailing - fresh horses, plenty of rest, easy stages and untired bodies. But from this point, the real difficulties of the expedition became apparent. The very keeping together of so vast a caravan, with so many sluggard animals as oxen, cows and calves, through an untravelled country, was bound to be wearisome.

At Dufferin 30 or 35 of our men deserted the service and took leg bail over the frontier, where, of course, they were safe from pursuit. At the first encampment of ours, two miles from Dufferin, four or five more followed their example. There is no doubt that this had a bad effect on the force, which, for a few days, was quite difficult, but gradually the distractions of the route effaced it, and we all came to the conclusion that we were well rid of these cowardly fellows. Later, as I shall tell, the men had reason for complaint in regards to rations and general comfort; but at the beginning, no ground existed therefor. Throughout, the treatment of the men, as far as their officers were concerned, was such as every soldier receives in a campaign." *(Henri Julien.)*

July 9, 1874 - Marais River. "*Found we could not transport all the stuff we had started with, returned a quantity of things into store. When about to move off had to place Inspector R-- under arrest for using insubordinate language. Went over a mile past the bend of the Marais River, but had to turn back at the bend, as there was no other water in the vicinity. Soil excellent, but no wood from the little lake to the Marais.*" *(Lieut. Col. French.)*

"*We camped that night about three miles from Dufferin. A short journey indeed, but nevertheless long enough for the horses which, as I said before, were not well used to harness, and had to draw overloaded wagons. The conduct of Colonel French, was far from being approved by his subordinate officers; and the expected revolt occurred the next morning before setting out. The Commissioner had ordered the inspectors to provide every morning a necessary number of horses for the wagons. Inspector Richer of F Division, being well aware that, if these commands were obeyed, the men would soon be on foot, was not in a hurry to produce the number of horses required, and an altercation ensued between him and Colonel French. But notwithstanding his many faults, the Commissioner was a well disciplined and experienced officer, and, knowing well that if this disobedience remained unpunished he would soon have to face a revolt of a more serious character, he put Inspector Richer under arrest. This we did not expect he would dare to do, as this officer was known to be well backed by men of high standing in the government. In spite of his arrest, Inspector Richer left at once for Dufferin, threatening, as soon as he should arrive in Ottawa, to acquaint the government with the real state of the Mounted Police.*" *(Sub-Constable Jean D'Artigue.)*

July 10, 1874 - Passage Island. "*The next day, having brought up two loads of oats, we made a march of ten miles, striking across the country, as the Boundary Commission Road in some places passes south of the Boundary Line. On our first starting we had, of course, the usual difficulties of balky horses and unruly oxen to contend with, but, after a few days, we had little trouble in this respect. Our train was, I suppose, the largest ever seen in these parts; when closed up to a proper interval it was a mile and a half long. But from the advance to the rear guard, it was more usually from four to five miles, owing to the uneven rate of travel of horses and oxen.*" *(Lieut. Col. French.)*

"*On the march at 10:30 a.m. informed us of trouble ahead with Indians. Ammunition to be got ready and threw out an advance guard. Much annoyance again tonight from dust and mosquitoes.*" *(James Finlayson.)*

July 11, 1874 - Buffalo Creek. "*Marched about 9:30 to the B. Com. Road, which is U.S. territory hereabouts. Watered horses and cattle at a pond near the 20 mile post on the Boundary Line, opposite Grants. Brought two yokes for oxen and some collars, also some firewood, which we had to carry to our next camping ground. Struck B. Com. Road at the 23 mile post, and followed it for 7 miles more.'" Camped beside a marshy pond which had dried up. Got a few buckets of water by digging in mud; good land; no wood.*" *(Lieut. Col. French.)*

July 12, 1874 - Pembina Mountain Depot. "*We are definitely out on the prairies, and have crossed the Pembina Mountains in which are hidden about a hundred predatory Sioux. They are keeping on the American side. On the 10th they carried away a woman at Grant's Place. We have not much sleep; water is scarce, but for the rest, all is going on very well. For the last two days we have met with many families running away from the Sioux. I do not think that we shall have much to do with the latter as some American cavalry are advancing to meet them. Mosquitoes are our plague; the doctor has, however, discovered a good remedy for their attacks which we are trying tonight for the first time. And we went down to the nearest riverlet to water our horses, hoping that this was to be our last work before turning in for a sweet night's rest, the mosquitoes would rise in columns out of the spongy soil under our feet and begin a regular battle against us. Our horses would rear, pitch and kick. We, ourselves, would be covered with scratches and blood. Our only refuge was to run our horses to the pickets, then hasten to throw ourselves on the ground, and cover ourselves up in our blankets.*" *(Henri Julien.)*

July 13, 1874 - Little Pembina River. "*Marched at 5 with oxen. Horses at 5:30. Six teams of oxen in wagons; broke a pole and reach enroute. Several carts broke down, and a great deal of time lost. The country passed over very fine and park-like. Land good, a fair amount of timber scattered about. Rose to the summit of Calf Mountain by several successive plateaus 15 to 20 feet above preceding ones. The Pembina Ridge, which is probably 300 feet above the prairie, slopes off to the north very gradually. Arrived at Calf Mountain about 4:30 and camped 1 ½ miles beyond. Made 17 miles today.*" *(Lieut. Col. French.)*

"*Beautiful day. Halted at noon to rest the horses and cook dinner. One of B Troop men badly injured by a runaway team. Grasshoppers very thick. Camped and cut a supply of hay for our horses. Water scarce.*" *(James Finlayson.)*

July 14, 1874 - Pembina River. "*Marched at 7, reached the bank of the Pembina River about 9. Bank very steep; halted at river. Great delay in taking teams up the steep bank on the west side; brought most of them up by ox teams hooked on ahead of the horses. Camped seven miles west of the river. Land of fair quality, number of boulders about. Wood on the Pembina River and in patches to Calf Mountain. River water good. Half-breeds and ox carts did not arrive until midnight. Pembina River valley might afford a large tract for settlement. Fish in river. River 12 yds. wide and two feet deep, not much current. Met Mr. Leveille and six half-breeds with 12 ponies and six carts containing presents for Indians.*" *(Lieut. Col. French.)*

"*The next day we moved to the eastern branch of the Pembina River, crossed it and the whole Pembina Valley, pulling up and down very steep banks." When we camped some six miles further on, we found no water and, to add to our discomfort, a furious wind rose upon the prairies and the night was exceedingly cold.*" *(Henri Julien.)*

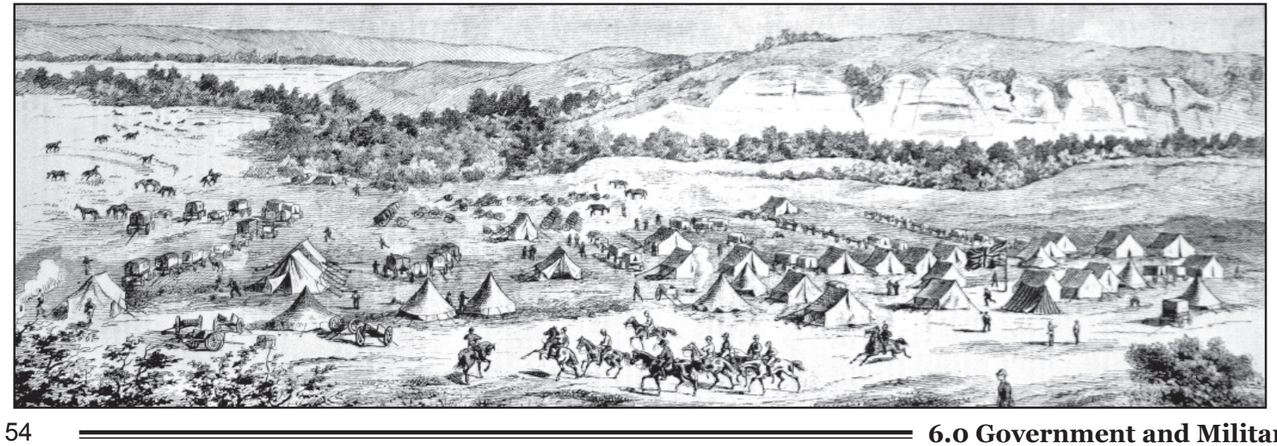

Figure 6.6.7. Left: "*Riviere Courté Camp.*" H. Julien wrote, "*In Roche Percee Valley is a third branch of the Souris, which goes by the name Riviere Courte (Short Creek). We camped a few yards from it, and found good feed, wood and water. I saw a large flock of vultures on reaching the valley, being drawn thither by the carcasses of buffalo which strewed the environs.*" *(CIN'75-03-20.)*

Figure 6.6.8. Right: "*Evening Guard Parade.*" Several lines of police force members, in their foul weather overcoats, being inspected at evening parade. *(CIN'75-02-13.)*

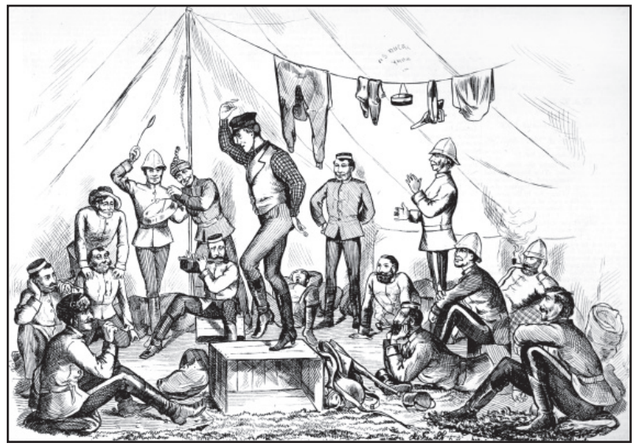

Figure 6.6.9. Above: "*Scene in the NWMP Camp.*" Sketch of a "civilian" dancing, likely an English jig, as a soldier plays a flute and a dozen soldiers watch on. Note the laundry line. *(CIN'75-05-15 :309.)*

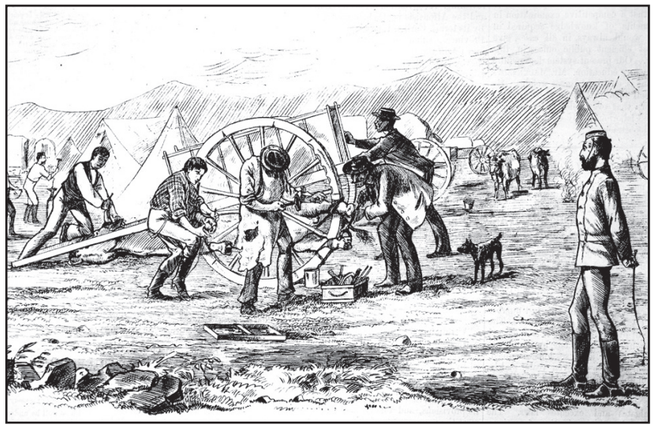

Figure 6.6.10. Above: "*The Half Breed Mode of Shoeing the Ox.*" Note the three men holding the ox down, with all four of its legs tied to the spokes of the cart wheel, as the ferrier works on shoeing the ox. *(CIN'75-03-27.)*

Figure 6.6.11. Above: "*The Sick Parade.*" From the journal of J.B. Mitchell. *"The doctor had success treating the men who were complaining of diarrhoea, especially after the Métis guide told him that it wasn't a good idea to use meat from cattle wearied on the march. The Indians long ago had taught them never to use meat from an over-fatigued beast for it was poisonous." (An Astonishing Cavalcade. BTNHR'94-01.)*

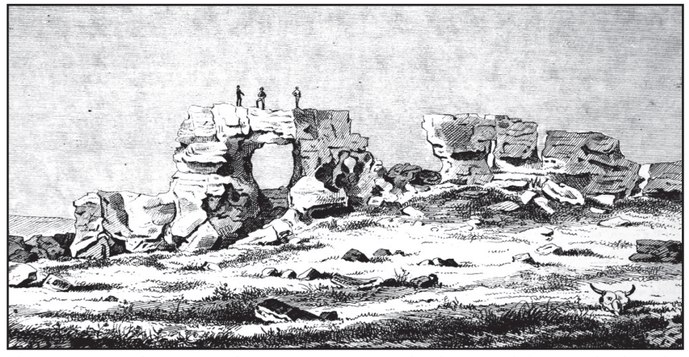

Figure 6.6.12. Above: "*Roche Percee.*" On 25 July, the expedition reached Roche Percee. H. Julien noted, "*This singular rock is a white sandstone formation, running up like a crest from the bottom of the Souris Valley. It is about 35 feet in height and 40 feet at the base. Some parts are softer than others and fissures and holes have been worn through it. On different parts of the rock are cut the names of people who have passed and many Indian hieroglyphics, which, of course, remain a mystery to us.*" *(CIL'75-07-17.)*

Figure 6.6.13. Above: "*Crossing the Dirt Hills, Aug. 6, 1874.*" Commissioner French wrote: *"In afternoon pushed on to Dirt Mountain, a gradual slope leading to foot of mountain and then a very abrupt ascent. Very severe work on horses, especially the gun horses; land poor, pasture dried up." (CIN'75-03-6.)*

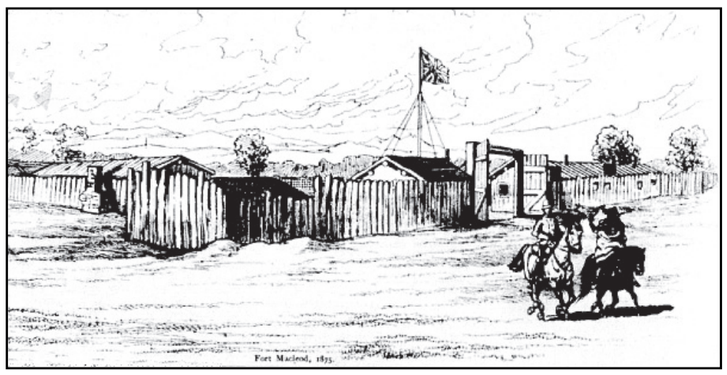

Figure 6.6.14. Above: NWMP Fort Macleod. In October 1874, Macleod and his men began to prepare their winter quarters. The site selected was on an island in the Oldman River. Fort Macleod became the first fortified presence of the NWMP on the western frontier. It was soon followed by NWMP Fort Walsh in the Cypress Hills. *(CIN'75-10-30.)*

July 15, 1874 - Badger Creek Crossing. "*Hitherto we had passed through plains that were very fertile; but we were now in a region that was quite the contrary, and the oats, which we had brought with us, being now consumed, our horses were left in a sad plight for want of sufficient provender. Besides this, many of the horses were already tired out, and we therefor expected we would rest at least two or three days to give them time to recover. But Colonel French not only gave orders that we should march at once, but inflicted upon us an indignation which took from us the pride which we felt in being members of the Mounted Police. The Commissioner gave orders that each division should provide a certain number of men to assist the half breed freighters. It is useless to mention how we greeted such an order. It was more than discouraging, on the morning of the 15th, to see some of our men, in their uniforms, driving oxen with sticks. The next morning, it fell to my lot to drive a train of these carts. Being a new hand at the work, the foreman of the half breeds very kindly harnessed my oxen, and arranged them in order for starting. On starting, we received three biscuits each, on which to make our noonday meal, it being expected that we could not keep up with the main column, and be able to take our dinner with them.*" *(Sub-Constable Jean D'Artigue.)*

July 17, 1874 - Turtle Head Creek Crossing. "*We left at 7 a.m. Travelled 19 miles before breakfast. We had to pass a great number of swampy coulees and steep hills; we experienced quite a lot of trouble in many places. We passed White Lake. Men are complaining about food.*" *(Severe Gagnon.)*

July 18,1874 - First Crossing of the Souris. "*I observed that diarrhea was always on the increase immediately after the consumption of fresh meat. The better class of Half Breed will not eat the meat of working or travelled animals; they say the flesh is poisoned. Our experience would lead to the same conclusion, but there is no doubt that the sudden change from salt meat to fresh meat has some weight in explaining the cause of the prairie cholera.*" *(Surgeon John Kittson.)*

July 19, 1874 - Souris Camp. "*On Sunday, 19th July, we found ourselves at Mouse River, 175 miles from Dufferin. It was a fair month's work we had done and we rested on the Lord's Day. The country around us teemed with ducks, prairie chickens, and prairie plovers. One duck is generally considered a full meal for a hungry man at a civilized table, but out on the prairie, I have thought nothing of eating three and four at a stretch. They lay moulting and helpless in the marshes and along the grassy margins of the rivers. The men would go down with big sticks, knock them over the head, catch them by the leg, and bring back a dozen of them in the course of half an hour. It was butchery. Unfortunately, one cannot be sentimental on the plains when he is worn out with constant riding, and half starved on government rations. We, therefore, made no scruple to devour as many ducks as we could kill. Souris, or Mouse Valley impressed us all very favourably. It seemed admirably adapted for cultivation and, in years when the frost is not too severe, ought to grow wheat easily. The men had a good rest here and felt very jolly. The camp resounded with songs. Blacksmiths, saddlers, and wheelwrights were all busy, repairing and making ready for the march. The usual run of men are pretty much like animals. Feed them well, keep their stomachs full, and they will work cheerfully.*" *(Henri Julien.)*

July 20, 1874 - Camped at the Souris. "*Reveille at 5:30 a.m., then rest. We are getting our horses shod and our broken wagons repaired. Yesterday, at noon, the thermometer registered 85; at 2 o'clock this morning it fell to 44, and at this moment of writing it is up to 97. We can hardly bear the heat and there is no wind. We have just started on our journey; we are only 175 miles from Dufferin and our horses are almost all lame; two died today and a good number of them will likely follow.*" *(Severe Gagnon.)*

July 21, 1874 - North Antler Creek. "*We struck our tents early in the morning and halted at eleven for dinner, being overpowered by the heat. Our beasts suffered much. Then men began to complain of diarrhea, due to the excessive quantity of water which they drank — not the quality, certainly, because we had running streams of late. Another cause was the fresh meat served out to the men once a week. We also suffered a great deal from blistered and cracked lips due to the dry state of the atmosphere, and the high winds constantly sweeping over us. The dust caused a burning sensation of the skin, especially the neck and face, relieved only by the free use of cold water. The lips became very sore and set at defiance all the recipes for lip salves in the prescription book.*" *(Henri Julien.)*

"*We left at 5 am, following the North Antler Creek for a while; then in the evening, we crossed the South Antler Creek on which we camped. The heat was almost unbearable throughout the whole day and there is no wind. About 5 o'clock, we admired marvellous scenery in the northwest sky. Men are complaining about having too much work to do and of not enough food and sleep. We left five men behind with rations for eight days to take charge of the horses unable to follow the convoy. Last Saturday, E Troop went on strike and refused to harness the horses unless they were issued with sufficient rations; they won their point. In the evening, it looked stormy but the wind cleared the sky.*" *(Severe Gagnon.)*

September 27, 1874 - "*No church parade. Most of us washing our clothes. Washed my clothes and had to go in my drawers and no shirt. If the people of Canada were to see us now with bare feet, not one-half clothed, half-starved, picking up fragments left by the American troops and hunting buffalo for meat and having to pay for the ammunition used in killing them, I wonder what they would say of Colonel French.*" *(James Finlayson.)*

In January 1875, a few months after the completion of this march, Commissioner French commented that, "*All true Canadians may well feel proud of such an epic trek. A Canadian force, hastily raised, armed and equipped, in a few months marched 2000 miles through a country for the most part as unknown as it proved bare of pasture and scanty in the supply of water.*" His command was, however, later to be criticized by many members of the expedition, who were not impressed with Commissioner French's decision to have the Force carry all their own supplies and not to rely, as the Boundary Commission did, on resupply transport wagon and cart trains and storage depots. The resultant toll on both men and horses was severe. On his retirement as NWMP Commissioner, French returned to the British Army and was knighted in 1902 when he retired permanently. Afterwards, until his passing in 1902, he served as the official guard of the British Crown jewels in London, England. *(Warner'04 :21.)*

For a more detailed account, see *An Astonishing Calvacade* by Felix Kuehn on the BTNHR website.

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7.0 EUROPEAN PIONEER SETTLEMENT 1870 to 1890 AD

Oxen, Stopping Houses and Soddies

7.1 MANITOBA FEVER

In 1869 and 1870, the Red River Settlement was frequently the subject of newspaper reports "back East" as well as in the British Isles, with all the major events that were occurring at Red River at the time, such as the "Red River Rebellion", the commencement of the Dominion Survey with free homesteads, and the government promise of a trans-continental railway. This growing focus on the Red River region prompted increasing numbers of people to seriously consider a move to Manitoba and the Northwest to take advantage of the agricultural and economic opportunities that would no doubt soon be available. By the spring of 1872, the township survey in the Winnipeg and Portage districts were completed and opened for both homesteading and purchase. After 1870, events were unfolding quickly and Manitoba was the object of growing attention and interest. "Manitoba Fever" was the term that often appeared in eastern Canadian newspapers at the time.

Earliest Settlers

The earliest of homesteaders and settlers in the Boundary Trail Region were members of Dominion Survey crews or discharged 1870 Wolseley Expedition veterans. The survey crews, during the course of their work, often made note of the most attractive and fertile lands they encountered and many chose to acquire land in these areas when it became available. They often also, and encouraged friends and family back east to come out and do the same, while the picking was good. At the same time, in 1870 and 1871, discharged members of the Wolseley Expedition were offered land through Military Scrip and many explored the Red and Assiniboine River regions and registered their claims before returning east to prepare for a permanent move to Manitoba. The "Portage Plains" and "Pembina Hills Country" were considered among the most attractive areas for settlement. The earliest settlers in the BTNHR included Thomas Boulton, who selected land in 1872 three miles east of Pembina Mountain on Silver Creek. Robert Stevenson with his wife and seven sons actually travelled along with the Wolseley Expedition to Manitoba in 1870 and entered the first claim for a homestead in the present Miami area in 1873. Another early homestead in the BTNHR was at Allard's Point in 1874. *(Brown'74 :42.)*

As more land became available for homesteading, and as news spread throughout the east, especially in Ontario where farmland was hard to come by, interest grew rapidly. After the Pembina Hills district began to be settled, and the community of Nelsonville became a frontier centre, the Rock Lake and Turtle Mountain country were the next most talked about in terms of good new areas to settle. In 1880, the *Nelsonville Mountaineer* newspaper published an article concerning the district's early settlers. In part, it read:

"*The very early pioneers of 1874, 1875 and 1876 settled on the creeks, from the Liffey Creek in the south, to Tobacco Creek in the north, so as to assure themselves of a plentiful supply of wood and water. The years 1877 and 1878 saw the greatest rush of home seekers into the Pembina Mountain District, and all the available good land was then taken up. Prior to the fall of 1878, there was no railroad into Manitoba, the first to reach Winnipeg being the extension of the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railroad from St. Vincent, Minnesota to Winnipeg. Before then, the route into the 'Promised Land' was either by the Dawson Route, by stage coach from Fargo, ND, or by flat-bottomed stern-wheeler down the Red River from Fisher's Landing* (now Crookston) *to Emerson or Winnipeg.*" *(Brown'74 :54.)*

Individuals and organized groups increasingly travelled to the new Province of Manitoba, the "Postage Stamp Province", to check things out. After locating the most attractive lands in the areas then available for settlement, and staking a claim, most of the men returned east to earn as much money as possible, to prepare for a permanent move, along with willing friends and family. If married with families, all would be busy for months getting ready — spinning, weaving, knitting and sewing. When all was in readiness, in the early spring, everything they owned - horses, cows, sheep, furniture and food — was loaded into railway boxcars and the journey west began. The Crystal City area was settled by a colonization group led by Thomas Greenway, who brought six groups of families from Huron County in 1879 and 1880. From Emerson, the groups travelled together in long wagon trains each with as many as 35 wagons.

The new Province of Manitoba also caught the attention of Icelanders and German-speaking Mennonite immigrants, both of whom settled in large numbers and were the first large groups of European settlers on the Canadian prairies. Icelanders arrived in 1875 and established the New Iceland colony on the southwest shores of Lake Winnipeg. In the same year, German-speaking Mennonites, from colonies established a century earlier in Crimea and southern Russia, came to Manitoba. Two Mennonite reserves were established. The East Reserve, set aside in 1874, was located in the present Steinbach district, southeast of Winnipeg. The West Reserve was established in 1875. Wholly located in the present BTNHR, it consisted of 17 townships on the "Red River flats" just north of the international border between the Red River on the east and the Manitoba escarpment on the west. Initially, only the higher and drier southwestern half of the reserve was occupied. Anglos, arriving at the same time, largely avoided the open prairie, believing it not to be possible to survive the winter in the open and without a source of flowing water and trees for building materials and fuel.

Throughout the late 1870s and early 1880s, there was much settlement activity and economic optimism in Manitoba and the Northwest, much of it focused in what is now the BTNHR. Despite growing interest and numbers of settlers arriving, economic progress through farming was somewhat of a "hit and miss" affair during the 1870s, and improved very gradually during the entire pioneer period. This was largely due to the lack of railway connections to markets and suppliers, early frosts, locusts (in 1874), and generally poor weather, which resulted in a series of early crop failures. Nevertheless, settlers continued to arrive in

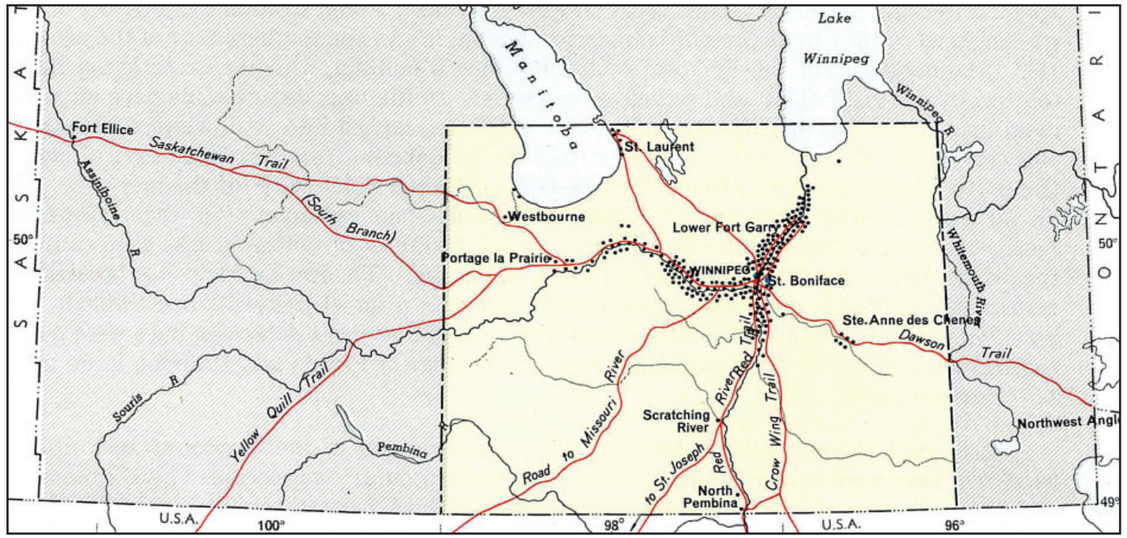

Figure 7.1.1. Above: Manitoba 1870. Map showing the original "Postage Stamp" Manitoba border configuration, population points, and major trails circa 1870, just prior to the start of the Pioneer Settlement Period. The Province's western boundary was extended to its present location, the western edge of township 29, in 1881. The eastern boundary remained in dispute until 1884. *(Wier'67 :29.)*

Figure 7.1.2. Above: Getting to Manitoba. Circa 1876. Workmen transferring freight from railway cars to the Red River steamboat *Manitoba* at Fisher's Landing, Minn. circa 1876. *(NDSU.)*

Figure 7.1.3. Above: Getting to Manitoba. Circa 1883. Photograph of two Great Lakes steamboats docked at McKay's Harbour, Port Arthur. During the 1870s, many settlers headed for Manitoba booked passage by water from Ontario to Duluth, Minn., and, after June 1882, from Port Arthur (now Thunder Bay, Ont.) for their railway connections west. *(L&AC.)*

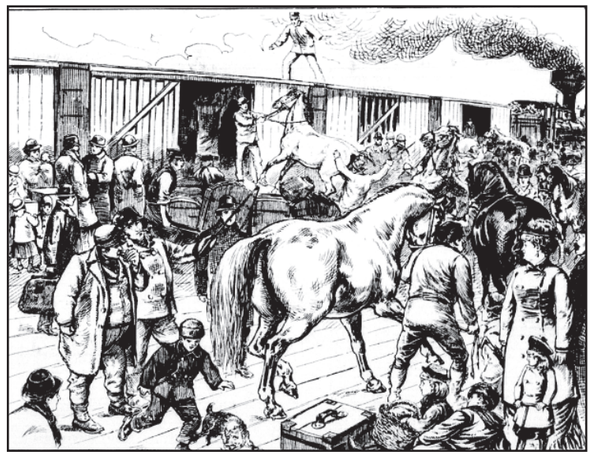

Figure 7.1.4. Above: "*Grand Train of Colonization for Manitoba.*" Illustration of an immigrant train in Ontario bound for Manitoba being loaded up with livestock, equipment and passengers. *(CIN'80-11-13.)*

Figure 7.1.5. Above: "*Weary Passengers Settling for the Night.*" Illustration of the interior of an immigrant train heading west. The ride on early trains was anything but smooth, and sleep almost impossible. *(CIN'78-02-09.)*

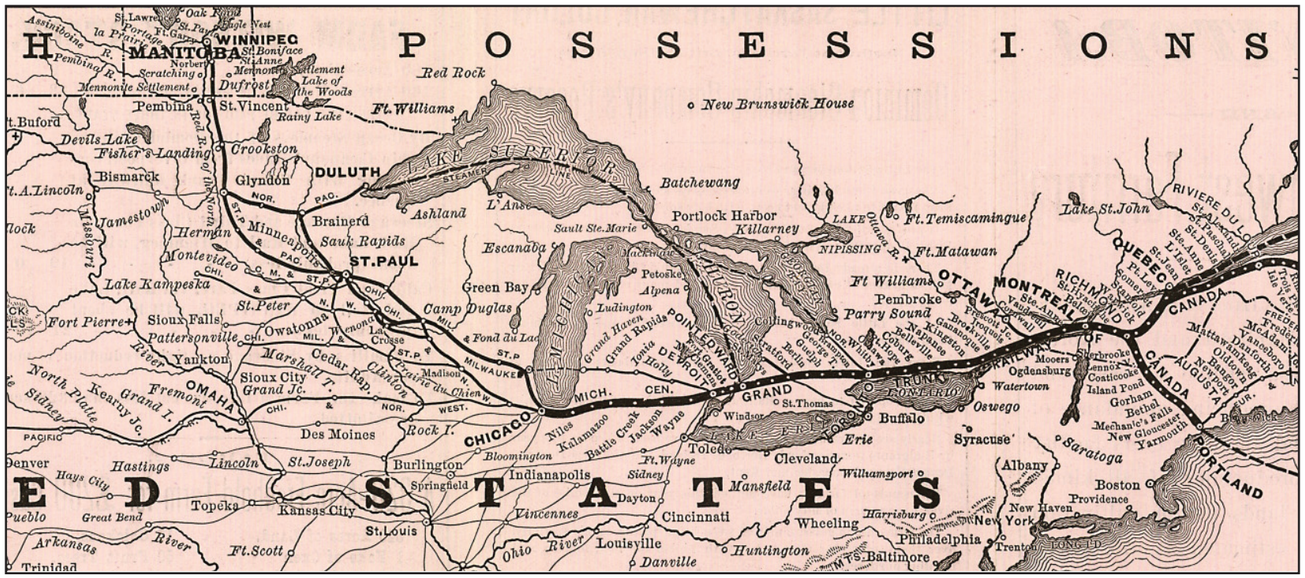

Figure 7.1.6. Above: Getting to Manitoba. Detail from an 1879 map showing railway and lake steamer routes to Manitoba. *(A of MB.)*

BRITISH POSSESSIONS
ROUTE MAP
SHOWING
LINES OF TRANSPORTATION
BETWEEN
MINNESOTA
AND
MANITOBA
MANITOBA
DISTANCES
Duluth to Glyndon 243 miles
Duluth " Fishers Landing 318 "
Fishers Landing to Winnipeg 350 by River
St.Paul to Winnipeg by Rail & River 675 m.
Rainy L.
Lake of the Woods
Winnipeg
Portage la Prairie
Brandon
Minnedosa
Rapid City
Birtle
Russell
Binscarth
Shoal Lake
Virden
Souris
Deloraine
Boissevain
Pembina
Emerson
Morris
Gretna
Letellier
Crookston
Fisher's Landing
Glyndon
Duluth
Brainerd
Sauk Rapids
St.Cloud
Minneapolis
St.Paul
Red Lake River
Red River
Mississippi River
Missouri River
Minnesota River
Lake Traverse
Big Stone Lake
Lake Pepin
Lake Winnipeg
Lake Manitoba
Lake Winnipegosis
Lake of the Woods
Rainy River
Ft.Abercrombie
Ft.Ripley
Ft.Garry
Ft.Pelly
Ft.Ellice
Ft.Qu'Appelle
Ft.Pitt
Ft.Edmonton
Ft.Assiniboine
Ft.Macleod
Ft.Walsh
Ft.Benton
Ft.Peck
Ft.Buford
Ft.Totten
Ft.Pembina
Ft.Dufferin
Ft.Ellice
Ft.Garry
Ft.Pelly

7.2 LOCATING AND ACQUIRING LAND

After arriving in Manitoba, a settler's main priority was to obtain a good piece of land as quickly as possible. Time was precious and much had to be done before winter. There were several options available. Those who arrived before the township surveys were completed could "squat" on the land and await the survey, and then purchase or homestead. The most popular, of course, was the homestead claim, by which a 160 acre quarter-section of land could be had for a mere ten dollar registration fee and specified property improvements over a three year period. Upon completion of these duties, the homesteader was issued a "Patent", which allowed them to apply for an official Certificate of Title.

Not all sections in Dominion Survey townships were available for homesteading, only the even-numbered sections in each township could be claimed by settlers. As mentioned earlier, the Hudson Bay Company retained one-twentieth of the prairie region of its former territories when the Dominion government purchased Ruperts Land in 1869. Consequently, in most townships, Sections 8 and 26 were owned by the HBC and available for purchase only. As well, part of every township was "government allotted" land, most of which was granted to railway companies, usually the CPR, to help entice and pay for a railway branch line network across the province. There were also several quarter sections set aside as "School Lands", and occasionally, "University Lands", "Wood Lots" and "Hay Land." The latter types could be purchased directly from the government by incoming settlers. However, a great deal of this "allotted" land was purchased by eastern and foreign speculators who simply left the land unimproved, waiting for a future date when it could be sold for a significant profit. These non-resident-owned empty properties soon led to a variety of problems for the local resident population and municipal councils, such as lack of weed control and loss of municipal tax revenues.

Another way of acquiring land, if one had the finances, was to purchase an existing "non-patented" homestead claim. By convincing an existing homesteader to cancel his claim and paying him for the improvements made to the property, a newly-arrived settler could "take over" the existing farmstead and register it as a "new" homestead claim in his name. In just this manner, local history records that Wm. Jickling, formerly of St. Mary's, Ont., arrived in Emerson with his wife and family in October of 1879 and, after making their way to the Nelsonville area, soon arranged to purchase an existing homestead in that area for $900, which included a half section of land, a serviceable house, equipment, livestock and about 14 acres of breaking. *(MHS'53 :A. Jickling.)*

Registering a Homestead Claim

The vast majority of settlers arriving during the 1870s and early 1880s were, of course, seeking to obtain an inexpensive homestead claim. The *Dominion Land Act* of 1872 set out the rules and regulations for the homesteading program, and while these were slightly altered over the next few years, such as allowing women to claim a homestead, the basic points remained. "*Any person who is the head of a family or has attained the age of twenty-one years, shall be entitled to be entered for one quarter section of unappropriated Dominion Lands, for the purpose of securing a homestead right in respect thereof.*" *(Brown'74 :47.)*

The age requirement was lowered within a few years to 18 as shown in the text of an 1880 claim form, which in part read: "*I do solemnly swear that I am over eighteen years of age and by paying $10 am entitled to a homestead entry for one hundred and sixty acres, and a pre-emption right to one hundred and sixty acres adjoining. At any time after a period of three years from the date of entry, the homesteader may claim a patent from the Crown for the homestead without additional charges, and a patent for the pre-emption on payment of one dollar per acre, provided he fulfilled the requirements of the law in regard to settlement.*" The requirements included building a house, breaking land for crops and living on the land for at least six months of the year for three years. At any time after three years, the homesteader could request an inspection and, if duties were met, a patent certificate would be issued confirming duties completed. The patent could then be used to obtain an official deed of title from the Manitoba land titles department. *(Brown'74 :47.)*

Besides being granted 160 acres for a homestead and the right to purchase, as a "pre-emption", the adjoining 160 acre quarter section for one dollar an acre, a settler could also purchase a 20 acre timber lot, or lease up to 80 acres of hay land, where available. The timber lots were made available to settlers as a source of both building materials and firewood. In the BTNHR, these could be found in a variety of locations along the Manitoba Escarpment, the Pembina River valley, and on the slopes of Turtle Mountain. Figure 7.2.2.

To locate a homestead, one had to explore available lands and identify specific quarter-sections by locating the survey stakes located at the corners of every quarter-section. Figure 7.2.1. The settler had to then register the claim at the nearest Dominion Land Office and pay the $10 registration fee, then return to the claim with building materials and supplies to commence development. The first Dominion Land offices were located in Winnipeg, Portage la Prairie and Emerson. In 1878, an office was opened in Nelsonville and, in 1881, at "Old Deloraine" in Turtle Mountain. In many documented cases, all of the travelling involved in locating and registering a land claim was undertaken entirely by foot and sleeping under the stars at night. It took an average of six to eight days to travel on foot from Emerson to the Rock Lake country.

In many cases, during the early years, a man with family back in Ontario would first come out to Manitoba with a few friends, locate and register a homestead, try to put up a building of some sort, try to break a few acres of land, then head back east. Sometimes, he would remain in Manitoba, if he could find work for the winter, and send for the family to join him the next spring. Or he might return to Ontario in the early spring to help his family, which had been busy all winter preparing for the move. When all was in readiness, everything they owned that could be taken — horses, cows, sheep, furniture and food — was loaded into one or two railway boxcars and the journey began. Figure 7.1.4.

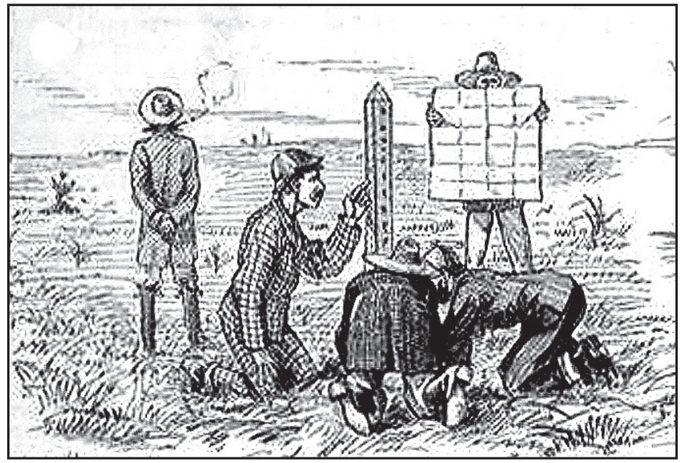

Figure 7.2.1. Above: Locating a homestead. A sketch by early Manitoba homesteader, Francis Dixon, and published in the March 17, 1883 issue of *The Graphic* magazine, showing prospective settlers attempting to read a Dominion Survey stake while land hunting. Different types of markers were used to mark the outer corners of quarter-sections, sections and townships. Most were square wooden posts with incised Roman Numerals indicating the number of the section toward which each side faced. It was important not to accidentally select sections 8 and 26, these being HBC Lands; or sections 11 and 29, those being school lands, and importantly, any even-numbered sections, which were railway lands and not available for homesteading, only purchase. Figure 6.2.6. *(TPLA :Dixon Coll.)*

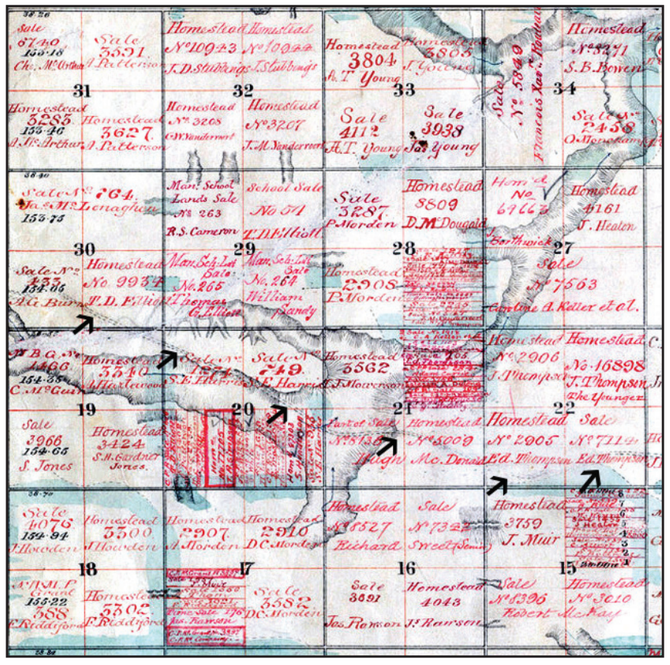

Figure 7.2.2. Above: Woodlots. Part of a plan of Township 2 Range 6 West, surveyed in October 1872, showing six quarter-sections set aside as woodlands, and sub-divided into 20-acre woodlots. The north half of section 20, not long after, would be surveyed into the townsite of Alexandria. The Boundary Commission Trail can faintly be seen crossing this area (arrows added), including through the north half of section 20-2-6W. *(A of MB.)*

Entries from the 1877 Diary of the Honourable Ferris Boulton, of Darlingford, featured in the *Manitou Western Canadian,* May and June 1902

May 7, 1877. West Lynne. "*We walked up to West Lynne and met Nelson Bedford, who had come out with a large yoke of red and white oxen to meet his brother and sister. We packed our belongings on the wagon, and after dinner struck west. As the wagon was heavily loaded, we decided that three would ride fifteen minutes each then walk half an hour, and the fellows walking made sure that the one riding did not take more than his share. After walking sloughs innumerable, we reached Smugglers Point, the tiredest crowd you ever saw, and put up with Joe McDaniels. We slept as sound on an oak board as on the finest bed of feathers.*

May 8. Smugglers Point. *We got up early and hooked up our oxen, and struck out. The roads were much better than the previous day. We passed through several Mennonite villages. The land was good but there was no sign of timber. We could see Pembina Mountains ahead all day. We found the first Englishman's house, J. Johnston's, in an oak bluff on the bank of a creek. After getting a drink, we went on to N. and F. Boulton's, arriving there in the evening. It was a very fine day. The grain was looking well.*

May 10. *Got up latter part of the night. Did not stay in camp long as there was nothing to stay for, so went north into open prairie. We came across Indians camped in bluff. They had poor grub. We went on to the Little Pembina River. There were too many willows and ponds to suit us. It was now half past 10. We were very hungry, and the nearest house was twelve miles off. We found a cart trail and followed it ten miles, coming to nice rolling prairie, with no timber. Had breakfast, dinner and tea, all at once, at Bonny Bros. We looked over some places in the afternoon, and called on J. Vandervort, living on a bush lot near a creek. S.A. bought a cow from J. Thompson, and we reached Bedford's after dark. I made up my mind I had never been as tired before.*

May 11. *Rainy. Went up over the Mountain and looked over some land. Nothing suited us.*

May 12. *Spencer, Mart and F. Bedford went up to Calf Mountain to look over some prairie. I decided that I had enough land hunting, so stayed home and planted potatoes with N. Bedford and Alex McKay rows half a mile long, and it takes two men and a boy to see from one end to another. The boys came home well suited with land.*

May 14. Osterwick. *F. Bedford, S. Scott, Herman Allard, Spencer, Mart, and myself started to Emerson to enter for homesteads. We walked to Osterwick, where Mart bought a yoke of oxen, borrowed a wagon and filled the box with hay, and enjoyed ourselves for the rest of the day. We camped beside a haystack and fought mosquitoes all night.*

May 15. *We got a good start and reached West Lynne at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, crossing over to Emerson on the ferry. We at once made a beeline for the Land Office which was the charge of Geo. Newcombe. Spencer and Mart homesteaded and pre-empted section 34, Sam and myself section 33 and Herman the east half of 32. After securing our papers we crossed over to West Lynne and put up for the night.*

May 16. *After getting everything packed up we started westward for "home." Sam and Herman thought the oxen were too slow for them, and struck out at a lively gait and walked home, about forty five miles. I was willing to go slow and accordingly stuck to the oxen and wagon, reaching Reinland in the evening and went into camp for the night.*

May 18. *Drove the oxen over to Howden's and left them there and walked to sections 16 and 17, 27 and looked over wood lots, then went north to our own homesteads. Found the first stake on the southeast corner of my place. We had lunch and wondered what our farms would look like in twenty years. Got to Howden's after dark. It was a cold night and we slept beside the oxen.*

May 19. *Raining. Mr. Howden amused us relating his experience of western life, and amongst other things told how himself and family had lived on boiled wheat during a part of the previous winter.*

May 21. *Loaded up our belongings in the forenoon and, after dinner, started out for our homesteads, stopping at Howden's for the night.*

May 22. Pembina Mountain. *We borrowed wagon cover from Mr. Howden, to live in and started across the prairie. We had considerable difficulty in finding stakes and locating our places, but finally succeeded and camped on Spencer's farm in time for dinner, having bread and butter and a mixture of alkali water and black tea. Oh, the horrible dose! The afternoon was spent looking over our farms and fixing our camp. The bed made our acquaintance early that evening.*

May 25. *Got up early, helped Mart to start breaking, then S.A. and I started digging a well. Struck our camp and stayed all night. May 25th Doing nothing and digging in the well for a rest. G.W. Stewart and Dave Long reached our camp in the evening. Five of us slept in the wagon box, and I was the middle one of the three in one end.*

May 27. *Read everything in camp, even the advertisements in the newspapers, and when we were awakened by a terrible whooping and yelling we thought Sitting Bull was after our scalps. It turned out to be F.N. Stevens and Dave Long on horseback. All our grub was eaten for dinner. Mart got on horseback with Stevens and they all went north to look over the prairie. I stayed in camp to prepare supper and tried my hand at baking. For the first time, I made cake out of flour, salt, and alkali water, baked with a camp fire. Mart came home alone and all this baking on hand and no pigs.*

May 28. *Spencer got home with fresh supply of bread and butter. We then fed the cake to the gophers. Some of them did not die.*

May 29. Calf Mountain. *After finding the two section mounds on the north side of Spencer's and Mart's, we discovered that the well and cellar, which we were digging for Spencer, were on Mart's farm, so much hard work for nothing.*

May 30. *Located a new building site for Spencer and started another well. The day was dark and the mosquitoes were bad.*

May 31. *It rained so heavy all day that we could not get fire to burn, so we had to eat a cold lunch. We remained under the wagon cover and at night had wet blankets to sleep in.*

June 1. *Got up wet, cold, and hungry, and hard work to start a fire. After breakfast, we went to look up our oxen. Mart and I got on their track and followed it. After travelling ten or twelve miles, we found them five miles east in a ravine. I then went over to Bonny's to borrow a pick and returned to camp very tired.*

June 2. *Started a new well. It was a clear day. In the evening, Mart and I started to walk to Bedford Bros., 14 miles, for grub. Darkness came upon us before we reached there, and we lost our attitude. We got on a cow path which took us to D. Scott's. Mr. Scott was away to Emerson for supplies. After having supper, the best the house could afford, we spent the night.*

June 3. *Walked from Scott's to Bedford's and had dinner. We packed our bread and butter home in the evening, and every mile we made, the load became lighter.*

June 4. *Mart started breaking, and Spencer and I went to the bush to cut logs for a house.*

June 5. Calf Mountain. *Between digging the well and eating the ducks, we had a busy day. For three meals we may eat one each.*

June 6. *Took Bonny's pick home. Had light rain in the morning, then soft snow. Got home in the evening very tired, wet, and hungry. We could not make a fire so we had a cold, raw supper.*

June 7. *Very cold last night. The wash basin was frozen hard. We looked up some dry willows to cook the rattlesnake bacon.*"

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Figure 7.2.3. Above: Settlers' effects. After registering for a homestead claim, basic "settlers' effects", including wagon, basic farm equipment, building materials and domestic household items, were purchased and the whole lot transported by wagon to the new farm site. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.2.4. Above: Wagon trains. The six different groups of settlers who travelled from Emerson 100 miles to the Crystal City area, as part of a "colonization-company" settlement reserve established by Thomas Greenway and associates, travelled along the Boundary Commission Trail in wagon trains, each consisting of dozens of wagons. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.2.5. Above: Arrival. A family group's first campsite on their newly acquired homestead, no doubt contemplating the huge amount of work needing to be done before winter. *(Darlingford Museum.)*

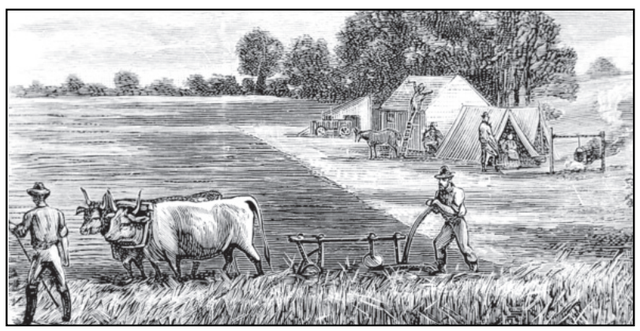

Figure 7.2.6. Above: Initial furrows. Breaking sod and cultivating a small patch of ground for the first cereal grain and vegetable garden crops began as soon as possible after obtaining a farmstead site. This illustration shows a rather large amount of plowed land for a recently arrived pioneer family. Such idealistic portrayals of frontier life by the newsprint media were commonplace at the time, and many arriving settlers were rudely awakened to the realities of frontier living. *(A of MB.)*

The Allard's Point area in township 2-5W attracted the earliest homesteaders and hosted the first settlement in the vicinity of the Commission Trail. Dominion surveyors, and brothers Walter and David Beatty, surveyed the township during the second and third weeks of August 1872, and were very impressed by "*a belt of very fine oak, 30 chains in width (4950 ft. or 1500 m.) through the southern tier of the township in which we laid out 26 wood lots.*" *(Kuehn'00 Vol.4 :63.)*

During the early 1870s, as noted, the most talked about and sought after lands were located in the Boyne River and the Pembina Mountain areas. The earliest of settlers in these districts used the old Missouri Trail from Headingly to access these areas, but it was not an easy journey due to the large marshy area that had to be traversed. Figure 7.1.1.

- A.P. Stevenson, who arrived in 1874, later recalled: "*In the spring of 1874, in company of five others with ox and cart to carry provisions, I started to Pembina Mountain to look for land. The old Missouri Trail was followed between Headingley and La Salle River. Nearly two thirds of the way was through swamps, with water two or three feet deep. The ox and cart were mired three or four times, and what a delightful time we greenhorns had up to the waist in water, with millions of mosquitoes adding their cheerful notes to the proceedings. It was a hungry and tired crowd that camped late that night on the dry banks of the high smelling La Salle, trying to dry socks, etc. Our clothing had early in the day been made up in bundles and tied high and dry on our backs during the passage of the swamps. The following morning, we found that our ox had broken loose and taken the road to the Boyne River settlement, so we started on foot for the same place. The distance was thirty miles, a dead level plain, without a tree, shrub, or twig, no house of any description, nor a drop of water to drink.*" *(Brown'74: 48.)*

Stevenson and his group continued southwest to the Pembina Mountains. Here they found timber in abundance, black soil, and a stream later known as Diamond Creek. He chose the SW quarter of section 25 township 3-6W, as his homestead claim. At the time, the distance to the nearest store was 70 miles and 50 miles to the nearest post office.

- *The Nelsonville Mountaineer,* published a vivid description in a letter from a reader in its November 8, 1880 issue."*I remember well my first tramp from West Lynne to the west; it was in the early part of July 1875, when in company of two others with four pounds of HBC hard tack and a tin of salmon, we sallied forth to take possession of our homesteads that we had just registered. West Lynne consisted of little more than the old HBC post in which the Dominion Land Office was located. Not a single Mennonite village greeted our eyes on the way — and now great indeed is the number thereof! It took us two days to reach our destination, and it was a great relief when we came in sight of our camp again after five days absence, in which we had only four 'square meals'. At that time, settlers were like old men's teeth — very few and far between, and 1876 did not add many to our numbers, probably the grasshoppers of the previous years had frightened the most intending immigrants. But in '77 a change took place; newcomers came in flocks, and '78 and '79 showed no abatement in the stream; so that now for 100 miles west of here the white man hath taken up his abode, and the once familiar visage of the noble red man greets our eyes no more. Truly, a great and marvellous change. The 'iron horse' seems to be in a fair way of paying us a visit within two years, and then our progress will be more rapid than ever.*" *(Brown'74 :55.)*

Starting Up a Homestead

Upon locating the quarter section, the homesteader had much to do the first year. Among the initial priorities were to locate a good building site near to a good location to commence plowing the prairie sod and preparing a small field for the first crops. Settlers would live in a tent, or overturned wagon box, while the ground was being prepared and the first crude shelters erected. In areas close to wooded areas, logs would be cut and a simple log shanty constructed.

- James Drury, who submitted the winning entry for a *Nor'-West Farmer* magazine essay contest which was published in an 1888 issue, described the equipment and work needed to establish a successful homestead in southern Manitoba. "*As one of those coming here in the pioneer days, allow me to offer some practical hints gained by experience as to the best way to start a homestead on limited means. Capital is required to purchase: breaker plow, $27; harrows, $20; tent and waterproof blanket, $15; cooking stove with pipes, $25; wood axe, pickaxe, bucksaw, shovel, scythe, 2 hay forks, wooden hay rake, trowel, 1½ inch auger, spade, rake, hoe, and a few carpenter's tools, $15; cow and dairy utensils, $30; 2 pigs, $12; fowls, $8; entry fee, $10; material for log house, $60; provisions, $50; 10 bushels seed potatoes, peas, beans, Swedish turnip, and small seed, $3; feed for livestock, $12; incidental expenses, $10; total, $465. Our settler ought not to camp out before the 1st of May, as some seasons are colder than others, making it dangerous with a young family.*

He must be careful to define the boundary lines of his land and pitch the tent near where the house is to be erected, which ought, if possible, to be on elevated ground about the centre of the homestead, facing the south or south east, with a bluff at the back, but if on the plains artificial shelter can be afforded by planting trees.

The next thing will be to select a piece of land near the house to break for a garden, say 2 acres, 1 ½ for potatoes; ½ acre, turnips and small crops; this operation completed, he must look out for a good well. At this time of the year, there will be plenty of water in the ponds, let him choose one surrounded by willows, for household purposes. There will not be any danger from ingesting the water if strained through a cloth before using, and by digging near, he will most likely find a supply of good water; the well should be 5 feet in diameter and 20 feet deep, stoned up, which is cheaper than lumber cribbing, as they can be taken off the land; the well can be covered over with lumber, having a trap door with hinges to prevent anything getting into it." *(NWF'88-03 :70.)*

As testified above by Mr. Drury, a good domestic water supply was a critical item in locating a homestead. Rivers and streams were a source of clean water, but available only to a few. Wells had to be dug in all other cases — these early crib-wells had to be dug by hand and cribbed with stone or timbers to prevent collapse. Also one had to be careful of poison gas buildup. Not all areas in the BTNHR had good groundwater, and open prairie areas were avoided during the early years because of the difficulty of finding good groundwater.

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7.3 FRONTIER SHELTER

After locating and registering for a homestead claim, and returning to the site to commence the work of building a functioning farmyard, the early pioneers of the Boundary Trail Region faced many critical jobs that had to be accomplished before the onset of winter. Their lives literally depended upon successfully completing most of these tasks. Securing food and shelter were the first of many concerns that had to be undertaken. The winters were more severe than in Ontario, or the overseas countries from which many of the settlers came, and adequate homes and stables had to be built. The prairie sod had to be turned over and worked to prepare the first fields and gardens for planting. A well had to be dug to locate a source of drinkable water. An adequate supply of hay had to be put up for winter fodder for the animals. Hunting and fishing trips to Turtle Mountain or the Pembina and Souris river valleys had to be made to acquire as much food from natural sources as possible. Supplies of wool had to be carded, spun and knitted into winter clothes. Firewood had to be obtained, trees cut, sawn into pieces and split into firewood enough to last the whole winter.

These and other related jobs were critical for survival of the homesteader and his family, and these had to be achieved with little or no cash. Many men had to leave their farms during the winter months to seek paid work in Winnipeg or early southern Manitoba townsites such as Emerson or Nelsonville, leaving the wife and children to "hold the fort" until their return in the spring. The settlers' first few years in the BTNHR were invariably a very difficult time. Not everyone chose to "tough it out." Some returned home, while others sold or rented their properties and tried again, farther west.

One of the first and highest priorities in starting a homestead was to erect a house, secure and warm enough to pass the first few years until a larger, proper house could be erected. Those settlers fortunate enough to have access to timber on their own property, or which could be obtained from a purchased woodlot or from unoccupied forested lands — would have built log structures for themselves. Settlers with homesteads far out on the open prairie would have constructed a sod-walled hut or "soddie." After occupying these temporary initial structures for a few years, or as soon as financial resources permitted, milled lumber would be purchased and a small wood frame structure erected. By the early 1890s, most settlers in the BTNHR were living in small lumber houses, except for recent arrivals just starting out.

Sod Huts

An interesting description of building a soddie was noted in the Louise RM local history published in 1974, "*Furrows were ploughed in some dry slough bottom where soil contained lots of fibre, and the sods were cut into thirty inch lengths, twelve to fourteen inches wide and four inches thick. Alternative layers of sods were placed crossways with the corners overlapped. A good wall consisted of two thicknesses of sods, making a wall about thirty inches thick. Above, poles were laid to a ridgepole and several layers of coarse slough hay completed the home with a thatched roof.*" *(Brown'74 :50.)*

Another description noted, "*When it rained on a Soddie, a three day rain outside meant a five day rain inside. Sugar, flour, and other items had to be covered with an old table oilcloth or put under the table to keep them dry.*" The windows were often simply made of greased cotton stretched on a frame and inserted into the holes left for them. This made them semi-opaque and the light shone through. Most soddies consisted of one large room, sometimes with a floor, sometimes without. If they boasted a partition, it was blankets hung on a frame which allowed for some privacy and discouraged drafts. Usually these temporary houses were used for a year or two until such time as lumber could be obtained and a frame house built. Sod houses were said to have been quite warm, but were damp. Most of the pioneer sod houses built in the BTNHR were located in the Souris Plains and Rock Lake districts. Figure 7.3.1. *(Louise'74 :38.)*

Log Cabins

A few local history books, such as *Pembina Country – Land of Promise* (1974), and *Louise and Her Farmers* (1979), include several rare first-hand descriptions of erecting a pioneer log cabin. One description describes how, in 1879, a group of five newly-arrived homesteaders from Huron County, Ont. filed for homesteads in the much talked about "Rock Lake Country", then purchased supplies and a team of oxen at Emerson, and returned to their newly acquired homesteads where they worked together to get out logs for all their homes. He later recalled,"*All the logs were peeled, flattened with a broad axe, planed with an adze, and seasoned suitably before houses were built in the late summer. Oak nails (dowels) were used to miter the logs together. The log walls were plastered on the outside with wet mud and a year later plastered inside with lime mortar when the logs were completely dry.*" *(Louise'79 :33.)*

Another informative description noted, "*The logs for these cabins were all cut and hauled to the site, then hewed with a 'broad axe' before the building was raised. The broad axe had a shorter handle and a blade 12 to 16 inches wide. Four 'corner men' worked on each building and dove-tailed the logs for the cabin, with the axe, making a perfect joint at the corners. Each row was carefully joined as it was raised. After the logs were all in place they were chinked in between with small thin strips of wood then filled in with clay and cut straw, or if possible, a lime and sand plaster. If necessary, this was renewed each year. Sometimes, if this was well done and the season not too wet, it would last for several years. Most of the settlers white-washed their cabins every summer. Limestone was plentiful in many areas and was burned in homemade kilns to make lime for mortar and whitewashing purposes.*" Figure 7.3.5. *(Pembina'74 :216.)*

Thatch Roofs

Most of the very early cabins had thatched roofs. To erect a thatch roof, generally a long pole would be positioned over the gable ends, from end to end, to serve as a ridge pole. Then smaller, thin poles were fastened close together from the ridge pole to the top of each side wall. Long tough slough grass was then woven into wide strips and laid over these poles in much the same manner as strip shingles are laid today. Thatch roofs could be built, inexpensively, using locally sourced natural materials. However, they could be dangerous. Sparks and embers from the wood-burning stoves quite often started fires in the thatched roofs of the early settlers' homes.

The inherent danger of possessing a thatch roof is clear from a number of articles found in early local newspapers. An article found in *The Southern Manitoba Times,* April 16, 1881 edition noted: "*Mr. A.M. Findlay, who lives in 2-7, was*

Figure 7.3.1. Above: Manitoba "bachelor soddie." Photo of a southern Manitoba sod hut, including two individuals, one on the roof with a canine friend. Note also, the full grown weeds growing on the roof, the "saw horse" at the front left, and the single visible window by the doorway. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.3.2. Above: Initial and second homes. A family group poses for a photograph in front of the first and second homes. Walpole Murdock, of Pilot Mound recalled, "*On the farm of Wm. Robertson, a little east of the old mound, the men, who were builders by trade, erected the most elaborate sod house ever constructed on the prairie. It contained all the varied rooms of a real house, with real doors, real windows and chimney. It was considered a great novelty. Jack Robinson tells me that this sod house remained sound for years and was there for a long time after his grandfather built his first frame house.*" *(Grosnell'68 :352; photo A of MB.)*

Figure 7.3.3. Above: Sod stable. A crude sod and timber stable photographed in the Killarney area, circa 1880. Note the young man on the hay rack hitched to a team of oxen and the older gentleman holding two pails. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.3.4. Above: Log cabin construction. Photo of a timber being winched to the top of a large log structure under construction in the Hartney district, seemingly by only two men. Note the timbers have been carefully selected, peeled, squared on two sides and carefully notched. Windows were often installed after the walls were completed, but there is likely a doorway opening on the far wall. *(PMA.)*

Figure 7.3.5. Above: Logs and sods. Undated photograph of a log house and privy, on the Gosney homestead, both with whitewashed, mud-plastered, walls and roofs made of timber and sod. Note the tall grass growing on the sod roofs. Note in this example, the walls were built of small diameter round logs, very likely poplar. *(Bill Warren photo.)*

Figure 7.3.6. Above: A rare survivor. This well-constructed log cabin was built in 1883 to house CPR railway construction crews working in the Pembina River valley "crossing" area, near La Rivière. Typical of many early log cabins constructed in the BTNHR, it was moved to Manitou in 1886 and used as a residence until 2001, when it was moved and restored as Manitou's Tourist Information Centre and museum. *(PMA.)*

Figure 7.3.7. Above: One-ply lumber shack. As soon as it could be afforded, many settlers began constructing simple frame lumber homes, which were more quickly erected than log or sod structures and dry, although rarely as sturdy or as warm. Note the one-room 'lean-to' addition, and the two tin stove pipes, likely one for the cook stove and the other for a home heating stove. The above building was photographed in 1901 by Cecil Guest, a bachelor farmer who purchased a farm overlooking the Pembina River near Pembina Crossing. *(PMA :Guest Coll.)*

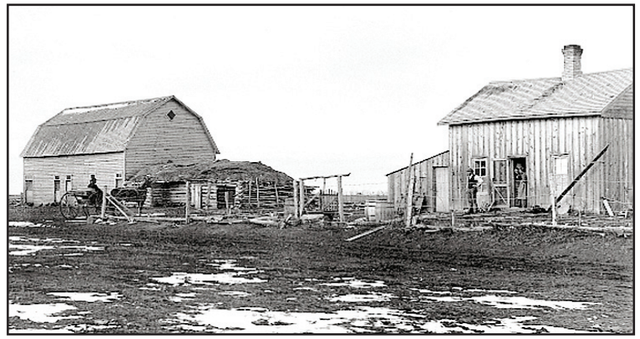

Figure 7.3.8. Above: First lumber structures. An excellent photograph showing architectural trends in the BTNHR. It shows a simple wood frame lumber house and barn, together with the original log and sod stable, seen next to the barn. Note the home's vertical "board and batten" exterior siding, the shed-roofed side addition with its own entrance and the "proper" brick chimney on the roof. *(MCA :Notman Coll.)*

Figure 7.3.9. Above: Lumber barns. Erecting a small frame lumber barn. By the late 1880s, most established settlers were able to afford to replace their sod or log barns with larger frame lumber structures, such as the one pictured above. *(HRB.)*

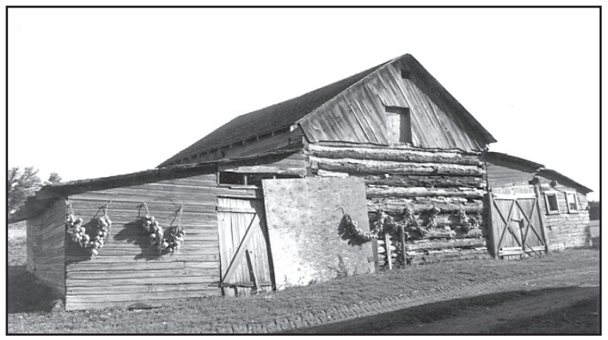

Figure 7.3.10. Above: House conversion. The former Borthwick family cabin, on 6-2-5W, in its later years, was turned into a barn with twin frame lumber wing-additions. It was said that 19 people lived in this structure, temporarily, when it was used as a home. Photo 1983. *(HRB.)*

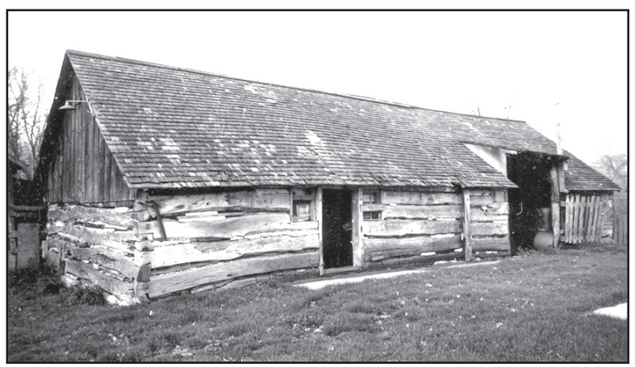

Figure 7.3.11. Above: Log stable. In areas where sizable timber was available to the homesteaders, homes and stables, such as the one above photographed in 1982, on 23-5-6W, exhibited impressively large timbers. The large door opening at the far end of the structure was likely a later modification to facilitate equipment storage, such as for a binder or small thresher. *(HRB.)*

Figure 7.3.12. Above: Log cabin remains. BTNHR Director, Gord McGill, inspecting the remains of an oak timber log cabin on his property, in township 1-10W. Built in 1878 by Daniel Stoddard and Frank Bell, the still-standing 142 year old structure is among the oldest surviving pioneer log cabins in the entire BTNHR. The roof of the structure only recently collapsed. Photo taken in 2016. *(EdLed.)*

recently burned out. I understand everything was lost. The fire caught in the thatch. Secure your thatches, you Snowflakes." After this occurrence, many in the Snowflake district began to put sod roofs on their cabins, by laying long strips of prairie sod over the pole frame work, and covering it with a layer of loose earth. This required a sturdier roof framework than for thatch, which was lighter than sod. *(SMT'81-03-16.)*

The early settlers began replacing their thatched roofs with wood shingle roofs as soon as local sawmills were established. An article in the November 27, 1880 issue of *The Nelsonville Mountaineer* noted, "*A few years ago there was scarcely a shingle-roof building in the Pembina Mountain country; today there is scarcely a thatch roof. A few months ago, a stovepipe through the roof was the only kind of chimney to be found here; in turn, these are now giving way to the orthodox brick. We steadily advance.*" Shingle roofs did not guarantee a dry interior however, especially if the shingles or lumber was newly milled or "green", as pointed out by Daniel Armitage whose family arrived in the Manitou district in March of 1882. He recalled that, during the winter, snow often "*drifted in through the poplar shingles and covered the bed*" when he woke up in the morning. *(MHS'53: Armitage.)*

Similar problems occurred when green logs were used to construct log cabins, which shrunk as they slowly dried out. In this regard, Mrs. F.A. Cowie, whose family homesteaded in the Morden area, recalled that when their family first occupied the log house, during heavy rainstorms, the furniture and other household goods had to be moved away from the walls because the rain would come through all the cracks. *(MHS'53: F.A.Cowie.)*

- James Gorrell, in establishing his homestead in the Crystal City district in township 2-12, erected a one-storey house from poplar logs. His son Ephraim later described it, "*The roof had a low slant to it, and consisted of a layer of brown paper covered with hay and sod. We had a rough board floor made from lumber supplied by a sawmill situated west of Pilot Mound. On July 12, 1882, there was a heavy rain which soon poured through the sod roof. The baby was placed under the one dry spot in the roof, but even this place finally was saturated and the little one was covered with mud and water. After this, the house was rebuilt. A second storey was added and a shingle roof replaced the sod one. Prior to 1882, finished lumber had to be freighted all the way from Emerson.*" *(MHS'53 :E.Gorrell.)*

First Sawmills

Sawmills powered by portable steam engines were established by several individuals and partnerships in the BTNHR during the early pioneering years. Such operations supplied wood shingles for roofs, lumber for sheathing and floors, and finishing wood for door and window casements, as well as for furniture. Robert Preston and his nephew, J.B. Preston, were partners in operating one such early sawmill in the Pilot Mound district, which provided cut wood for the finishing of houses from 1879 until destroyed by fire in 1881. Oak timber was plentiful throughout much of the western part of the BTNHR region, and elm could be obtained in many locations along the Pembina River. Poplar could be found in areas throughout the region, but was rarely milled for lumber. The gable ends on early buildings were often "logged up" and shingled over, although tar paper was sometimes placed under the shingles. Tar paper was expensive and used mostly on roofs; heavy brown building paper was mostly used under siding. Lime and sand were needed to make plaster, and as early as 1881, limestone was being burned in homemade kilns in locations throughout the Boundary Trail Region. Locally-sourced clay was used for wall plastering. Windows were bought with the glass in place, but the outer frames were often made locally. *(MHS'53 :J.Balfour.)*

First Wood Frame Houses

Those settlers who could afford it purchased lumber and erected small 1½ storey wood-frame homes to replace the initial soddie or log shanty. Emerson, with its steamboat connections to Fargo and Grand Forks in the US during the 1870s, was a major supplier of lumber for the BTNHR's pioneers. A June 1881 issue of the *Southern Manitoba Times* newspaper noted that: "*A raft of half a million feet of lumber is now in West Lynne. All of this lumber is to be hauled 80 miles overland to the Snowflake district.*" *(PM100 :122.)*

- Mrs. Cecil Hall wrote in a letter, in 1882, to family members back in England, where wood-frame construction was almost unheard of, "*In coming home we called in at the tent, and I was surprised to find how quickly Messrs. H--- and L---- were building their stable, which is to be large enough to hold two stalls and a room beyond, which, when they have a house, will make a good loose-box; but for the time being they intend to live in either sleeping in the loft or tent. To build a house or stable is not very difficult; but with no carpenter or experienced man to help, it wants a certain amount of ingenuity. You lay out your foundation by putting thick pieces of oak called "sills" on the ground in the shape of your house. In town these sills are nailed to posts which have been driven eight feet into the ground; but on the prairie are simply laid on the flat; on to the sills come the joists, planks 2" x 6" placed on edge across, two feet apart. Then the uprights, which stand on the sills two feet apart, form the walls. To these you nail rough boards on each side, with a layer of tar-paper in between if building a stable; if a dwelling-house, on the inside you put against your rough board, laths, and then plaster, on the outside the tar-paper and siding. The floor is made by nailing rough boards on the joists, then tar-paper, and on top of that tongued and grooved wood fitting into each other, to make it air-tight. The roofs, which are almost always pointed on account of the snow, are composed of rafter 2" x 4", two to three feet apart, with rough boards across, then tar-paper and shingles; the latter are thin, flat pieces of wood laid on to overlap each other. Our house is 24 feet by 24 feet, square, with a lean-to as kitchen.*" *(Hall'84 :40.)*

- Annie Gordon, the daughter of Reverend Andrew Gordon, wrote about living in the family's small wood-frame home on the Manitoba frontier during the winter of 1882-83. "*Indoors, battling with the frost was an hourly job, but without the dangers of the outdoors. Our home had neither plaster nor insulation, but only the out layers of lumber, and so breakfasts were eaten in a gleaming chamber, resplendent with a sheen suggesting to us the decorations of a fairy palace. Every nail head was hoar-frosted with diamonds. An hour or two later the heat of our stove dissolved our gem encrusted walls; the diamonds melted, ran down the walls and turned to ice when they reached the sill of our foundationless palace. On warmer days, when this ice started to re-melt and seep across the floor, it was a chore for the two younger boys, Bert and Rob, to carefully chop it lose and throw it out. This task ceased to be fun as the weeks and months of the long bitter winter all too slowly turned to milder weather.*" *(Kuehn'00 Vol 2 :117.)*

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7.4 FRONTIER SUSTENANCE

During the pioneer period, farm families lived a hard life. It was difficult for all family members, but especially so for the farm wives. In addition to raising an often large family, they were kept constantly busy with the countless tasks required to maintain a functioning household. There were gardens to plant and maintain, bread to bake, cows to milk, butter to churn, laundry soap to make, animals and poultry to tend to, clothes to make, cooking and cleaning, fruit to pick and preserve, and on and on. The early homesteaders had to be very self-sufficient. For many, there was little cash money and few off-farm sources of income. The pioneer families grew or raised most of their own fresh produce and meat. They only went to the store for necessities such as flour, sugar and salt. Any extra produce they had was brought into the stores for sale or exchange, as fresh items such as butter and eggs could not be shipped in from larger centres due to their short "shelf life." Home preserves were critical. Meat was preserved in brine or smoked. Butter was preserved by means of salt. Eggs were preserved in a water, salt and lime brine. Vegetables were preserved in cellars or a special pit, covered with logs, hay and dirt that kept the vegetables cool and in the dark. Wild fruits were preserved in sealers.

Recorded first-hand descriptions about the daily lives of the initial wave of settlers to the BTNHR are rare. However, some excellent quotes are to be found in select early local history publications and newspaper articles, from the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, in 1953, the Manitoba Historical Society (MHS) undertook a project entitled "Pioneer Days & Ways" that involved interviews with "old-timers" in communities across southern Manitoba, including several in the current BTNHR. With the MHS's blessing, the original handwritten notes taken during these interviews have been transcribed by the BTNHR, for use in its projects. Such rare, eyewitness, recollections provide a unique and insightful glimpse into the trials and tribulations of pioneer life in the BTNHR and the Manitoba frontier during the 1870s and 1880s.

Fish, Wildlife and Berries

- Frances Balfour, whose parents homesteaded in the Pilot Mound district, told her MHS interviewer in 1953, "*In the early years, the family didn't have very much, but we didn't starve either. There was no actual shortage of food, it was more a case of a lack of variety in the foods obtainable that was difficult. In the early days, deer, elk and bear meat could be obtained by hunting in the uplands and river valleys. Wild ducks, geese and prairie chicken provided the fowl in the pioneer diet. Rabbits could be trapped. Gophers were plentiful, but were not eaten. Fish were also sometimes caught, but depended upon the distance one had to travel to get them.*" *(MHS'53 :F.Balfour.)*

In addition to fish and game, wild fruit was abundant in many districts in the BTNHR. Preserved in jars, wild blueberries, cranberries, raspberries, saskatoons, gooseberries and wild plums were said to be all plentiful. Wild strawberries, in particular, were very abundant and, after the railway arrived, were often packed in boxes, like dried currants, for sale. Preserves, pastries and jams were made in every farm kitchen. Pearl McIntyre, who grew up on 31-1-12W, recalled that, as a child, she and her siblings consumed so many preserved blueberries that, as adults, none of them "could stomach" eating blueberries. She recalled that hazel nuts were also collected and eaten, as were acorns, but they were used only as fodder for the pigs. *(MHS'53 :P.McIntyre.)*

Settlers and homesteaders of the "Rock Lake Country" were able to include fish in their pioneer diet. It was said that, during these early years, "*Pickerel, pike and suckers were so plentiful in Rock Lake that it took no skill to catch them with either a spoon or bait, scoop net, spears, or more commonly a wire box cage. Many of the Jackfish caught weighed as much as ten pounds.*" *(Louise'79 :167.)*

- Mrs. Jas. McGregor, a daughter of Clearwater pioneer Alex. McLaren, recalled that in her family, "*Fish was the staple food at first, the only alternative being fat bacon hauled from Emerson. This bacon fat was mostly used to cook the fish in.*"

Finally, in 1880, while traveling to Turtle Mountain on the Boundary Commission Trail, Reverend Armstrong wrote in his trip journal: "*On the 8th of January 1880, we leave Pembina Crossing. We ascend the long, but well-graded hill on the left bank of the river. After reaching the level prairie on the height, we travel across twenty-five miles of good country to Cypress or Clearwater Creek. Along the way are met by large sleigh-loads of jackfish and pickerel caught in Rock Lake and the other lakes in the neighbourhood. They are firm and sweet — very delicious to eat.*" *(Armstrong'80.)*

Fishing was carried on in the Pembina River, as well as the chain of lakes during the early years. Some pioneers of Louise Municipality told of walking during the winter from east of Snowflake, 20 miles to Rock Lake to do some fishing, then returning home carrying a bag of frozen fish on their back. For many early settlers, fish was a welcome change of diet in the wintertime. *(Louise'74 :102.)*

Farm Livestock

- George Gilbert, who grew up in the Clearwater district, provided an excellent description of preserving meat during the pioneer years, "*Fresh meat was hard to obtain and expensive when it was available. Money was scarce at that time. Beef steers were normally killed in the fall as all the meat could be frozen. It could not be preserved during the summer months, not until about 1890, when it started to be 'corned.' Most preserved meat was stored in a stone-lined cellar which kept the air cool. Pork was soaked in brine or salted dry and then smoked over a wood fire. Often, it was hung in a barrel with a hole cut in the bottom to let in the smoke. Another method was to dry the meat and keep it in a trough of clean oats - there were few flies at that time. Some of the settlers set up a smokehouse in a granary or shed. Butchers were not common businesses in the region until after the arrival of the railway.*" *(MHS'53 :Gilbert.)*

Preserving fresh meat for later use before the days of refrigeration and freezers was extremely difficult. Some cold storage could be provided for by blocks of winter ice packed in sawdust in a timber- or stone-walled in-ground shelter. Ice often lasted until mid summer. Side pork was also often fried and layered in crocks, covered with rendered lard and kept in a cool cellar or milk house. Homemade sausages were preserved in the same manner, as were roasts of cooked beef or pork. Hams would be cured and smoked, sometimes in a brine and sometimes in a smokehouse. During the winter, the roasts were often wrapped in paper and jute sacks and buried in the grain bins. This way they did not thaw until well into the spring. In the summer, there was the beef ring.

Beef Rings

In addition to preserving and curing home-grown meat, one could join, or establish, a local beef ring where members' animals would be butchered in rotation, according to a weekly or bi-weekly schedule during the summer months, with each member receiving an equal share of fresh meat. At the close of the season, the weight of the meat received by each member was compared with that of the steer he had contributed and he was either reimbursed or else he paid the shortage. One local history description of a "beef ring" goes as follows, "*The 'ring' was mostly made up of farmers, but the town folk could join in too if they wished to buy a beef when their turn came to contribute. If you desired a whole share, you put a beast in every year, and for one half share, every second year. A share was approximately 18 to 20 pounds of various cuts of beef. A chart was kept by the butcher and during the summer each member would receive every cut of beef in rotation. As one might expect, there were often complaints about amounts, cuts age and tenderness or shares. Everyone supplied their own white sack into which their meat was placed and you were expected to pick it up early in the day and get home. Then you would either cook it or put it in a pail down the well, or into your ice-well if you had one —as the summer weather was hot and flies numerous so you had to deal with it quickly. Butchering and pick up was often a weekly affair and there might be four or five rings on the go at one time in any district. The butcher received the hide and a small fee for his work. Organs went to the one supplying the beast.*" Beef rings continued to function for many years and only disappeared with the advent of refrigerated locker plants during the late 1930s. *(Louise'79: 46.)*

Home Dairy

During the pioneer years, owning a cow or two for milking purposes was a priority, for milk for home use and, especially, for the making of butter, which could be traded at stores for groceries or credit. During the very early years, the raw milk would quite often simply be strained through a cheese cloth or a fine wire mesh, and left in large flat pans for about 12 hours to allow the cream to rise to the top. The thin layer of cream was then skimmed off the top with a special flat metal spoon with small holes in it, which the thinner milk would pass through, but not the denser cream. The cream was saved for the churn and the skim milk used for the table, cooking, fed to the animals, or soured and made into cottage cheese.

Before long, a long metal can known as a "creamer" became available, which had a glass set into the side and a tap on the bottom. Figure 7.4.5. After the cream had risen to the top, the skim milk was drawn off the bottom. By the mid 1880s, mechanical separators, which were often sold by traveling salesmen, could be purchased. The mechanical cream separators improved in efficiency and price, as time went by.

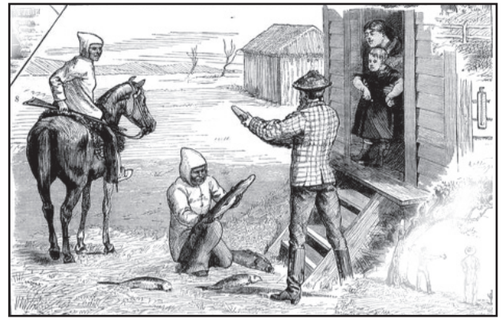

Figure 7.4.1. Above: "*Bartering with Indians*." Detail from an illustration entitled "Leaves from an Emigrant's Sketch-book in Manitoba" published in 1883 in *The Graphic* magazine, showing local natives bartering frozen fish with a pioneer family. *(Dixon'83 :284.)*

Figure 7.4.2. Above: Hunting prairie chicken. Wild fowl and game were plentiful and an important food source for BTNHR's early settlers. *(A of MB.)*

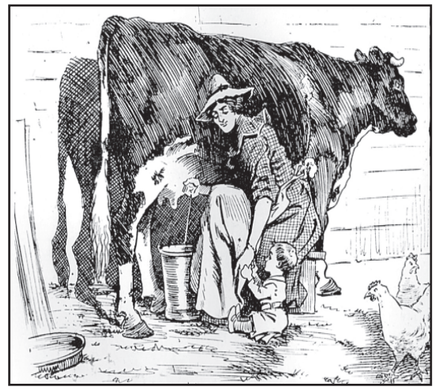

Figure 7.4.3. Above: Farm cream. A farm magazine illustration showing a farm wife milking a cow while tending to a small child. A dairy cow was a critical possession during the pioneering years, as a source of both sustenance and income. *(GGG'14-10-28 :10)*

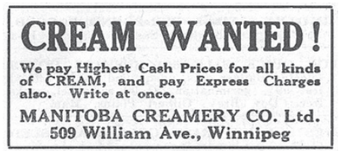

Figure 7.4.4. Above: Cash for cream. Manitoba Creamery Co. advertisement offering "Highest Cash Prices for Cream." *(GGG'15-3-5.)*

Figure 7.4.5. Above: The Wilhelm cream can. Advertisement for "*A New and Valuable Invention*" for separating cream from raw milk on the farm. *(NWF'86-6 :518.)*

Figure 7.4.6. Above: Wortman & Ward butter churn. Advertisement proclaiming their London, Ontario manufactured hand-crank churn, as being "unexcelled for making the best quality butter." *(NWF'86 :589.)*

Figure 7.4.7. Above: Cash for eggs and poultry. Advertisement offering "Highest Prices" for butter, eggs and poultry. *(NWF'89-6-5.)*

Figure 7.4.8. Below: Home baking. Illustration showing a "home-baking" scene. Note the child closely observing his mother's work, the simmering pan on the cook stove, and the pots and pans hanging on the wall nearby. (*Sloan's'05.)*

Figure 7.4.9. Above: Cook-stove advertisement illustration. 1880. Frances Balfour of Pilot Mound recalled that pioneer women did their cooking with cast iron utensils. Some of the frying pans had a handle on each end. There was also a long "griddle" which could be fitted over the length of the stove and used for roasting meat. Both "high oven" and "low oven" types of stoves were used. The "Robinson" stove was very popular, had large hind legs and three lids along the front, and could accommodate logs 2½ feet long. *(MHS'53 :Balfour; photo Weidman'80 :102.)*

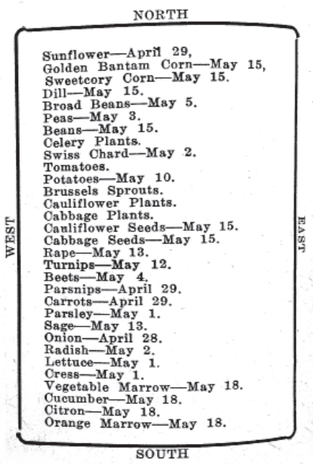

Figure 7.4.10. Above: Gardens. Woodcut showing a farmer standing in a large garden. Note the shelterbelt and farmhouse in the background with smoke coming from the summer-kitchen chimney. *(Hamm'88 :82)*

Figure 7.4.11. Above left: Garden layout. In a published submission to an early farm magazine, a farm wife wrote: "*I find the best location for a garden is an east slope as the morning sun is considered the best for plants. I plant the entire garden in long straight rows running east and west. Here is a plan of my garden.*" *(GGG'25-04.)*

Figure 7.4.12. Above: Garden produce. Photograph of a vegetable display, likely taken at an agricultural fair after 1900, when there was more time to "get fancy" with garden produce. Nevertheless, it shows the variety and high quality of produce some settlers were able to grow in their southern Manitoba gardens. *(A of MB.)*

The first butter churns were simply crocks with a lid with a hole in it and a wooden plunger that was pumped up and down repeatedly until the butter began to form; a long, tiresome, and very messy job. Then came the hand cranked barrel churns, a round oak barrel with a lid that clamped on and a cork, to let out the gas which would build up and to drain off the buttermilk. Figure 7.4.6. Forgetting to regularly let out the gas often resulted in the cork blowing out, spewing the contents onto the ceiling and in the operator's face. The finished raw butter had to be carefully removed and washed. It was then put into a wooden bowl and salt worked in with a wooden spoon, until the taste was just right. To obtain butter with no streaks in it, the salted butter had to be left for five or six hours more and then worked again. If destined for exchange at the local store it was then packed into a brick mould or rolled and wrapped in parchment paper, or it was packed into crocks for home use. *(Louise'74 :47.)*

Flour and Oatmeal

The baking of bread was a frequent and important household activity. During the early years, the needed flour had to be brought in all the way from Emerson, which, for some, involved a three to four day journey. When settlers ran short, they often "home-milled" wheat into flour using a "quern." It consisted of two circular stones stacked in a wood frame, with the lower, "nether" stone, slightly hollowed out, where the wheat kernels were placed. The upper stone had a handle attached, and it would simply be placed onto the lower stone and cranked to grind the wheat. Querns produced very low quality flour, but many early settlers had little choice but to bake with home-milled flour. When necessary, barley was made ready for soup, and oats for breakfast, in the same manner.

Bread was a staple necessity and there was a huge local demand for flour throughout the Pioneer Era. As soon as possible, even prior to the railway in many cases, steam engine powered flour mills were built to supply local demands for the milling of cereal crops for home use. Until the mid-1880s, such machinery was imported by steamboat or overland from St. Paul and, later, Moorhead, Minn. During these years, annual trips, usually during the winter, would be made to the local flour mill with a load of grain for milling, often at great distance from the homestead. In addition to flour for bread baking, "grits" for porridge, "shorts" for hot mashes for the animals, and "bran" for cooking purposes were also products of the local mills. The earliest, pre-1880, grist mills were located at Nelsonville, Mountain City, and Preston. *(PM100 :123.)*

Yeast, a critical ingredient in making bread, was said to have first been made using dried hops brought from the east, boiled with sugar and water, strained, and made into a type of dough by stirring cornmeal into the liquid. This yeast "dough" was then rolled out or cut into squares and dried for future use. Everything had to be kept very clean in making the yeast, or so-called "rope bread" would result, a sour smelling heavy dough, which was not very palatable. Sanitation during the pioneer years was difficult because most kitchen utensils at the time were wooden. The wooden "dough boxes", where the dough was covered and left to rise prior to baking, became highly prized antiques in later years. It was said that some pioneer farm wives used up to 100 pounds of flour every two weeks baking bread and biscuits. Few pastries or cakes were made other than a fruit cake for Christmas, or some spicy sour cream cookies. It was also noted that the early woodstove ovens did not have thermometers. The farm wives determined, just by waving a hand in the oven and by the bread's appearance, if more wood needed to be added to the firebox to properly complete the baking. *(Louise'79 :44.)*

- Mrs. Cecil Hall, in a letter written on July 5, 1882, to family members back home in England, described bread making on the Manitoba frontier, including a recipe. "*We are longing to make bread again, which takes up a great deal of time, as it has to be set over night and kneaded three or four times the following day. The bread is perfectly delicious, so light and so white in colour. The flour is excellent. To make bread, we put ten tablespoons of flour in a bread pan, and add enough warm water to make it into a thin batter, add half a pint of yeast, mix well, and, having covered the bread-pan with a cloth, put it in a warm place near the stove over night. During the night it should rise and settle again. In the morning add enough flour to make it into a thick dough, and knead it on a bread-board for ten minutes. Put it back into the pan for two hours and let it rise again. Grease your baking-tins, knead your dough again, and then fill the tins half full. Put them close to the stove to rise, and when they have risen thoroughly, grease the tops of your loaves with a little butter (preventing the crust from cracking and giving it a nice brown colour), and put then into the oven and bake for an hour to an hour and a quarter.*" *(Hall'84 :82.)*

Vegetable Gardens

- Ephraim Gorrell, whose family homesteaded in the Crystal City area noted that vegetable gardens were an essential part of pioneer domestic life and most early farm families depended upon garden produce for a large part of their food. "*The most important garden vegetable for the pioneer homesteader was the potato. It would grow with the least amount of cultivation, could be planted on fresh broken land, and yielded well. Most other vegetables required more time to better prepare the ground. At first there were no pests, worms or weeds at all. All garden crops came up wonderfully.*" *(MHS'53 :Gorrell.)*

Garden-grown vegetables were stored in "root cellars", usually located under the farmhouse, but stand-alone, dugout structures were also often built. The cool, dark conditions helped preserve the vegetables and they were often kept for the entire winter, without spoiling. James Balfour, of the Pilot Mound district, noted that, on his family's farm, a pit, covered with logs, hay and dirt, acted as a vegetable cool storage area. He recalled that, one spring, his mother instructed him to get some potatoes. When he descended into the pit, he was quickly rendered unconscious by the fumes in the pit, which hadn't been opened all winter, and had to be rescued by family members. *(MHS'53 :Balfour.)*

- Annie Gordon, whose father was one of the first Methodist ministers in the BTNHR, recalled an amusing, but potentially very serious, "potato" event from her childhood days. "*Our water supply, brought from the Elliotts on a stone boat, ceased when the snow and frost made it too difficult a job, so these fresh pioneers turned to the only other source of drinking water, melting snow. This made for another task for us children, one we performed with great zest, vying with one another as to who could carry the largest crust of snow. On one occasion, during the transit from stove to barrel, an accident occurred. The copper boiler, filled to the brim, was being carried to the big barrel in the corner, when one handle gave way, flooding the floor like a cascade. 'The potatoes! The potatoes!' called Mother! 'Nothing must happen to the only vegetable we have left.' The trap door was quickly lifted and the precious spuds, which were already covered for frost protection, were now recovered using the oilcloth carriage rug. Then all hands turned to the task of mopping up, making the accident cause for a little merriment, for we relished even an accident in these mundane, short winter days.*" *(Gordon'50 :123.)*

Bartering for Groceries

The early homesteaders of the BTNHR had to be very self-sufficient. Stores or stopping houses selling groceries were few and far between and pioneers only went to a store for basic necessities. Few pioneers had money, so a barter economy quickly developed. Most farms had gardens, a cow and a hen house. Any extra vegetables, butter, cream, eggs or chickens were taken to the nearest store and groceries or dry goods taken in return. As the BTNHR's first railway line pushed westward across the BTNHR, during the later 1880s, fledgling towns were soon established at regular intervals along the line. An increasing variety of goods and services soon became available and, for many, it was only a day's journey away. Items such as sugar, spices, corn starch, laundry starch, cloth, proper clothing and furniture were no longer rare and special commodities. Commonly bartered goods included dried fruits, such as apples, currants and raisins. Dried apples came on strings and were particularly plentiful in this form. Cured meat and smoked herring, packed in barrels, were also a common grocery item during the early years. *(MHS'53 :Hagyard.)*

- John and Eliza McKitrick homesteaded 18-1-11 in 1879. They later recalled that, as soon as possible after becoming established, they purchased a milk cow. Eliza carefully made butter and was very pleased when she was able to trade their first small crock of butter to the local storekeeper in exchange for some material to make curtains for their little home. Unfortunately, the very next week the cow died and, while they did have curtains, there would be no butter in the home until next summer. *(Louise'79 :22.)*

An interesting list of 1884 produce prices was found in an early newspaper. *"The market report showed prices as follows at March 3, 1884: Wheat 60 to 65 cents a bushel; Oats 20 to 22 cents; Barley 40 to 45 cents; Butter 18 to 20 cents; Lard 15 cents; Muskrat 8 to 10 cents; Fox 50 cents to $1.06; Mink 85 cents to $1.20."* *(McKitrick'40 :51.)*

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7.5 DOMESTIC LIVESTOCK

Athough livestock was scarce for the first five to ten years, most settlers raised a basic range of farm animals. These were mostly for home use and included beef and dairy cattle, hogs, a few sheep and some poultry. Horses were kept for field work and transportation purposes. Very little was exported, especially in terms of livestock. Initially, oxen, horses and cattle were purchased from existing Red River valley residents and very early pioneers. After the CPR connected with the US railway network in 1879, livestock could be more easily imported, and the number and quality of farm livestock began to improve. Soon, fairly large herds of registered pure-bred cattle, especially beef cattle, were being imported by settlers "with means" and by livestock dealers for general sale. By 1890, a rapidly-growing number of settlers were shipping beef cattle to Winnipeg stockyards and slaughterhouses. Raising beef cattle became an important farm industry in the BTNHR, although it never surpassed wheat as the Region's most important agricultural product.

Beef Cattle

Local history records provide a few valuable personal recollections concerning farm livestock during the 1870s and 1880s.

- Oliver Law, who grew up in the Darlingford district, noted, "*While hogs and poultry remained largely for home use, cattle gradually became an important source of farm revenue, and purebred cattle were soon being raised for sale for beef. Shorthorn cattle were the commonest breed. In the early days, cattle feed consisted of hay and some oats. For a good many years, six or seven cents a pound was the average price for beef cattle. However, as with grain, beef prices fluctuated from as low as 2 cents or 3 cents to a high of 35 cents per pound. A good steer sold for about $12.00 to $15.00 during the pioneer period. Calves brought $2.00 per head.*" *(MHS'53: Oliver Law.)*

- D.A. McKay of Manitou recalled, as a youth, seeing beef cattle being shipped out of that community, "*Mr. Gordon, of Gordon, Ironside & Ferris, shipped a lot of cattle in the early days. I can still see the men on horseback rounding up the hundreds of head of cattle in the late fall to be shipped out. They were pastured in the valley all summer.*" *(Gosnell'68 :386.)*

Many settlers arriving from Ontario knew the value of good stock and brought purebred foundation stock with them, especially after the completion of the CPR in 1885, shipping stock directly from Ontario. John McDonald, who settled on 34-2-10W in 1878, was one of the early importers of purebred Shorthorn breeding stock from Ontario and was the first in Manitoba to have an accredited herd. *(Louise'74 :19.)*

- John and Elizabeth Wilson homesteaded on 21-3-12W in 1879. Over the years, the family specialized in purebred farm livestock, raising Polled Shorthorn cattle, Percheron horses and Berkshire hogs. Their son, Ralph Wilson, later served as the first president of the Manitoba Polled Shorthorn Society. The entire family showed at many fairs and took great interest in the development of agriculture. *(Louise'74 :34.)*

While some setters immediately became involved in purebreed animal husbandry, the majority of settlers arriving in the BTNHR did so with little means and were compelled to purchase whatever types of livestock were locally available and affordable. These were often not high quality animals. The importation of breeding stock was, thus, newspaper-worthy information, as seen on the pages of Emerson's *Southern Manitoba Times* - April 9th, 1881 issue, "*We notice the arrival of 'Manitoba John, a thoroughbred bull purchased by W.F. Leslie Esq. of Spencerfeldt.*" *(SMT'81-04-09.)*

Throughout the 1880s, in the BTNHR, local sales of farm livestock thrived, with earlier settlers supplying livestock to newcomers, as shown in the *Nelsonville Mountaineer,* April 2, 1881 edition, "*New settlers hunting to buy oxen and cows are numerous.*" *(NM'81-04-02.)*

Most early settlers would butcher a steer or hog in the late autumn, after freeze-up, so the meat could be immediately frozen for winter storage. Farm meat, in excess of that needed for home use, was sold to local stores, as advertised in the *Nelsonville Mountaineer,* from November 8, 1880, "*Fresh pork is commencing to come in, and sells readily at 8 cts. Beef is in good demand at same price, though up to the present time, it has ruled a cent higher.*" And from the December 12, 1880 issue, "*Considerable quantities of pork and beef are coming in. Pork sells at 8 cts. And beef at 7 to 9 cts.*" During the pioneer years, cattle were allowed to 'free range' and graze unoccupied lands, but they often found their way into occupied lands. To help prevent damage to crops and property by free ranging cattle, municipal herd laws were enacted soon after the establishment of municipal governments. The RM of Louise passed their herd law on February 26, 1880. "*Be it enacted that all animals in the municipality shall be and may be detained for damages committed by them, regardless of fences.*" *(Gosnell'68 :29.)*

Dairy Cattle

Dairy cattle were mostly kept for home use. There was no local market for milk and no one shipped cream to Winnipeg during the early years. Although several attempts at commercial butter and cheese making were tried, in most cases, a sufficient guaranteed supply of milk could not be secured and most of these early operations lasted for only a few years. In 1888, Crystal City had a cheese factory run by Wm. Taylor, which burned in 1900. At this time, the Honourable Thomas Greenway operated a creamery on his farm. In 1898, a creamery in Pilot Mound reportedly produced 60,000 pounds of butter. Cartwright had a creamery in 1913. After 1900, with larger dairy herds, sufficient supplies of milk were provided and some creameries functioned well into the 20th century. However, during the pioneer years, most butter in the BTNHR was made in small quantities on family farms and sold in local stores. The price of farm butter averaged 16 cents per pound, but in times of scarcity, it sold for as high as 30 cents or more. Farm butter for sale was commonly packed in wooden tubs called "firkins" and later as square "prints." *(SMT'80-12-24.)*

As noted before, early attempts to establish creameries and cheese plants were generally unsuccessful due to an unsteady supply of milk. An 1888 *Nor'-West Farmer* magazine article published a short report written by the provincial dairy inspector. In part, it reads, "*On the 17th, I paid an official visit to the City cheese factory. This factory, organized on the stock company plan, was built last spring. The farmers own the building and milk wagons, and the machinery and utensils are the property of the cheese-maker. The building, though not yet finished, promises to be one of the finest in the Province. The curing room, on the lower floor, is a great improvement over the old style curing rooms, situated overhead in the second floor. Mr. Taylor, the cheese-maker, is a careful and progressive operator. The milk is of good quality. The whey is taken back to patrons in the milk cans. This is an objection which should be removed. The greatest drawback is the cost of milk transportation. This difficulty will in time be removed by an increase in the number and size of the herds.*" *(NWF'88-09 :854.)*

Hay

Hay for livestock feed was, at first, cut by hand using a scythe, but, by the mid-1880s, mowers and hay rakes were being introduced. Hay was normally hauled from the field and stacked in the barnyard with a protective wooden fence around it. During the early days, hay was where you found it, unless your neighbor found it first. A considerable amount was hand mown with a scythe, as it was difficult to get machinery into many lowland sloughs and hay fields. One to 1 ½ acres was a good day's mowing for one man using a scythe. Hay was also often sold, as noted in the April 2, 1881 edition of the *Nelsonville Mountaineer,* announcing, "*Hay sells at $6 per ton. Not much coming in.*" *(MHS'53 :R.Stephenson.)*

Hogs

Hogs were raised on most farms; however, these were the days before the bacon hogs and there was little commercial value in raising hogs other than supplying one or two animals to the nearest butcher shop. Berkshires were a favourite early breed. Hogs were fed on crushed grain, usually barley, but oats and frozen wheat also could be used for feed. After butchering, barrels of brine or dry salt were used to cure pork. Sometimes, the hog carcasses were hung in a sod house over a smoky wood fire. Live hogs could be sold for four cents, six cents or eight cents per pound. Sheep and hogs were susceptible to predation by wolves, still commonly seen during the settlement era. An October 16, 1880 issue of the *Southern Manitoba Times* reported, "*A wolf has been making raids upon Mr. C.V. Helliwell's pig pen lately, and has succeeded in carrying off three youthful porkers. Mr. Ellison shot at the varmint on Tuesday but did not hit him.*" *(MHS'53 :E.Gorrell.)*

Poultry

The poultry were generally fed on grain, with "Plymouth Rock" being a very popular early breed. Roosters could be sold for about 15 cents each. Eggs fetched about seven cents per dozen. Dressed chickens were sold at the local stores. In 1886, the *Nor'-West Farmer* reported that on the R.G. O'Mally farm, there were "*a lot of nice poultry, including some pure Buff Cochins, which he intends shall be the only breed of poultry kept in future.*"

Sheep

There were only a small number of sheep kept until the early 1900s. The wolves were "*a terror.*" Furthermore, the smell of the sheep prevented the same pasture from being used for cattle or horses. *(MHS'53 :Armitage.)*

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Figure 7.5.1. Left: Frontier livestock. The Hagyard family homesteaded in the Pilot Mound area during the summer of 1879. They arrived with, *"A team of horses, 2 cows, 2 sheep, 1 pig, a wagon and a sleigh, some furniture and no farm equipment."* *(MHS'53 - Hagyard.)* Sketch by Francis Dixon, part of a collage entitled, "Leaves from an Emigrant's Sketchbook in Manitoba", published in the March 17, 1883 issue of *The Graphic* magazine.

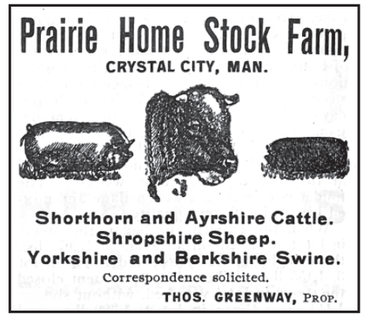


Figure 7.5.2. Above: Prairie Home Stock Farm. Advertisement for purebred cattle, sheep and swine available at Thomas Greenway's Crystal City area stock farm. *(NWF'98 :636.)*

Figure 7.5.3. Above: Poultry and swine. Advertisement for purebred swine and poultry available at Wm. Kitson's farm, near Portage la Prairie. *(NWF'98 :636.)*

Figure 7.5.4. Above: Livestock. Early settler and his son show off some of their prized farm livestock, a breeding bull and two work horses. Note the log stables in the background with the sod roofs and the well-built log shed with wood shingled roof at right. *(A of MB.)*

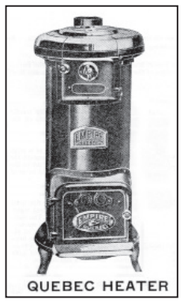
Figure 7.5.5. Above: Livestock. Cattle reflected in a farm pond after an early snowfall on the Handford homestead in the Snowflake area, township 1-9W. One or more milk cows were one of the critical first purchases for the early homesteaders in the BTNHR. *(PMA - Handford Coll.)*

Figure 7.6.1. Above: Going for firewood. During the settlement era, most everyone burned wood for home heating, so after taking care of their own needs, the early settlers often hauled wood to the local towns to be sold or bartered at the stores for groceries. George Legary recalled that his father often hauled cord wood and poles to Crystal City receiving, at the time, $2.00 a load. *(A of MB :Eden Coll.; Gosnell'68 :346.)*

Figure 7.6.2. Above: A good supply of firewood. A photo showing a farmstead, circa 1890, and a large amount of poplar cord wood, piled in the foreground, all along the road to the house and to the left. One did not want to run out of firewood, especially during the winter months, this settler clearly was well prepared, but more likely also sold wood as a source of extra income, which was quite common. Firewood was sold by the cord. One standard cord measured four by four by eight feet and contained 128 cubic feet of wood. Ten cords of wood would have been enough for one winter for an average house. *(CDH.)*

Figure 7.6.3. Above: "*Stoves! Stoves! Stoves!*" An advertisement from an 1880 Winnipeg guidebook offering "cook, parlor and box stoves" to incoming settlers. *(Henderson's'80 :21.)*

Figure 7.6.4. Below: Quebec Heater. Stoves such as the "Quebec Heater" were popular room-heaters. *(NWF'20-5.)*



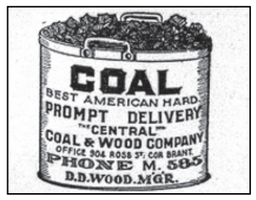


Figure 7.6.5. Left: "*Coal - Best American Hard!*" Coal became popular as soon as supplies were available, largely due to its ease of handling and superior heat generation, over wood, but it was smelly and dirty. *(Hendersons'10 :140.)*

Figure 7.6.7. Above: Wool clothing. Photograph of a woman spinning wool into yarn for making clothing and bedding. Before wool could be spun, the sheep had to be clipped, and the wool washed and "carded" or combed. *(MacAulay'00 :39.)*

Figure 7.6.6. Above: Split, piled and ready for winter. A winter's supply of firewood, cut, split and piled in a manner to promote drying. Many hours would have been spent hand-splitting this amount of winter firewood, not to mention the original cutting and hauling of the trees themselves. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.6.8. Above: Winter wear. S.H. Melson wrote to a sister back in England in December 1880, and noted, "*You would hardly know me with my beard and gun, and Robinson Crusoe-like clothing. The moccasin is a capital kind of boot to run in, and the leather fringes slap against the britches and coat at every step. Fringes all along the legs, shoulders, etc. All leather, not boot, but a kind of soft wash, leather.*" *(Kuehn'93; image ROM :F.Dixon.)*

7.6 GENERATING WARMTH

The winters in the BTNHR, as elsewhere on the prairies, were more severe than in Ontario or the overseas countries from which the settlers came. Survival, in a climate unknown to most settlers, meant generating warmth for many months of the year, through stoves and proper clothing. Being unprepared, in either case, could cost you your life.

Firewood

A good supply of firewood was essential to every home for warmth and cooking purposes. The first homes were relatively small, so wood burned in the kitchen stoves and smaller box stoves kept the house fairly warm during the winter months. In the first few years, wood was often plentiful but "green", and had to be cut, split and dried before it would burn properly. Green wood would sometimes be dried in the oven or behind the stove. As soon as it was possible, wood was hauled ahead of time, and dried preferably for a whole year before being burned. Preparing a year's supply of wood entailed much hard work and often involved several neighbours working together. "*Leaving early in the morning in the dark with a four-horse team, eating a frozen lunch, chopping a load of poles, loading, and starting the long trek home. The woodsman would often walk to keep warm and arrive home after dark. This would often go on for days and days during the winter.*", recounts one local history description. A sawing bee would be held later and the wood split and piled. Firewood was obtained wherever it could be. Some were lucky to have poplar bluffs or riverbank forests on their own land, or were able to purchase a not too distant "woodlot." Other times, farmers "helped themselves" to wood on speculators' land both for fuel and for building. But many weren't so lucky and were forced to travel many miles to the Pembina Valley or Turtle Mountain to obtain firewood. *(Louise'79 :227.)*

Coal

Some of the settlers of the BTNHR chose to purchase coal rather than cutting and hauling wood from so far; however, it was much more expensive. Coal was mined in several locations on the slopes of Turtle Mountain and, soon after the arrival of the railway, it could be purchased in towns throughout the BTNHR. Bulk coal would arrive by the railcar load and be stored in coal sheds by the tracks. It would be loaded onto the farmer's wagons and be weighed on the public scale. Several types of coal were available. "Green Hill" brand coal made for a hot fire, but it was dirty and oily and very hard to get started. Local "Souris coal" was also inexpensive at $4.00 per ton, but it, too, was terribly dirty and did not burn hot. Better quality "Gault" or "Drumheller" coal was also available fairly early on and cost $11.50 per ton. About 1890, "Pennsylvania Hard Coal" became popular and cost $20 per ton. *(MHS'53 :F.C. Hagyard.)*

Pioneer Clothing

During the early years, when money was scarce and clothing stores few and far between, every bit of clothing was repeatedly recycled, and eventually ended up as a piece of a braided or hooked rug to help keep the floors warmer, or as a patch in a quilt to cover the beds. No piece of cloth was wasted. Many pioneer homes boasted a spinning wheel and the women, and some of the men, were very adept at spinning. Socks, mittens, underwear, blankets, and coat materials were knitted and woven from the wool. Large winter fur coats were a necessity for the men rather then a luxury, and most men owned a buffalo skin coat, or a raccoon or muskrat-lined cloth coat. When these were later worn thin, the coats were made into gauntlet mittens for all the members of the household. Chore mittens were made from old coats or overall material and lined with usable pieces of leftover cotton used to make underwear.

Because of the cold house interiors, infants had to be warmly clad and babies were put into two or three woollen "barrow-coats" until the age of six or seven months. Toddlers were dressed in dresses, including little boys. Dresses were fashionable with much frills, lace, tucking and detail, such as "leg of mutton" sleeves, so mother spent many hours ironing with various types of irons heated on the wood stove. Wash day, usually Monday, was a long hard day. The boilers were filled the night before for an early start. Usually, the whites were boiled and then rinsed twice and blued and then hung outside to dry. In the winter, they were hung outside, frozen, and then brought in and hung to thaw and dry on lines in the kitchen or living room. After the clothes were hung on the line, the rinse water was used to wash up the kitchen floor, and two pails full were saved to clean out the outhouse, a weekly task of every good farm wife. *(Louise'79 :40.)*

Bedding

Most early houses were cold and blankets not too plentiful until the early 1900s. Clothing was recycled into quilts and filled with mostly down or sheep's wool. The earliest quilts were very plain, but later, cottons were bought and exchanged with neighbours and many beautiful quilts were made. Quilting bees were common events and usually coincided with a barn or house raising where all the neighbours gathered to help. Mattresses were unheard of, so ticks made of "ticking" or very strong cotton, were used. The tick was filled with straw and the top with feathers, which had to be turned and fluffed each day. Every autumn, a day was set aside to renew the straw ticks. First, they were emptied out of what had now become chaff, the covers were washed and hung to dry and then filled with fresh wheat straw for a nice clean smell. The feather tick covers were washed in a tub of soft water heated over a fire in the yard, rinsed, and laid out on poles or bushes to dry. The feather bedding, after being scrubbed, was laid on the roof to be rained on for rinsing, and then allowed to dry in the sun. *(Louise'79 :46.)*

Cold Weather Travel

To travel in cold weather in unheated vehicles, children, especially, had to be warmly dressed. Everyone had a heavy overcoat, probably home-made, and hand-knitted toques, mitts and stockings. The yarn for these articles was carded and spun from raw wool as the women were experts with the spinning wheels brought with them from Ontario. For fancy winter mitts, rabbit fur was sometimes added, a pinch at a time, into the yarn as the mitts were knitted. The hand-knit stockings were worn over long underwear and the children, especially the girls, hated these outfits. They became very itchy on warm days and, at the first sign of spring, the underwear would be rolled up and the stockings rolled down. All children wore boots or moccasins with three or four pairs of heavy socks inside. In spring, these were soon discarded and most of the children went barefoot.

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7.7 FRONTIER FARM POWER

Farm power during the Pioneer Period, for the most part, evolved from primarily oxen power during the 1870s, to horse power during the early 1880s, to steam power during the late 1880s. However, adoption of new power sources was slow and overlapped. Steam engines were being used as early as the early 1870s for threshing and milling purposes, and one could find oxen still being used on many farms, well into the 1890s. Nevertheless, farm power and farm power innovations played a major role in the history of settlement and development of the Boundary Trail Region and deserve discussion.

Manual Labour

Local history records reveal that some of the BTNHR's poorest and least-equipped early settlers broke the first land, cultivated the soil, seeded and harvested the first small crops entirely with simple hand tools. These would have consisted of a shovel and a rake for breaking and cultivation, a basket for broadcast seeding, and a scythe and a wooden flail for harvesting. Homesteading with hand tools was not likely commonplace, but common enough to note and recognize. Such people began with nothing more than a few hand tools and the sweat of their brow.

Oxen

Oxen were the primary source of farm power for both field work and transportation, and could be found on most BTNHR homesteads during the 1870s. Trained farm horses could be purchased; however, they were few in number and far more expensive to buy, feed and care for than oxen. Thus, oxen continued to be used on many farms throughout the BTNHR, especially for sod breaking purposes, as oxen tended to be more powerful than horses and required less care. However, oxen could not stand the summer heat as well as horses could. On a warm day, the settlers would have to work from sunrise to until 11 a.m. and then turn the oxen loose until about four o'clock. They would be re-hitched and field work would then continue until about nine p.m. In contrast to horses, the oxen would feed themselves on prairie grasses during the summer and did not require feed grain. For this reason, the use of oxen for farm power and transportation continued to about 1900. Oxen were, however, forever complained about for stubbornness, and when they decided, for example, they wanted to sit in a cool slough, there would be no stopping them.

Horses

Horses cost more than oxen to keep, but could work longer hours and were faster workers, so as soon as the pioneer could afford to do so, the old "yoke" of oxen was replaced by a "team" of workhorses. During the later 1880s, horses were becoming fairly common, although very few of the settlers could afford anything more than a two-horse team. Four-horse teams were still uncommon except for on a few wealthier farm operations. The first railway connection reached Manitoba and the BTNHR in late December 1878. By the following spring, carloads of old horses were shipped to Manitoba from Ontario. These could be bought at $100 to $125 per team, but it soon became apparent that old Ontario horses were widely considered as "not worth the money." This was a fact that the members of the NWMP themselves learned during their 1874 Trek West. A good and proper team of horses could cost a settler up to $500. For this reason, most newly-arrived settlers generally purchased oxen and put off purchasing a team of horses until other priorities were taken care of, such as buildings, livestock, and even farm implements. In the BTNHR, horses became commonplace about 1885. They continued to be the primary power for field work for the next half century and were the basis of a large support and service industry, including livery stables, harness makers, wagon makers, veterinarians, blacksmiths, etc. A four-horse outfit could manage 250 acres average per season. Clydesdales were the most useful breed of farm workhorse and were highly prized. Percherons were also prized but were not introduced into the BTNHR until the 1890s. Plowing matches and agricultural fairs were popular events where the district farmers could show off their prized horses. *(MHS'53 :Foster.)*

Alfred Garnett came to Manitoba from Brockville, ON, arriving in the Crystal City area with the early settlers. "*After the railway reached Manitou, Alf made a trip to Medicine Hat, where he bought 50 horses from the ranchers there and had them shipped by train to Manitou. He, Em. Knight and a third man, unloaded them from the cars and drove them out to the farm. The three men spent the winter breaking the horses to harness, matching them as teams and training them to ride or drive. When trained, the horses had a ready sale, bringing as much as $500 for matched teams.*" *(Gosnell'68 :519.)*

Steam Engines

As with other "larger" farm implements such as reapers and threshers, the early steam engines were wheeled and could be hauled from site to site on the overland trails. Steam engines, at this time, were prohibitively expensive for individual farmers and most were owned in partnership or in cooperatives. The Region's first steam engines were used to power lumber saws, shingle saws, and grist mills to produce lumber, flour and bran which were essential goods at the time. Only a few of the first steam engines in the BTNHR were used to power grain threshers. Steam power on the farm did not come "into vogue" until the 1890s. The first steam engines had vertical boilers and both wood and straw could be used to fuel them. These early "upright" steam engines were not self-propelled and had to be towed by horses to work sites. *(MHS'53 :Balfour.)*

Wind Power

Windmills were one of the cheapest forms of energy that the early farmers had. Their fuel, the wind, was free. The early windmills were fairly large and of mostly wooden construction. Frequently, they were connected to the top of a pump house beside the barn. The rotation of the vanes was used to operate a pump to draw up water or, through belts, could be attached to a small crusher to crack the grain for livestock feed. Farmers also connected the windmills to water troughs with a float mechanism located at the bottom of the mill. As the float dropped with the water level, it moved a series of chains that pulled the tail of the windmill around, so that the vanes could catch the wind and pump water into the trough. When the float rose to a certain point, it would pull the tail flat to stop the wheel from spinning and automatically stop the pump. *(Louise'79 :225.)*

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Figure 7.7.1. Above: Ox power. Oxen, though slower-working than horses, were popular with new settlers for their hardiness and pulling power, and were favoured for breaking new land. They were also much cheaper to purchase and keep. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.7.2. Above: Horse power. Once the land was broken and financial resources permitted, settlers switched from oxen to horses, which could work for longer periods and were easier to handle. *(L&AC.)*

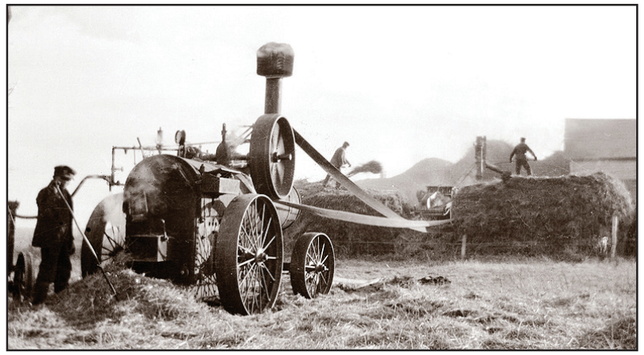

Figure 7.7.3. Above: Steam power. Portable steam engines appeared in the BTNHR as early as 1879, and were used primarily to run threshers and small saw and grist mills. Horses pulled these early engines from site to site. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.7.4. Above: Wind power. Windmills were popular and an effective source of farm power in the BTNHR, with its flat open landscape, and were used primarily for grinding grain into animal feed and pumping water. They were often seen in the Region's Mennonite villages, as illustrated above. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.7.5. Above: Horse-powered belt-drive. A very interesting photo of a late autumn wood-cutting event on the John Handford farm, near Snowflake on 21-1-9W. Circa 1902. Note the horses, at left, which walked in circles around a gearbox that drove a drive shaft connected to the drive-wheel, visible at centre in front of the hay wagon, which, in turn, powered a circular saw via a long belt drive, visible to the left of the group of workers. A fan-mill can be seen to the right of the horses. James Laidlaw, who homesteaded 33-2-12W in 1880, purchased, together with neighbour, Mr. William Affleck, the district's first threshing machine run by horse-power. For years afterwards, this horse-powered machine was taken from farm to farm for woodcutting and feed grain crushing. *(PMA :Guest Coll.)*

Figure 7.8.1. Above: Importing farm equipment. A photo of the river front at Fargo N.D., circa 1876, showing barges loaded with farm equipment, mostly threshers and steam engines, bound for Manitoba. Note also the grain elevator, railway and pedestrian bridges in the background; the lumber raft and boxcars being unloaded in the middle ground; and the steamboat *Pluck* and two fully loaded barges in the foreground. *(A of MB.)*

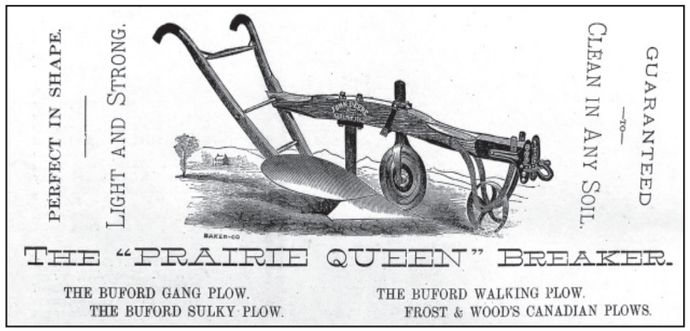

Figure 7.8.2. Above: Breaker plows. 1886 Advertisement for the Winnipeg Agent of the John Deere "Prairie Queen" Breaker plow. Walking plows such as this were an essential initial purchase for virtually all homesteaders. In addition to Prairie Queen walking plows, the advertisement also offered Buford brand "Walking, Gang and Sulky" plows, and Frost and Wood's "Canadian" plows. *(NWF'86 :370.)*

Figure 7.8.3. Above: Tough going. A plowman breaking land pauses to allow a photograph to be taken, giving his "beasts of burden", a pair of oxen and three horses, a bit of a breather from their hard work. *(CDH.)*

7.8 GRAIN CULTIVATION

The westward expanding US railway network first reached the Red River at present day Fargo/Moorhead in 1871. Almost immediately, a very active steamboat transport industry began to develop between Fargo and Fort Garry, and strategic riverside locations in between. A wide range of merchandise and material was shipped north into Manitoba during the steamboat years. Among the most lucrative items shipped for sale were farm implements. Plows, harrows, reapers, threshers and even portable steam engines began to be imported into Manitoba from eastern Canadian and US manufacturers via the US rail system and Red River steamboat.

After 1879, implements could be shipped in entirely by railway, lowering the prices and increasing the variety. But even then, only the best-financed settler in the BTNHR could afford much more than a very basic set of implements. It was more common, throughout the pioneer years, that a group of two to four farmers, each with some cash resources, would communally purchase one or two items, and share their use. Farm-owned implements, when not being used, would be rented to neighbouring farmers.

Emerson was established in the spring of 1878. With its Red River steamboat connections to the US railway network at Moorhead/Fargo, it immediately became an important centre where settlers disembarked and supplies and equipment could be purchased. When the CPR Pembina branchline passed through the community, its importance as a market and supply centre exploded and Emerson, along with West Lynne on the west side of the river, became boomtowns with all kinds of commercial activity: selling equipment, supplies and building material, grain buying, hotels and rentals, government land office, lawyers, doctors, and on and on. Winnipeg, as well, served as a commercial centre for incoming settlers bound for the Boundary Trail region using the old Missouri Trail from Headingly to the Pembina Hills. The types of basic farm implements and equipment being purchased by the settlers during the pioneer period in these centres would have included: wagons, buggies, sleds, breaker and walking plows, harrows, hand-powered broadcast seeders, horse-powered grain threshers and hay compactors, reapers and binders, even portable steam engines. This would have been in addition to building supplies, furniture, food, clothing, etc.

Initial Breaking & Cultivation

Depending upon the nature of the land chosen, settlers in the BTNHR could expect to break from five to 20 acres of land during the first year. Thomas Bell, who homesteaded in township 3-12W in 1878, noted that the land he selected "*was mostly bush*" and that he was able to only clear and turn over five acres the first summer, using oxen and a breaker plow. It was often noted at the time that it was difficult to find breaker plows that did a satisfactory job of turning over the thick virgin prairie sod. One of the complaints was that plows shipped out from Britain or eastern Canada would not "clean properly" — due to the clay rich Manitoba soils. There were also complaints that the Ontario eight and nine inch breaker ploughs were "*too narrow and too slow.*" A larger style breaking plough, cutting a 12 and even a 14 inch furrow, pulled by yokes of oxen, became the norm by the early 1880s. There were also complaints made that the "Ontario method"of ploughing "*left the land too dry.*"

- John Sanderson, in summer of 1872, became the first settler in western Canada to register a homestead claim under the *Dominion Homestead Act*. His homestead was located in the Portage la Prairie district, west of Winnipeg. In his memoirs, he made mention of the problems with the early breaker plows. He noted that the first plow that gave him satisfaction was the "Moline" 12-inch breaker plow, manufactured in the US. He indicated this plow cost him the princely sum of $40 but was "*best of all for breaking and back-setting.*" As noted by Mr. Sanderson, the settlers' first breaking was often "back set" to help break apart and pulverize the dense prairie sod. One local history description of back setting reads: "*After turning over the prairie sod to a three inch depth, the upturned furrow was allowed to rot during the summer. Then it was back set by ploughing the furrow over again but two or three inches deeper. This helped to break up the sod and deposited several inches of fresh soil on top of it, making for a better seed bed than plowing alone.*" If one owned a set of spike tooth harrows or similar implement, this "back-set breaking" would have been leveled out and broken up even more using the harrows before seeding commenced." *(Louise'79 :4.)*

First Crops

Fresh breaking could not be immediately seeded to crop for, as noted, it took several months for the overturned thick prairie sod to begin to decompose into granular soil. Typically, seeding was done in the spring the year following initial breaking and back-setting. Seeding of the first crops was done by simply hand casting with a simple basket or shoulder bag used to carry the seed. During the early 1880s, the hand held "gatling-gun" or mechanical broadcast seeder came into use. Those few homesteaders, who were financially better off than most, purchased horse-drawn seeders, such as the Robinsons of township 9-3W who purchased a "9-foot, 2 horse seeder" in 1883. It was generally not until the early 1890s that horse drawn drill seeders became commonplace. Fields would have been harrowed prior to seeding to prepare and level the seed bed and, again, after seeding to cover the seed. Wheat and oats were the two most common first crops and were critical for making flour for the settlers and feed grain for their livestock. Only grain surplus to domestic needs would be sold to grain buyers for milling or to incoming settlers for seed grain. However, there was very little surplus grain to be found during the 1870s and early 1880s. The seed stock used for the first crops grown in the BTNHR was brought by the settlers from Ontario or the British Isles. "Golden Drop" and "Red Fife" wheat and "Banner" oats were popular early varieties of cereal crops. Some barley was also grown.

Without any income to be derived from crops and with few opportunities for nearby "off-farm" sources of employment and income, the first year was often extremely difficult for the newly-arrived settlers.

Scythes, Hand-binding and Flails

As mentioned above, some of the BTNHR's poorest and least-equipped early settlers broke the first land, cultivated the soil, seeded, and harvested the first small crops entirely with simple hand tools, such as a shovel and a rake for breaking and cultivation; a basket for broadcast seeding; and a scythe and a wooden flail for harvesting. Mrs. Jessie Mann, whose father, Tom Boulton, located a homestead in 1872 near the future settlement of Nelsonville, wrote the following description regarding her father's first crops, "*Breaking the land was a great task, where there were trees with big roots to dig, and spots that had many stones to pick. I don't now recall how he tilled the land, but I do recall that he scattered the seed by hand. In the autumn, when the grain was ripe, he cut it by hand with a scythe, and reaped it with a cradle — which was made of willow and attached to the scythe, a sort of a basket shaped thing — which piled the cut grain in a coil or bundle. When it became dry enough to thresh, he would carry the grain bundles to the floor of some building and thresh it with a flail.*" *(Louise'74 :106.)*

Another local history description of early harvesting methods in the BTNHR reads: "*The farmer would cut the grain with a scythe, leaving the grain stalks lying in neat rows with all the heads pointing in the same direction. This was then picked up with a cradle and carried to the threshing floor. Usually, women and children or older people did this job. Threshing floors first consisted of hard packed areas of cleared ground, but soon, canvasses were used to contain the grain to be threshed. Also, special wooden threshing floors were often built into granaries and barns once building materials became available. The grain was pounded or beaten from the stalk by a wooden flail, usually a man's job, but not necessarily as all healthy women and children helped with the harvest one way or another.*" *(Louise'74 :106)*

- Robert Stevenson recalled the evolution of threshing methods he witnessed growing up on his father's Morden area homestead. He recalled: "*The cradle reaper, a type of scythe, cut just enough at one slash for a sheaf of grain. For a small amount of threshing, a flail was used (two sticks put together with a leather thong). It was necessary to acquire the knack of swinging this instrument in order to avoid clubbing oneself. Later, the 'Massey' reaper was used. This was drawn by three horses and cut a six-foot swath. It had a sheaf bundler that was worked by hand and a tail wheel that had an adjustment to lower the cutting blade and table.*" Figure 7.8.6. *(MHS'53 :R.Stevenson.)*

It is on record that in 1881, some farmers advertised that they would pay $2.00 to $2.50 a day for "Good Binders." These binders were not mechanical devices, but men who were adept at taking two small bunches of cut grain, deftly twisting the head ends together like a knot, then arranging a sheaf sized bundle of cut grain, deftly placing this straw band around the bundle, near the middle, and locking the band in that position by doubling the excess length between the band and the bundle.

- D.L. McBrien, whose family were pioneers in the Crystal City area, recalled hand binding, "*The binder had been preceded by a machine which cut and bunched, but did not tie, the grain sheaves. In his youth, Father knew the art of binding by hand, with straw, and often he would tie a sheaf which the machine had missed.*" *(Gosnell'68 :464.)*

Reapers and Binders

As noted above by Mr. Stevenson, as soon as they were financially able, many newly-arrived settlers began to purchase horse-powered mechanical farm machinery. Among the first to be purchased were reapers and binders. Reapers were used to cut standing grain or hay into six- or eight-foot wide swaths and some early models gathered the cut grain and left it in "windrows." Binders (or reaper-binders) were invented in 1872 by Charles Withington, a jeweler from Janesville, Wis. They were used primarily for

reaping cereal crops and both cut and bound the grain into bundles or sheaves. These sheaves were usually then stacked into A-shaped conical "stooks", resembling small tipis, to allow the grain to dry for several days before being picked up and drawn on racks with horses to the separator to be threshed. There were problems with using wire to bind the sheaves and it was not long before William Deering invented a binder that successfully used twine and a mechanical knotter. Binder twine quickly became the "duct tape" of its time and had many farm uses. Some early models of reapers could be used to cut both grain and hay, but later models specialized in either "reaping" grain or "mowing" hay and thereafter developed into separate implements. The first known reaper in the BTNHR was used in 1874 by the NWMP during their Great Trek West. They brought two with them to cut hay along the way for the horses. Figure 6.6.6.

Binders were generally uncommon in the BTNHR until the early 1890s. However, a wire binder was reportedly being used to cut crops in the "Huron" district, in 11-3W, as early as 1880. In 1881, William Robinson and David Watson bought a reaper in partnership and used it to cut the first crop on the Robinson homestead. That same year, Pilot Mound's first reaper came into the district and was often used for custom work. About ten acres per day could be cut with this reaper. Usually, the charges were paid through exchange work. *(MHS'53 :Hagyard.)*

- James Laidlaw, near Clearwater, also purchased a wire binder in 1881; however, as reported by others, the "*wire was not very handy.*" Oliver Law, of the Darlingford district, recalled, "*The Scott, Nichol and Bedford families bought a wire binder as a cooperative affair. Two or three men were needed to operate it and three horses, but sometimes oxen were also used.*" The *Manitoba Times,* in the August 14, 1883 issue, reported that Harris & Sons implement agency in Preston, *"during the previous two years, sold 49 self-binding reapers and 90 ploughs.*" *(MT'83-08-14.)*

One of the earliest "cord binders", a Deering, was purchased in 1883, by James Gorrell of the Crystal City district. In 1888, a new type of combined hay mower and grain reaper appeared for the princely sum of $500. It had a canvas table that could be removed and a bar placed on the knife when it was used to cut hay. *(MHS'53 :Gorrell.)*

Threshing Machines

The next advance was the use of horses for powered threshing. The Armitage family of Manitou area purchased a two-horse-powered treadmill grain "separator" in 1880. Figure 7.8.8. A team of horses rotated a treadmill which operated a cylinder where the grain was separated from the straw. Two boxes were placed beneath the cylinder to catch the grain and the straw was forked away. A few years later, larger horse-powered separators began to appear. In 1886, the Armitages obtained a ten-horse model, which was capable of threshing as much 400 to 500 bushels of wheat in a single "good day." This unit would also thresh upwards of 1000 bushels of oats per day. At that time, each man had approximately ten to 12 acres of grain. The charge for custom threshing at this time was three cents per bushel for wheat and two cents per bushel for barley. *(MHS'53 :Armitage.)*

These early, larger, separators were powered by ten or 12 horses walking around a centre pivot. The circular motion, by means of gears and shafts, transferred to the cylinder and beater drum of the thresher. These early separators possessed neither a sheaf intake feeder nor a rear straw blower. The straw, or "chaff" was elevated onto a stack at the rear of the separator as a man continuously forked it away. So called "bucking" poles, with workers at each end, were also often used to move the straw away. The grain was elevated into wagons or two-bushel jute sacks to be drawn away to store in bins until it was sold or milled. *(MHS'53 :Balfour.)*

- Rob Mason of Killarney described how the Robinson Bros. owned and operated one of the first horse-power threshing machines in the Cartwright district. It also "*had no straw carriers and when threshing near a building would take about six men and a boy to keep the straw away.*" He also recalled that the "bushel man" commonly kept tally by pulling on a ball of string through a hole in a board and tying a knot for every bushel he emptied. He added,"*this early method of tracking bushels threshed often caused rows and arguments.*" *(Killarney W.I.'07 :43.)*

- Robert Duncan of Preston, near Pilot Mound, also owned a ten-horse-powered threshing outfit. When operating to capacity, it apparently required a crew of up to 13 men and, in order to obtain enough horses to supply adequate power, it was necessary "*to gather them from quite a distance around.*" During the latter 1880s, this same type of horse-powered drive-shaft implement was used by setters in the BTNHR for sawing wood and baling hay. *(MHS'53 :Stevenson.)*

The transition from oxen- and horse-powered threshers to steam-powered separators in the BTNHR began during the late 1880s. These were mostly portable engines in that they could be hauled by teams of horses from location to location, but none of these early models were self-propelled. Steam powered "tractors" were not introduced until the late 1890s. The introduction of portable steam engines meant that larger-capacity separators could be operated and harvesting completed more quickly than by horse-powered threshers. Also, steam engines did not require the same feed and care as horses and could be fueled by the waste straw. Larger, higher-capacity separators also required more men to operate them and, increasingly, harvest work provided valuable cash employment for local residents and seasonal labourers. One of the first farmer-owned steam-powered custom threshing outfits in the BTNHR was the Dreadnought Company which was formed in 1883. This company consisted of Messers Hagyard, Sandercott, Ady and others from the Londesborough district. The engine purchased was a "Watrous" with an upright boiler. *(MHS'53 :Hagyard.)*

As more efficient separators and other new mechanized farm implements, such as seeders and binders arrived, larger acreages could be cropped and field sizes slowly began to increase and the amount of grain being produced soon became surplus to local needs. As local railway connections developed, it was easier to get surplus grain to market, and seed companies from the East were increasingly interested in surplus wheat available in Manitoba. Grain production, especially wheat production, began to increase quickly in the BTNHR during the late 1880s, as did grain prices and farm income.

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Figure 7.8.4. Above: Fall plowing. Plowing land previously broken and cropped did not require a heavy "breaker" plow to turn over the stubble and help prepare the soil for seeding the next spring. The plowman in this image appears to be just a young lad, and doing a superb job of plowing. Note the straight cut line. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.8.6. Above: "*Farming in Manitoba. Harvesting. 1883.*" Lorne Stewart, whose father homesteaded in the Clearwater district, recalled: "*The first few years, the grain was broadcast by hand, then harrowed in. My father, John Stewart and his brother Jim, had a reaper in 1880 and tied the sheaves by hand. Then, in 1882, they purchased a binder, which tied the sheaves, saving much hard labour.*" Until binders became commonplace, hired "stookers" did that job, using twisted grain stalks to hand-tie the bundles. Binders, which used wire, and later on, twine to tie the bundles, steadily improved in both size and efficiency over the years. The pile of bundles seen in the foreground was likely the photographer's attempt at making a stook. *(NWF'89-10 :235.)*

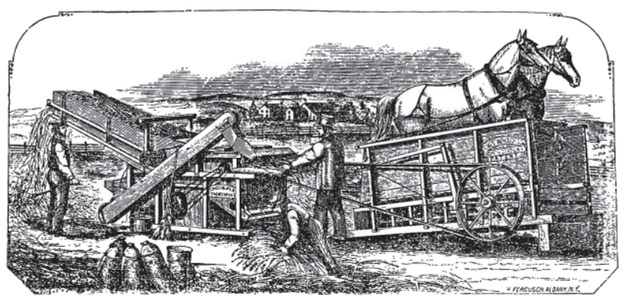

Figure 7.8.8. Above: *Two-horse-power thresher and cleaner. For sale by Gilman & Senger, Saint Paul, Minn.* Some of the BTNHR's early settlers purchased horse-powered threshers such as this early, 1861 two-horse model, but they were deemed slow and inefficient. *(Jarchow'43-12.)*

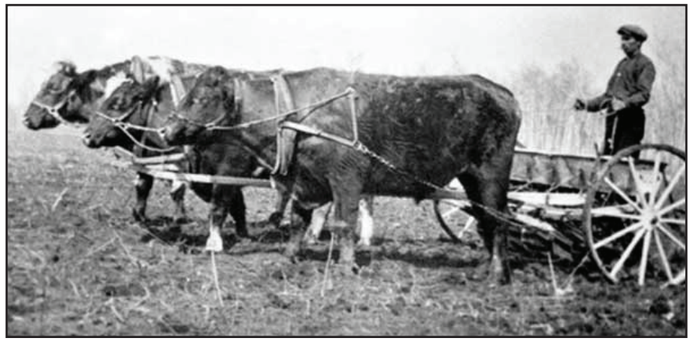

Figure 7.8.5. Above: Seeders. Seed drills first began to appear in the BTNHR during the mid-1880s. Mechanical seeders placed the seed at a uniform depth, resulting in better germination than hand broadcasting and harrowing. *(CDH.)*

Figure 7.8.7. Above: Farm equipment. Advertisement illustration in the November 1889 issue of the *Nor'-West Farmer and Manitoba Miller.* The caption read, "*H.S. Wesbrook, 62 Princess Street, Winnipeg Manitoba. Manager and agent for the Patterson & Bro. Co., Ltd. Manufacturers of: steel binders, mowers, rakes, grain seeders, grain crushers, straw cutters, plows and harrows. Also agents for the celebrated J.I. Case threshers and engines, Ironside agitator separators (with or without bagger), straw-burning traction engines, Flying Dutchman gang, riding and walking wheel plows, and the McCormick harvesting machine.*" *(NWF'89-11.)*

Figure 7.8.9. Above: Steam power. John McRae's threshing outfit, Hamiota district, 1878. First steam engines were portable but not self-propelled. *(A of MB.)*

First Export of Manitoba Wheat

On October 10, 1876, R.C. Steele of Steele Bros., seed merchants of Toronto, arrived in Winnipeg to buy Manitoba-grown seed grain. There was a shortage of wheat seed in southern Ontario as a result of frost damage to the previous year's crops. He reasoned that the flinty, amber-coloured Red Fife wheat, grown on fertile land in a northern climate, would have desirable qualities of hardness and early ripening. He ran an advertisement in *The Manitoba Free Press* offering, "*for the next nine days, eighty cents cash per bushel for choice wheat for export for Ontario.*" *(Manitoba Pageant'61-01.)*

It was late in the season, when the last steamboat south, the *Minnesota*, was moored at McMillan's mill wharf at the foot of Post Office (now Lombard) street in Winnipeg and ready for departure. Riverboat Captain Charles was anxious to depart before the river froze over but cooperated in delaying until the morning of October 21st by which time 12 farmers had responded to the advertisement and brought in a total of 875 1/6 bushels of Red Fife wheat. The grain was packed into two-bushel sacks and loaded onboard the *Minnesota,* which made an uneventful trip up the Red River to the nearest railway connection, located at Fisher's Landing (Crookston, Minn.). Only two days later, thickening river ice stopped all steamboat traffic on the Red River. From Fisher's Landing, the shipment of wheat was transported by rail to Duluth, Minn. and from there by lake steamer to Sarnia, Ont. and the final leg by rail from Sarnia to Toronto, where it was sold for seed at $2.50 per bushel.

Early Flour Mills

Prior to 1876, all of the wheat grown in Manitoba was used domestically. Imported flour was expensive, so wheat not saved for seeding purposes was milled into flour and livestock feed for on-farm use. Mills were few and far between during the early 1870s. The earliest grist mills in the upper Red River region were wind mills built during the 1820s by the Selkirk Settlers. Water-powered mills were built on the Seine River and Sturgeon Creek in present-day Winnipeg during the 1840s and 1850s. In 1856, John Inkster imported a 24-horsepower steam engine from the US to provide a more reliable source of flour than the existing wind and water mills. During the 1860s, several more entrepreneurs imported steam engines and milling equipment. These early mills were beset by various problems and several were destroyed by fire. When the Northern Pacific Railroad crossed the Red River at present day Fargo in 1871, steamboat transport from there to Fort Garry grew tenfold and it suddenly became easier and less expensive to import heavy steam engines, grain milling and sawmill equipment.

As settlement and wheat acreages increased across the BTNHR during the later 1870s, more and more steam powered grist- and saw-mills began to be built in newly-settled areas, as soon as enough wheat could be supplied to make operating the mill a profitable enterprise. By 1880, there were mills at West Lynne, Blumenort, Nelsonville, Mountain City and Preston. A few years later, mills were erected at Pembina Crossing, Crystal City, Hamilton (Snowflake) and St. Léon. When the CPR Pembina Mountain branchline reached Manitou in 1882 and then extended to Deloraine in 1885, mills were established in many of the new railside communities including; St. Jean Baptiste, Altona, Gretna, Morden, Manitou, Killarney, Holmfeld, Boissevain, Deloraine and Melita. Milling quickly became an important pioneer era industry across the BTNHR as there was a strong local demand for flour, and although the numbers of mills declined in later years, flour milling remained an important industry for many decades.

The early flour mills erected at Preston, Clearwater and Pembina Crossing did not prove to be a success, as, at that time, there was not enough wheat grown in that region. The denser, earlier settled areas along the Pembina Hills were able to produce enough wheat to keep the early mill at Nelsonville busy milling wheat and oats during the harvest season. During the rest of the year, the steam engine powered a lumber and shingle mill. It was recorded that in 1881 the mill at Mountain City "*sawed lumber during the day and grist flour during the night*." The charge for milling was 20 cents per bushel for wheat or a portion of the flour as a toll. *(MHS'53 :G.Gilbert.)*

Long Haul Grain Marketing

In 1882, when the CPR reached Manitou, the settlers throughout the western portion of the BTNHR found it much easier to market their grain, no longer having to travel all the way to Emerson. Grain marketing trips from the Rock Lake and Turtle Mountain districts were usually made in winter using sleds as that was easier for the draft animals. The Pembina Valley was a major obstacle for those hauling grain to Manitou or Emerson as it was difficult for the horses or oxen to climb the slope with a full, 50-bushel, load of grain. Thus, farmers would frequently haul half of their load of bagged wheat across the Pembina Valley and up the east slope where it was unloaded on the level prairie near the lip of the valley. They would then return home or to a nearby stopping house where they would load the remainder of the grain sacks on the sleigh. Early the next morning, they would hitch up and cross the valley with the second half of the load, add the bags left the day before, and then continue on to Emerson or Manitou with a full load of grain to sell. It was notably reported that no farmer ever lost any sacks of grain that were left overnight on the east side of the valley during the years that this was a common practice. Most sleighs were equipped with a sharp iron spike that could be driven into the ground to temporarily hold the sleigh on a steep hill, until the winded horses got a brief rest before continuing on." *(McKitrick'00 :13.)*

Profitability Of Wheat Production

Frost damage was a major problem during the pioneer years and the profitability of wheat production was somewhat debatable. Damaged wheat also made for poor quality flour and often sold for only nine or ten cents a bushel. The years 1873 to 1875 were exceedingly dry, leading to severe grasshopper infestations. Crops were severely damaged and many were lost completely. The 1873 grasshopper plague was significant. "*They ate the grain and polluted the water. It was reported that grasshoppers were a foot thick in the wells. This was followed by a typhoid epidemic in 1874. In Winnipeg, it raged with unabated fury until finally subdued by the cold weather of October and November. The death rate was something fearful — men, women and children all suffered alike.*" *(Brown'74 :52.)*

Then, the years 1880 to 1883 were abnormally wet, leading to flooded fields in the Red River Valley and wet, almost impassible, trails all across southern Manitoba. Adding to the settlers' problems, from 1882 to 1884, the federal government cancelled homesteading rights in much of the BTNHR because the high demand for land made it too valuable to give away as homesteads. All land would now have to be purchased; however, the policy was quickly reversed — a great many arriving settlers simply went south of the border and settled in the Dakotas during those two years. In addition, much of the land was granted to the railways, and speculators held much of what remained. This all resulted in slow economic progress in the western half of the BTNHR for those arriving during the 1870s and 1880s. There was much grumbling by farmers in the local newspapers during these years. The 1881 crop was low-yielding and frost-damaged, while 1883, 1887 and 1889 were crop failure years. Emerson's *Southern Manitoba Times* reported in its November 20, 1880 issue: "*It is estimated that the Mennonites west of here raised 300,000 bushels of grain this year, the most of which will be marketed here in West Lynne. John George, who has been running a threshing machine all fall, reports the yield of grain very poor, averaging but 12 bushels per acre.*" Fortunately, in-between years provided reasonable crop yields. Reporting on the 1882 wheat crop, the *Southern Manitoba Times* reported,"*The crops of the Mennonite settlement in Manitoba are reported as looking very well, including a large quantity of flax. The Mennonites have twice as much grain as they had last year and threshing is being pushed rapidly on. The yield will be a good average, and merchants in West Lynne may look forward to having a rushing business.*" *(SMT'82-9.)*

Fortunately for all, beginning around 1890, the weather became more favourable, and the wheat strains being introduced were more suited to Manitoba's growing conditions; the wheat economy in the BTNHR began to blossom in earnest. The profitability of wheat production improved and there was noticeable economic progress to be seen on the farms and in the towns across the Boundary Trail Region. Provincial wheat crop production statistics record that the 1891 crop year was very good with 25.3 bushels per acre average, followed in 1895 with a massive bumper crop averaging 27.9 bushels an acre. The previous highest recorded average occurred in 1888 with 28.6 bushels an acre. 1900 was a disaster year for crop production with only 8.9 bushels. However, after the turn of the century, average yields steadily improved into the high teens and 1901, 1902, 1905, 1912 and 1915 all had over 20 bushels per acre average yields across all of southern Manitoba. After the difficulties, trials and tribulations of being a wheat farmer in the BTNHR during the pioneer years, the cultivation of wheat crops finally became a profitable enterprise in the BTNHR and southern Manitoba generally. After 1890, farmers began to use their wheat profits to purchase new equipment and construct new farm buildings. *(Daciw'80 :18.)*

Oatmeal

While not as important a cash crop as wheat, oats were grown by all the early settlers and used, in crushed form, for livestock feed and milled, into rolled oats or oatmeal, for human consumption. The many bachelor homesteaders, in particular, relied on rolled oats for quick easily-made meals. Farm families also consumed large amounts of oatmeal and, every year, most farm households would haul a quantity of oats to the nearest mill to be ground into rolled oats. Figure 7.8.14.

- Donald McKay grew up in Pilot Mound, home, at the time, to one of the largest oat mills in southern Manitoba. He had fond memories the the mill, "*Oatmeal was a very staple diet and each family would take home enough for the long winter. A large capacity oatmeal mill was built in Pilot Mound about 1900 by Dow and Curry. Mr. Dow was a hard headed businessman from Scotland. He knew how to make rolled oats and how to sell oats on the overseas market. If by chance another mill tried to cut in on the oatmeal trade in our district, they were in for a battle. I have seen bags of oatmeal piled in front of the stores from one end of main street to the other, six high in 20, 40 and 80 pound bags at prices of 1½ cents cheaper than his competitor.*

When we were boys and on our way down to the pasture to bring home the family cow after four o'clock, we had to pass the mill and would go into the room where the bags were filled, put our hands under the spout and fill our pockets with hot rolled oats, which we consumed while getting the cow. The mill was equipped with electric lights long before any other building in our district. The mill came to an untimely end by fire in 1912. About the same time, all of the buildings on main street, north of the hotel, were destroyed by fire." *(Gosnell'68 :385.)*

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Figure 7.8.10. Above: Grain Hauling. Farmers bringing grain for milling at the Preston mill. Circa 1880. *(PMA.)*

Figure 7.8.11. Above: J.P. Friesen & Son Mill, Altona. Built in 1889, the mill was one of the first Mennonite-owned flour mills in the West Reserve. *(Enns'87 :73.)*

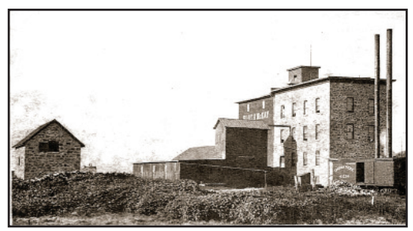


Figure 7.8.12. Above: Boissevain Roller Mill. The mill was built in 1889 by Wm. Preston and W.C. McKay at a cost of $5000. Note the piles of cord wood in the fore ground. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.8.13. Above: Hartney Mill. Built 1893. Photo circa 1910. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.8.14. Above: Great West Oatmeal Mills. Built in 1900, the Dow Cereal and Milling Co. complex in Pilot Mound burned in 1912. *(U of AB.)*

Figure 7.8.15. Above: Harrison Milling & Grain Company. Holmfield, 2003. The Harrison Bros. Mill was the BTNHR's last operating flour mill. During WWII it apparently operated day and night. "Turtle Mountain Maid" was the brand name. *(HRB.)*

7.9 MENNONITE WEST RESERVE

Between 1874 and 1881, approximately 7000 Mennonites from southern Russia made their way to the newly-established Province of Manitoba. They left Russia when Czar Alexander II ended special privileges, granted to them a century earlier by Catherine the Great, to entice members of this German-speaking Anabaptist group to establish colonies in her newly-conquered, but largely empty, lands north of the Crimea. The two main tenets of the Mennonite religion are pacifism and baptism by choice. By the 1870s, however, the Czar had removed their military exemption and began to exert control over Mennonite schools and institutions. They soon began looking for a new home.

To attract these industrious farmers to the prairies, the Canadian Government offered inducements by way of exemption from military service, religious freedoms, and the granting of large tracts of land for their exclusive settlement. An amendment to the *Dominion Lands Act* allowed them the privilege of settling in villages, circumventing the demand that each farmer had to reside upon his own homestead, a requirement which guaranteed dispersed settlement. The Mennonites were thus able to retain their distinctive "Strassendorf" or street villages. Like many other religious groups, they saw cohesion and religious solidarity as being dependent upon the communal village settlement pattern.

The Mennonites were granted two reserves in Manitoba. The first, in 1874, was an area of almost eight townships east of the Red River; the second, in 1876, was an area of 17 townships west of the Red River. At the time of their arrival, the open prairie was not highly regarded by most Anglo settlers, who were dependent upon ample supplies of wood and running water. But to the Mennonites, experienced in steppe land farming, the open prairie was an attractive area in which to settle.

First European Settlers on the Prairies

The initial contingent of Mennonites, who arrived in 1874, had the distinction of being the first large European block to immigrate to Manitoba, although Icelanders arrived right on their heels. Having been guaranteed by the Dominion government all the essential conditions of a religiously cohesive settlement, the Mennonites recreated the self-governing commonwealth they had left in Russia. In all, they established 37 villages in the East Reserve and about 50 in the West Reserve, although not all existed at one time, nor were all complete villages. Figure 7.9.6.

The stony soils and scrub bushland of the southern half of the East Reserve proved difficult to farm and, beginning in 1876, a large number of Mennonite settlers began moving their homestead claims to still unoccupied areas of the West Reserve. Existing Anglo homesteads along the Pembina Hills in townships 5-1W, 5-2W and 5-3W were exempted from Mennonite settlement, as was 1-6W, which was reserved as a temporary Mennonite "woodlot", and was only later opened for general settlement. Also, the northern tier of townships, such as the area of Plum Coulee, was largely wetlands and not well-settled until drainage projects began during the late 1880s. Figure 7.9.3.

When a Mennonite village was established, a group of 20 or so families would select a site for the village and register individual homestead claims for the land surrounding it. The homesteads would then be pooled into a single parcel, and each land type was resurveyed into strips, with each family receiving a number of strips for their personal use. By doing so, each family was assured of receiving a fair allocation of all land types at varying distances from the village. Stock could be herded in common, and the necessity of fencing cultivated strips was thus avoided, while the social advantages of nucleated settlement were achieved. In almost all the villages, the houses and barns were joined, recalling the Dutch origins of the group, where farms had to be built on man-made mounds to afford protection from flood waters. In the later Russian colonies, this compact form of settlement was retained and refined to afford protection from nomadic bands of Tartars, which often threatened the Mennonite colonies. In Manitoba, the villages most frequently consisted of a single street about half a mile long, with housebarns lining one or both sides of the "Strassendorf" street, which often was oriented along a creek bed to afford equal access to water within the village.

Within two years, the West Mennonite Reserve was dotted with picturesque European-style villages bearing pastoral, poetic place names such as Kronsthal (Valley of the King), Schoenwiese (Beautiful Meadow), Reinland (Pure Land), Osterwick, (Easter Vetch), Blumengart (Garden of Flowers), Rosenfeld (Field of Roses), Gnadenthal (Valley of Grace), and Kronsgart (Garden of the King). (*Kuehn'94.)*

Emigration to Manitoba

- George Elias, in his history of the Peter F. Klassen family, reflected on his family's emigration from Russia and their first few years in Manitoba. He related, in part, "*In 1870, after defeats suffered during the Crimean war, Czar Alexander began to discuss a plan of universal conscription. At the same time, there was increased pressure in Russia to remove or modify other privileges of all foreign colonists. Schools increasingly came under jurisdiction of government authorities, largely to increase the use of the Russian language in these institutions. Many Mennonites were feeling increasingly uncomfortable with what they thought to be direct violation of terms under which they had initially settled in Russia. Negotiations continued, but when it appeared that they were unlikely to be successful, specific plans for emigration were initiated. A deputation of 12 European Mennonite and Hutterite leaders were sent to spy out new land in America. When twelve delegates who had visited North America returned to Russia in the summer of 1873, they reported that land was abundant and the terms generally liberal. Emigration fever ran high and the first group of Mennonites began their trek in 1874. The first block of land settled by the Mennonites in Manitoba was the East Reserve. Realizing from the start that much of the land in the East Reserve was not particularly fertile, permission was granted to settle west of the Red River, just north of the international border. The western half of the West Reserve was settled largely by* (orthodox) *'Fuerstenlaender' or 'Old Colony' Mennonites who formed the Reinlaender Mennonite Church after arrival. The part east of Plum Coulee was settled by* (progressive) *'Bergthaler' Mennonites, most moving over from the East Reserve.*" *(Elias'16 :2.)*

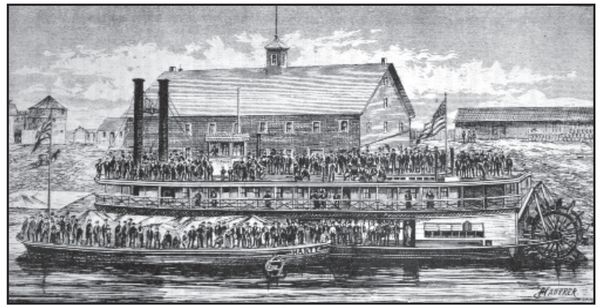


Figure 7.9.1. Above: Manitoba's first group of European settlers. The first group of Mennonites to settle in the Canadian west arrived in Winnipeg in October 1874 aboard the HBC-owned, but American registered, paddlewheel riverboat, the *International*. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.9.3. Above: First structures. A painting, located at the Pembina Thresherman's Museum near Winkler, depicting the first structures on the Gerhard Braun farm in the Burwalde district, 3-4W. Details, such as the large garden, bake oven, crib well and poultry cage, suggest the image was drawn from life. *(PTM.)*

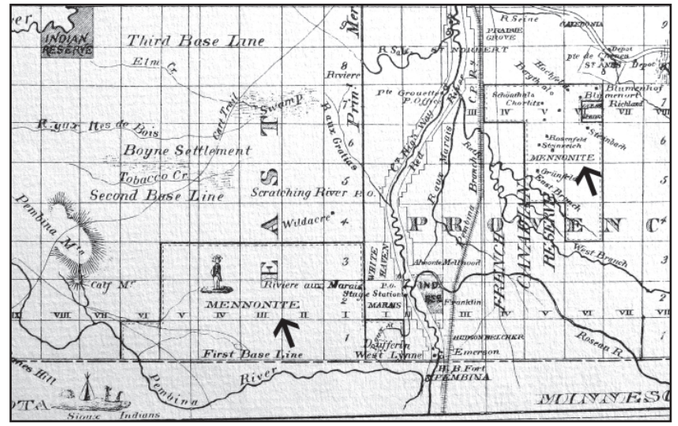
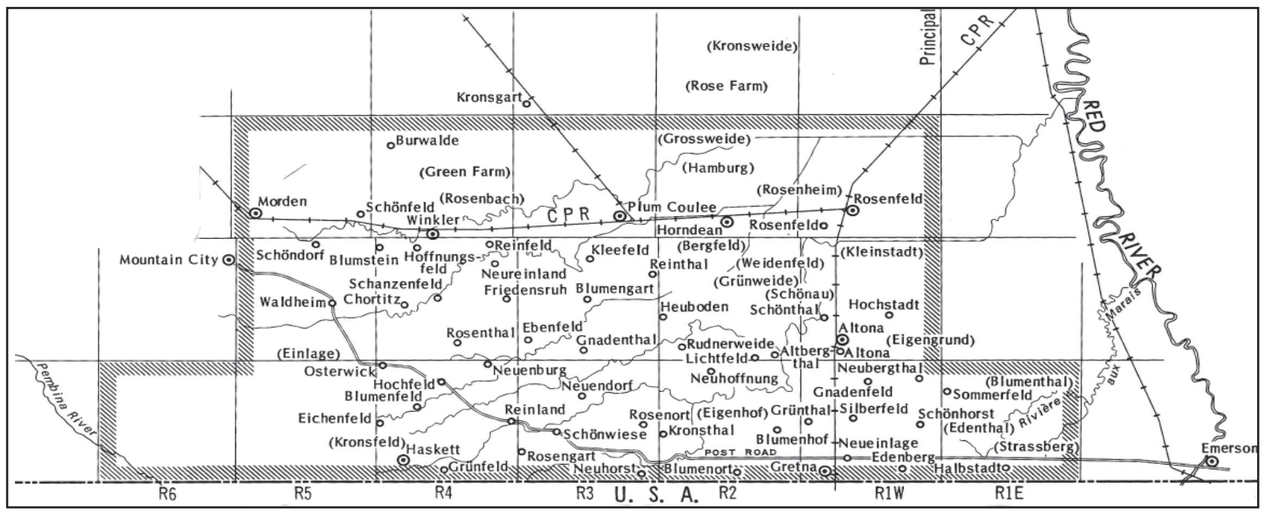


Figure 7.9.2. Above: Mennonite East and West Reserves. Map of southern Manitoba, circa 1879, showing, among other details, the Mennonite East and West reserves (arrows), the township survey grid, CPR Pembina Branchline, major trails, "Indian Reserves", etc. *(HRB.)*

Figure 7.9.4. Above: Village street. An early photograph of the village of Blumenfeld, likely in spring-time. Note, the width of the street, the thatched roofs, firewood teepees, extensive rail fencing, and a few planted trees along the village street — but not in leaf at the time of the photograph. Within a decade, the maturing shelterbelt trees would obscure most of the housebarns. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.9.5. Left: First structures. A reconstruction of a Mennonite pioneer sod-walled "semlin" located at the Pembina Threshermen's Museum. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 7.9.6. Below: West Reserve, circa 1890. Map showing villages, towns, railway lines, and the Post Road trail. Place names in brackets indicate scattered habitat or undeveloped village sites. Note the absence of villages in townships 1-5W and 1-6W. *(Epp'74 :37.)*



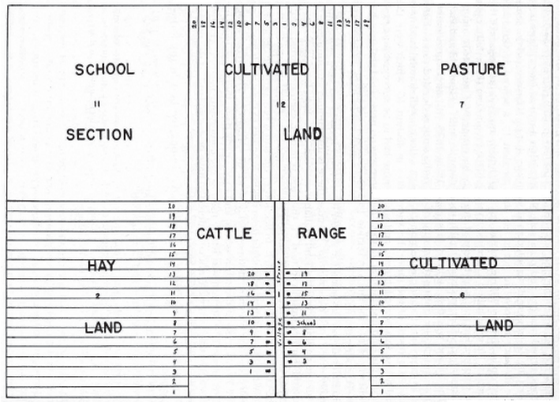


Figure 7.9.7. Above: Village lands plan. Plan of Heuhorst village showing, 20 village building lots; two full sections of cultivated land surveyed into 20 strips each; a full section community pasture; and another as hay land, and two cattle range paddocks of about 100 acres each. The hamlet privilege, dispensing with the homestead residency requirements, was removed from the *Homestead Act* on May 6, 1885. No new villages were established after 1885. *(Warkentin'60 :81.)*

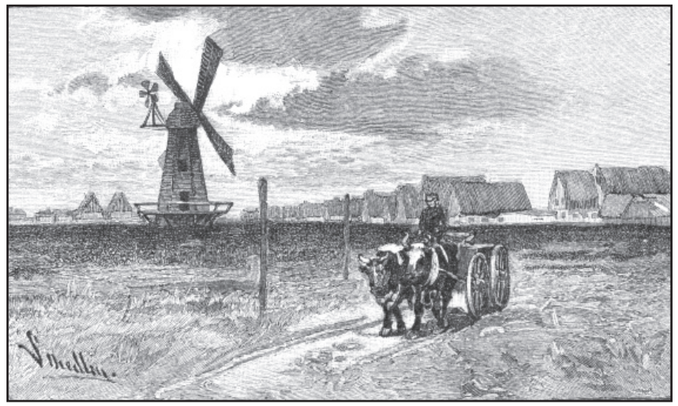


Figure 7.9.8. Above: Reinland, circa 1880. A newspaper artist's impression of the village of Reinland and a traveller on the Post Road. Prior to the acquisition of steam engines and industrial flour mills, several villages, including Reinland, built windmills for grinding wheat into flour. The posts along the trail marked the trail route for winter travellers. As a result, this section of the Boundary Commission Trail came to be known as the "Post Road." *(PC Vol.13 :322.)*

Figure 7.9.9. Above: A Mennonite girl herding cattle. *Picturesque Canada* magazine illustration, circa 1880, by W.T. Smedley, from sketches made during a visit to the West Reserve. The windmill in the distance suggests that the village is meant to be Reinland, which, at the time, was the only village with a windmill constructed for grinding wheat into flour. *(PC Vol.13 :320.)*

Figure 7.9.10. Above: Thatching Blumenort school. Circa 1880. Education was an important concern for the Mennonite settlers. In the first year of their arrival, the governing "Oberschultze" wrote to all the villages reminding them to set up schools as soon as possible. One of the concerns of the Mennonites before moving to Manitoba was the right to control the education of their children. Even though the federal government made promises to allow this, education was a provincial responsibility and the issue of schooling in the West Reserve would soon become a major political concern. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.9.11. Above: House-barns. A street scene in the village of Hochfeld, circa 1890. As a rule, the barn section was attached to the back of the house with the front of both on the same side. The barn was normally two feet higher and wider than the house. The barn plan included a hay mow section at the far end, and all the way back along the back side would be a narrow lean-to. Also traditional was the row of small windows running along the length of the front of the barn and a huge door, large enough for a hay rack to pass through. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.9.12. Right: Interior and Exterior of Mennonite Church. A P*icturesque Canada* magazine illustration of the Reinland church, circa 1882, by W.T. Smedley, from sketches made during a visit to the West Reserve. *(PC Vol.13 :321.)*

Figure 7.9.13. Left: Reinland Church. 1984. The former Reinland village Church, built of hewn timbers in 1876, is a protected heritage site and now functions as a community hall. *(EdLed.)*

The First Year

A brief history of the village of Osterwick, published as part of its 2004 homecoming weekend, describes the village's establishment and early years. It reads, in part: "*The first group came in 1874 and started the village of Reinland. The second group left Russia in 1875 and came to Canada in late summer. That summer, 19 families bivouacked* (camped) *just north of the international boundary and, before winter arrived, all of them had built themselves temporary shelters, called semlins, to pass the winter in. A semlin consisted of two to three-foot deep dug-outs with sod walls about the same height. Poplar poles were used as rafters over which alternate layers of dogwood bush and grass were placed. This was then covered with some more grassy sods. The next priority was to look for a place to start a village. Two things had to be kept in mind. Those were potable water and shelter from the open prairie winds. A site with both was located on section 6-2-4W. In the spring* (of 1876), *all 19 families filed for homesteads in the surrounding area. On the SW quarter* (of 6-2-4W)*, they laid out the main street of the village in a north-south direction with building lots on both sides of it. They decided to call the place Osterwick, which in Low German dialect is "Easter Vetch.*" *(Osterwick'04 :4.)*

Village Administration

The settlers set up their village administration system as they had done in Russia. After a village group was organized and the village site selected, the village officials would be elected. There were three main officials, First, there was the "*Schultze*" or mayor. He had two assistants who acted as police officials; then there was the "*Hirtenschultze*", or herdsman inspector, who oversaw where and how the cattle were pastured; then there was the "*Brandschultze*", or village fire inspector, who also had two assistants. They had to make the rounds every three weeks in order to ensure that the stove pipe chimneys in all the homes were maintained and clean. All roofs were initially thatch and, in a village environment, one house fire could potentially destroy the entire village. Taxes were collected and some work was required of the residents. This independent village system functioned outside of the regular municipal system until the 1920s. There was also an area-wide fire insurance system. The "*Waisenamt*" was a mutual financial organization set up to care for the widows and orphans, but it served wider needs, as it also provided cash loans. Every three years, the "*Brand Aeltester*" or chief fire inspector, came around with the local village inspector to ensure that everyone had a "*Brandleiter*", or fire ladder, and a 16 foot long fire-hook in good condition and ready at hand. The fire-hook was used to pull down burning thatch roofs, and to quickly retrieve pails of water out of crib-wells. If these requirements were not met, there would be a reprimand and a warning that a fire loss would not be fully reimbursed. Through such community organizations and action, many important needs of the early village residents were met. Additionally, the social effects of isolation, often cited by the early Anglo homesteaders of the BTNHR, were not an issue for the Mennonite pioneers in their compact farm villages. *(Toews'74 :88.)*

Village Plan

In his 2002 brief history of Chortitz village, John Penner provides an informative description of that village's early years. In it, he describes various aspects of early village life, including the village physical plan. He notes that the village of Chortitz consisted of eight sections of pooled land. Each landowner had his 160 acre homestead divided into several different parts for village use. His "allotted" land included a village lot of 14 acres, several strips of crop land in different areas of the village land pool, access to the community hay land, and a share in the village common pasture. This way, although a farmer had legal title to a certain quarter, his land was part of the village pool. This system required the assent of every villager, and made cooperation and planning essential.

The Village Pasture

Penner described how, during the early decades, the Chortitz village pasture stretched from the school grounds, at the end of the village street, for several miles west. All the village cattle were pastured there and a herdsman was hired to watch over the cattle. "*The herdsman would start walking from his residence at the south end of the village to the north blowing his horn. You had to have your cows milked on time because the herder would not wait for you. People were ashamed to be late, so there was pressure to have the milking done on time. By the time the herdsman was at the north end and turned around all the cows were on the street ready to be chased to the south pasture. The herdsman would take care of them all day, and in the evening when he brought them back, every animal turned into their proper yard automatically.*" *(Penner'02 :6.)*

Farming as a Religious Lifestyle

During the early years, most every villager earned his living by farming. Some had a specialized sideline, such as blacksmithing or carpentry, but basically everyone earned their living as farmers or farm workers. Also, according to Penner, this kind of farming was not meant to be business- or profit-oriented, but rather a basic subsistence level of farming that allowed most everyone to earn a decent, simple living. It was meant to be a lifestyle, not a means to become wealthy. The village authorities and religious leaders enforced these early village lifestyle norms. Later, as the population increased, there were an increasing number of land-less "*Anwohner*" residents in most villages. These people began moving to other places to find farmland and eventually to find other types of jobs. Increasingly, more and more Mennonites became urbanized in the eyes of the traditionalists.

Churches

In 1875, the first church established in the West Reserve, called the Reinlander Church, was built in the village of Reinland, which became the religious hub of the West Reserve. The majority of the people in the West Reserve belonged to this church. The "*Aeltester*" and the ministerial staff, who preached on a rotating schedule, served the church. At one time, membership in the church was a requirement for living in the village. The Chortitz church, a log structure built in 1881, was the second church building erected in the West Reserve. It is currently a preserved museum piece at the Mennonite Heritage Village in Steinbach.

Schools

Even in pioneer days, education was important — to give children skills necessary for farming and to train them in a Christian way of life. Basic skills that were taught were reading, writing and arithmetic. Singing, penmanship and spelling were other skills that were taught. The private school was taught in German and run by the village. The "*Fibel*" was used in primary reading and after that, the catechism, the New Testament, and then the whole Bible for the senior class. Boys attended until about the age of 13. The school provided all the education the people thought was necessary to be a good Christian and a good farmer. *(Penner'02 :8.)*

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7.10 TRAVELLING THE COMMISSION TRAIL

With intense traffic on the Boundary region's trails system during the Pioneer Period, a whole world of experiences occurred not even contemplated today, but which were normal everyday life on the trail at the time. Following are but a few interesting personal recollections recorded about travel on the Boundary Commission and other regional trails during BTNHR's 1870-1890 Pioneer Period.

- **Byron Mason,** who grew up in the Killarney area, related, "*There were several ways of travelling, one had the choice of either a wagon, red river cart, stone boat or a hay rack, all of which the writer has seen used, and with oxen as the motive power, which though slow, one might generally depend on getting to their destination, unless the mosquitoes were bad, which was often the case. The writer has seen oxen so covered with them it was hard to tell what color they were.*" *(Killarney W.I.'07 :26.)*

- **The Gilbert family** started along the Boundary Commission Trail in September of 1880. George Gilbert, a child at the time, recalled passing through the Seven-Mile and Fifteen-Mile Mennonite villages and Brown's Stopping Place somewhere south of Reinland, some 20 or more miles from Emerson. He also recalled seeing a gristmill and a store at Mountain City on their way through the new community. West of that settlement, they made poor headway to the Little Pembina. Upon reaching this stream, the family stopped for the night at "Alderson's farmhouse." Back on the trail west, after travelling only two or three miles over a whole day, the party became completely mired in a willow swamp. That night, it was necessary to pull grass in order to make a dry spot upon which to pitch the tent. The girls and Mrs. Gilbert slept in the covered wagon while Mr. Gilbert and the boys slept in the tent. The land in township 2-8W was very swampy during the early days and crossing the Little Pembina was frequently fraught with difficulty. *(MHS'53 :Gilbert.)*

- **Alex Rankin**, whose family were early settlers in the Killarney area, related an interesting trail story. "*The first team of horses in the Turtle Mountain district was owned by a well known man by the name of Bernard La Riviere who ran a stopping house and store at Wakopa. His nephew, Jeremiah La Riviere, a big husky freighter, frequently drove them to Emerson for store goods, three days travel each way. One time, during a return trip, the horses played out at Badger Creek Crossing. He then walked to Wakopa for a bundle of hay and a sack of oats, which he carried back to the horses, a round trip of 60 miles. At one of the stopping places on the way, there was a free-for-all fight occurring. La Riviere saw that he was not going to be able to get any sleep indoors, so he went outside and scooped out a hole in the side of a snowbank, rolled himself up in his buffalo robe,and slept peacefully till morning in 15 below zero weather.*" *(Killarney W.I.'70 :12.)*

- **Colin and Robert Finlayson** arrived in Emerson, with nothing but a single trunk with their belongings. They bought a team of young unbroken oxen, put a yoke on them, cut a plank or two, made a stone boat by nailing them together, hooked the oxen up to it, put their trunk on the planks and drove up to their homesteads, walking beside the team to urge them along. *(Killarney WI'07 :18.)*

- **Andrew Gordon**, a "Bible Christian" pastor, arrived in Emerson with his family in 1882 to take up a four-year pastoral charge in the Thornhill district. On their 60-mile journey west from Emerson to the Pembina Hills, the group travelled most of that distance through the Mennonite West Reserve. Rev. Gordon's daughter Annie, later recalled that experience. "*Speeder, Father's ever faithful driver, was disembarked soon after reaching Emerson and the phaeton unloaded and parked near the hotel. As the stores were open in the evening, we were able to purchase supplies, chiefly bread, flour, oatmeal, cracked wheat and a ham. The hotel cook was kind enough to boil the ham together with a large pot of potatoes, assuring the family of meals on the trail for a couple of days. Several heavy rains have made the trails rough. Everything going west for 300 miles passes over this trail, so it will take a long day to reach Alexandria 60 miles directly west. Once out of Emerson, the view to the north, east and west was amazing, a flat treeless prairie that gave one a haunting feeling of its lonely immensity. How quaint we found the first Mennonite village we drove through; long buildings stretching back from the trail, living rooms, barns, granaries, stables and storerooms all under one roof. The waving of hands indicated friendliness as the stout, well-groomed matrons and equally well-groomed children came out to watch the passing travellers.*

As old Sol was dipping his hot face beneath the western horizon, he let loose a plague. Mosquitoes in clouds rose and feasted on these fresh Ontario folk. Bad roads and heavy loads had made it impossible to reach even the foot of the hills and so the drivers sought early shelter in the next village. Here, no one wanted these travellers for the night, and the same response was found in the next village. All were concerned, especially for Rob, whose face was swollen beyond recognition; Nan was a close second. The refusal to open the door in the next, and last village, which would have meant an all night stay out in the open, dark, mosquito infested prairie, was met with threats as the drivers, with one accord, hammered on the door. 'We'll burst the door if you do not open. We have women and children with us.' Swishing the mosquitoes off at the smudge fire, we quickly took shelter in the almost dark outer room; the men followed into the front room. They moved the table over and put the benches against the wall. In a few minutes, armfuls of hay were brought in and strewn on the floor. Over this was placed a layer of buffalo robes, pillows and quilts. After rubbing ointment on Rob and Nan, they were soon in 'the Land of Nod' on the narrow benches. Everyone showed signs of the ravages of the mosquitoes, but the weary travellers, in spite of not being used to sleeping on mud floors, were all soon asleep. An early start, after an even earlier breakfast, soon brought us to the foot of the Pembina Hills and Alexandria, our new home." *(Gordon'50 :23.)*

- **Elizabeth Attridge** noted in *History of Brenda RM, Vol. 1,* "*Our roads were often trails across open country. If in doubt about whether we were going in the right direction, we would make for a corner stake which was a post of wood marked with the section, township, and range. These stakes were often our compass or road sign when using the trails. There was one at the corner of every quarter section of land.*" *(Attridge'70 :404.)*

- **Mennonite hospitality** was accepted with gratitude by many weary travellers along the Commission Trail. And the thrifty Mennonites were happy to get the cash that came their way from hosting these guests. By our standards, charges were exceedingly modest. Some homes charged as little as five cents per person for a place to sleep and something to eat in the morning. Others chose "*ine slup*", (literally "a sleep"), a group rate, 60 cents for the whole family with stabling and feed for the horses or oxen included. Accommodations were not luxurious. The sleeping quarters were generally the main room of the house; beds were often a layer of hay or straw scattered on the floor on which the house guest laid whatever bedding he or she preferred. One account noted, *"Just as daylight was fading from the prairie, we drove up to the door of a house. A patriarchal looking old man opened the door. To Mr. Farquaharson's inquiry, 'Can you put up a couple for the night?' came a hearty 'Ya-ya!' Thus encouraged, we disentangled ourselves from the buffalo robes, and stepped out of the cutter. Another man led our horse into one end of the building, while we followed the old Mennonite into the other end. He guided us through a room, where eight or ten young Canadians were sitting enjoying their pipes, into one occupied by the women and children of the household.*

There we were invited to lay off our wraps and be seated. The women regarded us as objects of curiosity, and asked us many questions regarding the homes and the land we had left. As far as we could see, there were only two rooms in the part of the building intended for the family, and one of these was occupied by the young Canadian men. In neither were there any visible beds, and as I was very tired, I began to wonder where we were to sleep. Our host noticed my drowsy condition, and sympathetically told me he would prepare a bed for me of the best he had in the house.

He then proceeded to the room where the men were sitting, and took two wooden benches, putting them together with their backs outward. On these he spread hay which he brought from the loft above us. The women then supplied him with two blue and white checkered linen sheets, spun and woven from their own flax, and pillows to match. Then turning to the minister, he said that was all he could do, and we must supply the blankets. We had nothing with us, save the buffalo robes and my trunk strapped to the back of the cutter. The minister went out and brought in a robe and spread it over the bed. My bed was now ready, but the eight men were still sitting here. Our host assured me that he had really given me the best he had in the house, and I might now retire, and then departed from the room. I made my way in the dark to this novel bed. When I was safely under the robe the light was brought back. Peering from beneath the buffalo robe, I saw the men scattering hay over the floor and lying down on it without undressing. In a short time, I fell asleep, but was soon awakened by the intense heat and a sickening feeling of suffocation. The room was unventilated, and was heated by a large clay oven, in which straw was the fuel burned, and put into the oven from the outside by means of a pitchfork.

In due time, morning dawned. The men rose early and continued their journey, and we were left in possession of the room. Before I was out of bed in the morning, the Mennonite appeared with a tin basin full of water and a blue and white checkered towel. The morning was bright and beautiful, and after a breakfast of bread, butter, boiled eggs and coffee, we continued our journey. The village of Edenburg was a favorite stopping place for travellers who found it a convenient point to spend their first night out on the trail after leaving West Lynne. It was twelve miles from the latter place and thus acquired the nickname the Twelve Mile Village." *(BTHR.)*

- **The spring of 1882** was very wet; what bridges had been constructed previously had in many cases been washed out by the floods that spring. Getting stuck in sloughs was a frequent occurrence. The streams had to be forded regardless. "*I remember crossing the Badger at Cartwright. The water was quite high and when, in the middle of the stream, the draw-bolt broke, all hands had to get down and push. Needless to say, everyone got soaking wet.*" *(Killarney WI'07 :33.)*

- ***Southern Manitoba Times,*** October 30, 1880 edition. "*A son of R. Sweet; Esq., while driving a team across Dead Horse Creek recently, the horses became unmanageable and ran away. In their running down the steep banks, the young lad was thrown out and the wagon badly broken up.*"

- ***Nelsonville Mountaineer,*** April 29, 1881 issue. "*Last Tuesday, J. Holmes of Emerson, drowned a horse belonging to J. Braun, in one of the coulees between here and Pembina. On the following Thursday, a newcomer drowned a fine team in the same coulee. A number of horses have been lost while crossing this coulee in previous years. The dangerous crossing might be easily avoided by driving about a mile out on the prairie, where the coulee becomes more shallow.*"

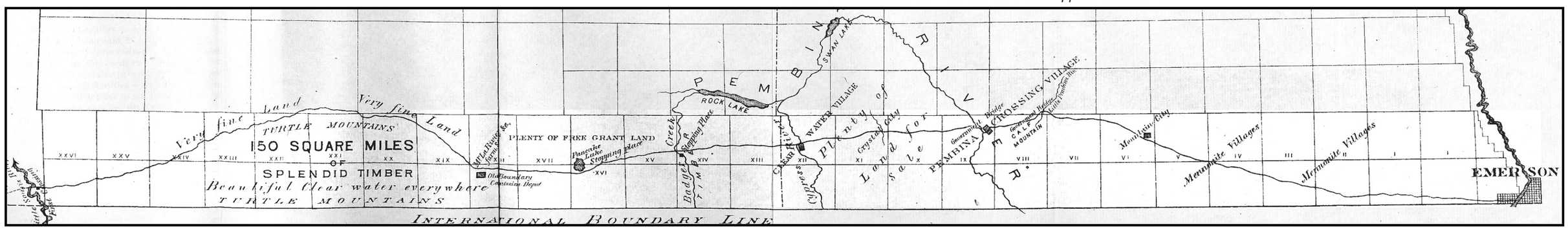

Figure 7.10.1. Above: The Boundary Commission Trail. 1881. Stopping houses were located along the entire length of the BC trail and major cross trails, including at Edenburg (12 mi. from Emerson), at Kronsthal (20 mi.), Brown's Hotel, at Hazards (45 mi.), at Calf Mountain, at Pembina Crossing (73 mi.), at McLaren's, Clearwater (93 mi.), at Badger Creek Crossing (115 mi.), at Pancake Lake (130 mi.), and La Riviere's (146 mi. from Emerson). The Samuel Treble family's original sod shack on their 22-2-11W homestead, came to be known as the "Half Way House", being 100 miles west of Emerson and about the same distance to the Souris River. There were stopping houses on other trails including "The Ramrod House" on the Archie Conner homestead in the Pembina Valley, near the Missouri Trail, on 18-1-18W. *(A of MB.)*

- Wm A. Latimer, whose parents were early settlers of the Boundary Trail Region, related the following recollection regarding the serious danger of winter blizzards: "*Yes, we had a lot of real bad blizzards. They would come up very suddenly and, if caught in one, there were no landmarks or anything to go by, just wide-open prairie. People used to get lost quite often, and lots of them got frozen to death. One time, my father and James Ray left with the team and sleigh going to Brandon, and, when they left, it looked like a blizzard was coming up. And it did come up, too, and they weren't able to follow the trail and got lost. And just before they got lost, they caught up to an Englishman that had just come out from England and he wasn't used to this country and he had just a pair of those red leather boots on. Just common leather boots. And it was cold, 40 below zero. They saw that they had to unhitch the team because they couldn't go any further.*

It was deep snow and they'd got off the road. They tied the team to the sleigh and then they started to run around the team in a circle to keep warm. The Englishman wanted to lie down; he said he was sleepy. They told him that that's a bad sign, and not to lie down. And they kept him going, they pretty near had to kick him to keep him going and awake. And in the morning, they realized they were just a half a mile from a farmhouse, but they didn't know it at the time. The Englishman's feet were frozen hard and so they hurried up and got him into the sleigh and got him into Brandon as quick as they could and got him into the hospital where they had to cut his boots off. And they had to thaw the best way they knew, slowly with cold water. Yes, but on the next trip to Brandon, they inquired how he had made out and they were told the doctors had to amputate both his feet. Yes, there was a lot of people that got frozen in blizzards, in the early days." *(BTHR files.)*

- Reverend L.O. Armstrong, in relating his experiences during a winter trip from West Lynne to Turtle Mountain on the Boundary Commission Trail in January of 1880, wrote, "*The next day was Sunday, but as it is not usual to lay over whilst on the road, 8 o'clock found us again on our way intending, if possible, to make Pancake Lake. The roads were very heavy and badly drifted. In about another hour, we strike burnt prairie and we make very good time as the snow does not lodge on it as it does in the long grass. About three o'clock, the wind changed to the northwest and very suddenly began to blow a blizzard. Our clergyman companion went on ahead on snowshoes, following the summer trail, which here and there could be seen where the prairie was bare, and which generally, where there was snow, could be distinguished from the fact that no grass grows upon it. He found he could not face the storm and turning, ran back to the sleighs to advise retracing our road to our house if possible. He found the men preparing to do it before his arrival, lightening their sleighs of their loads. This done, we turn and try to follow the trail that we have ourselves made. We soon find that the horses cannot follow it, and we send a man ahead running to follow it, relieving him about every mile. We manage to retrace a few miles in this way, but darkness overtakes us. We have lost the trail. The order is given to stop and camp before we are all fagged out.*

Blinded with the driving snow, with what energy we have left, we make a shelter with our two sleighs and put blankets upon the horses under their harness that they not be blown away. We are six men and have for bedclothes three buffalo robes and three bed quilts. We spread the quilts upon the grass, having as carefully as possible shovelled away the snow with our snowshoes, and getting close together, we lie down, with the buffalo robes as coverlets. We pass around a slice of frozen pork and a sea-biscuit to each man. It is a chilly occupation at first lying there, but soon a snow drift covers us. Every half hour, at first, we had a song all around, and a general squeezing to see that everyone is all right, but soon we begin to realize that we shall be warm enough and we drop to sleep. We pass a very good night, considering that it is about 25 below zero and the wind blowing 50 miles an hour perhaps. We awaken in the morning to find ourselves in a profuse perspiration, our fur hats that we had pulled over our ears and our mittens wringing wet. Little streams of water were running down our necks. We are covered by a snow drift two feet thick. We have some difficulty in breaking through this. We give three rousing cheers for daylight and then survey the scene. It is a wreck indeed. The poor horses are ferocious with cold. They have nothing but a thin blanket on. We finally let them loose, knowing that with their wonderful instinct they will go back to the stable at Cypress Creek direct. We follow them. The blizzard is over, but the weather is very cold. We trudge on disconsolately; our hats and mittens are frozen stiff, and worse, we are going back instead of forwards." *(Armstrong'80 :42.)*

- The blizzard of January 13, 1888 was a major event, and was vividly recalled in a personal account published in the *Nor'-West Farmer* magazine. "*On the morning of the 13th, the wind was blowing warm from the south, and the mercury stood at 2 degrees below freezing. At 10 a.m., without a moment's warning, the wind changed to the northwest, and for the next 12 hours this most terrible storm rages. In 35 minutes the mercury fell to 20 degrees below zero. The wind blew at the rate of 45 miles an hour, and the wind was filled with an indescribable fine ice or sleet, peculiar to this country, and something neither man nor beast could face for any length of time, because it fills the eyes and attaches to the skin, until it is impossible to see a rod in any direction. When one looks down to the ground, it appears as a sea of ice rolling and tossing along, giving one the impression that the whole surface had broken loose and is hurrying by. It is probably this apparent movement that confuses and causes those who start for a point, 20 or 30 rods away, to lose their bearings and their heads, and then wander and perish.*" *(NWF'88-03 :58.)*

Figure 7.10.2. Above: Wet crossings. The years 1880-83 were abnormally wet years, making for difficult trail conditions throughout southern Manitoba, but also made steamboat navigation of the Assiniboine River possible, and an alternative to slogging it out on the Boundary Commission Trail. Many settlers headed for the Turtle Mountain region, booked steamboat passage from Winnipeg to the Souris River mouth area and then travelled south overland from there, thereby avoiding travel on the Boundary Commission Trail. (See front cover, top map.) *(The Graphic, 1988-03-17.)*

- R.W.M., a Nor'-West Farmer Magazine contributor, from Winnipeg, identified only by his initials, experienced the same 1888 blizzard, and later reported, in part, "*Next, I went over to Deloraine just in time to see the start of the memorable blizzard of Wednesday the 11th. The Deloraine of other years was a pretty and well-sheltered location; however, the new one is open to all weathers and got its full share of all that was left after Dakota had been supplied. Ten men came in at nine o'clock at night from the north, only two of them being able to bring in their loads, the rest had to lie on the prairie till the storm was blown out. There is another big* (settlement) *reserve on the north side of Deloraine for the benefit of the university of our future, and this with the extensive CPR lands, all unsettled, help to make it as dismal and dangerous a place for a man to get caught in a storm as anywhere in the country. Mr. Roper from the Souris district got caught there with two teams, one of horses, before reaching the safety of Whitewater Station. It was 40 degrees below and a fearful night and day, and his escape after 24 hours of such exposure was almost miraculous. So far as I can judge, the damp snow and comparatively high temperature of last Wednesday were not one bit more pleasant than a colder and drier storm from the north. Damp cold wind is downright torture, and kills faster than extreme cold.*" *(NWF'88-02 :40.)*

- Excerpts from Emerson's *Southern Manitoba Times* and the *Nelsonville Mountaineer* newspapers suggest news items regarding trail conditions on the Boundary Commission and other local trail, during the 1880s, were many:

March 5, 1881. "*The bad roads have prevented parties coming to the* (Nelsonville) *mill with grists, and in consequence the mill is now fairly ahead of her work. Doubtless, there will be another rush as soon as the roads are fit to travel. Very little business was transacted at the council meeting on Friday, two of the councillors being absent on account of the bad roads.*"

June 10, 1881. "*Woe should it be your lot or misfortune to strike bad roads, for then the rich dark soil of the prairie stirred up by the continual travel becomes a sticky mud, a regular black paste, the wheels of your vehicle sink to the axles, and to pull it through and out of such places, the words of the old song 'put your shoulder to the wheel' have to be literally fulfilled on many occasions. It might be said here, that nowhere on the whole route West, between West Lynne and the Souris, over 200 miles, can a worse piece of road be found than lies between the town of West Lynne and the Mennonite villages for the first twelve miles of the way. It was our good fortune to fall in with a party of immigrants who had left Emerson on the previous day, westward bound to the Turtle Mountains. Some idea of the labour undergone by these people and the worry on their teams may be imagined when we state it took them three whole days for to perform a journey of twelve miles on the bad roads immediately to the west of West Lynne.*"

June 15, 1881. "*The roads between the two Pembinas are in a wretched condition. Wagons, temporarily abandoned, are strewed along at intervals.*"

June 17, 1881. "*At sunrise, we were once more on the road and in a short time we had reached that portion of the road situated between the two Pembinas which has been a source of disaster to more than one of the many immigrant wagons that had travelled that route this spring, and it was not long before we were called upon to extricate another of our new settlers who was receiving his baptism of mud in one of the numerous sloughs which lay in this great travelled route of western highway, and which so long as this state of affairs exists on this road, will be a standing disgrace to the Local Government. Our united help was not sufficient to extricate the wagon from its soft bed of mud and extra help had to be solicited from some of the farm houses close by.*"

September 16, 1881. "*The roads between the two Pembinas are in a better condition than they have been for years. No one travelling on them now would for one moment think the deep mud holes and miry sloughs that had to be crossed in the spring would ever be hard and dry and fit for travel as the road is today. We suppose it will remain so now until spring when the same state of affairs that occurred last spring will be repeated unless the Local Government are awakened to a sense of their duty and, in justice to Southern Manitoba, make some effort to put this, the great highway to the west of the province, into proper condition. Freighters have now, however, a good chance for teaming between the two Pembinas.*"

- Mrs Harriet David recalled driving along water covered trails as an arriving settler. "*We left Brandon* (in 1882) *with all our earthy possessions drawn by a team of horses with a pair of oxen tied on behind. During the three days drive, we had lots of time to look over the country. The sun was bright and warm, but the world looked lonely. While on the road, I was given the lines and told to keep on the road, and drive for a change, while my brother and husband rode on the oxen. Suddenly, we came to water. It looked like a lot, but I had been told not to leave the road, so kept on. It got deeper and deeper, the horses lost their footing, but found it again, and got safely through, right on the road. On looking back, I found that the boys on the oxen had been nearly drowned as the oxen had to swim. But such were the roads in those days, and we were all very optimistic for the future. After three days on the road, we arrived at Section 24-3-18W, unloaded the wagon, tied the horses and oxen to it and called it 'home'.*"*(Killarney WI'70 :26.)*

- Ferris Boulton personal journal entry, "*June 14, 1877, Loading up. Had lunch with drover out on the prairie — ancient eggs with slapjack and rattlesnake bacon. Met Bill Cookston and Harry Ferguson. We started west at 2 p.m. Soon found that my oxen were well mated — one willing to do all, and the other willing he should. Roads bad. Lots of fun with Bill driving his Montana Oxen, and Harry giving riding exhibitions on a cow in the sloughs. Left our loads stuck in a slough a mile out of Smugglers Point, which we reached at 9:30, wet, tired, and hungry. Turned our oxen loose, had supper, and retired to rest on the oak floor of Joe's kitchen. June 15th Looked up our oxen, then got half breed to bring our loads in, and learned a lesson not to leave the old trail, as it had a good bottom no matter how deep the water was.*" *(Louise'79 :112.)*

- James Dougall homesteaded in the Snowflake district,1-9W, in 1879. His journal entries provide vivid descriptions of the trials and tribulations frequently experienced travelling the Boundary Commission Trail. Following, are a few short excerpts. "**April 25:** *We left Mountain City early this morning but only travelled a short distance when both oxen and horse teams got mired.* **April 29:** *The roads were very soft. We came to a small river and had to unload everything and carry them on our shoulders for about a acre, up to our knees in water, to a raft which we had built to get our goods across.* **May 5:** *We decided to change our plans and at 5 a.m. started back for Twp 2- Rg 9 where some of our party, being satisfied with the land, had located farms. We got back to Nelsonville the next day, after being lost off the road three times, and travelling to the knees in mud and water — a dreadful experience.* **May 20:** *This morning we loaded up once more and started out. It was very hot and the oxen were proceeding rather slowly. On attempting to get more speed out of them, they broke into a run and broke the cart so that we had to put both loads on the wagon and hitch both teams to it.* **May 26:** *Arrived at the Little Pembina by noon but had to leave part of the load by the way. Wm Rae was walking alongside the lead oxen, missed his footing and stumbled head over heels out of sight into the water. I ran forward and with some difficulty he was pulled out, completely covered with mud and water but otherwise unharmed. Before 5 o'clock, we were stuck four times and had to unload and reload each time. We then left half of the load and went on over the worst places and then had to go back and pick up the rest; then camp for the night.* **May 28**: *Arose at 4 o'clock this morning ready for the last lap of our journey. We swam the oxen across the river, took the goods over in a boat, loaded up once more and after a few miles of tough travelling we arrived at our homesteads that evening, none of us feeling any the worse after a long and wearisome journey.*" *(Gosnell'68 :561.)*

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7.11 STEAMBOAT TRANSPORTATION

The cry "Steamboat coming round the bend!" was commonly heard on the Mississippi and the Missouri during the heyday of the great riverboat steamers. But the shrill of the riverboat steam whistle and rhythmic beat of its paddlewheels, also echoed up and down the muddy waters of the Red River from Fargo-Moorhead to Winnipeg. Steamboats played a major transport role in the life and development of many communities in the years prior to the arrival of the railway and for some time afterwards as well, although in a reduced capacity. The 25-year-long period of international cross-border traffic on the Red, from 1870 to 1895, was especially active and colourful. It offered as much source material for riveting storytelling as steamboat life on the lower Mississippi did for Mark Twain and his contemporaries during the 1840s and 1850s.

The HBC and the *Anson Northup*

In 1858, the Hudson's Bay Company began shipping furs and trade goods from its Fort Garry headquarters, to and from England via St. Paul, MN and its connections to the US eastern seaboard. Keen to create more trade ties with the Red River Settlement, merchants in St. Paul, offered a $2000 reward to the first person to put a steamboat on the Red. At least two entrepreneurs attempted to win the prize. In the autumn of 1858, Captain Anson Northup purchased an old Mississippi steamboat, the *North Star,* and steamed it up the Crow Wing River, a tributary of the Mississippi, as far as he could, and then dismantled it. Hiring 30 men, 13 yokes of oxen, 17 teams of horses, and numerous wagons and sleds, he planned to drag the boiler, machinery and fresh lumber over the snow 150 miles from Crow Wing to the forks of the Sheyenne River on the Red.

While Captain Anson Northup was setting into action his plan to capture the prize money, Captain John Davis devised a simpler plan. That autumn, he purchased a small twin boiler steamboat, the *Freighter*, and sailed it up the Minnesota River to Big Stone Lake and parked it for the winter. He had been informed, by an old-timer, that a heavy snowfall and high spring floodwaters would allow him to simply steam overland, the short five miles, across the height of land to Lake Traverse and the headwaters of the Red. The winter of 1858-59 turned out to be one of the most severe in years, with record cold and snowfall. While Captain Davis waited out the winter in relative comfort, Captain Northup, his hired men and their animals, suffered extreme conditions on the open trail. Many of the animals died, much of the material had to be left along on the trail and, with their lives endangered, many of the men quit. A rescue mission was organized, but Captain Northup and a handful of men finally succeeded in reaching Lafayette on the east bank of the Red River in April 1859, arriving with little more than the boiler and their lives.

When spring arrived, as Captain Davis had hoped, the Red and Minnesota river watersheds were, indeed, connected by floodwaters and it appeared his plan was going to succeed. But, the *Freighter* was grounded on a shallow spot, and could not be freed before flooding subsided. The *Freighter* was left high and dry on the prairie and abandoned. Captain Northup's vessel, now reconstructed as the *Anson Northup*, remained the only contender for the prize money. Captain Northup successfully steamed his namesake down the Red River to HBC Lower Fort Garry, arriving June 10, 1859. Figure 7.11.1.

The HBC purchased the *Anson Northup,* renamed it the *Pioneer* and began operating it, hauling HBC goods and consignment items. After being improperly tied up for the winter of 1860-61, at the mouth of Cooks Creek near present day Selkirk, the vessel flipped and sank when the water level dropped. The boat was unrepairable, but the boiler was salvaged for use in a HBC lumber mill. Convinced of the value of steamboat transport on the Red, the HBC contracted boat builders to salvage the boilers and other materials from the *Freighter* and construct a new vessel, exclusively for HBC use. It was built at Georgetown, HBC's wharf and warehouse on the upper Red, in 1862. Christened the *International*, it was 137 by 26 feet in size, weighed 133 tons, had a draught of only 15 inches when light, 27 inches when full, and required a crew of 22 deckhands plus officers. During the 1860s, it operated between Georgetown and Fort Garry infrequently, due primarily to the Dakota Sioux uprising of 1863 and low water levels that lasted until 1869. Figure 7.11.2.

After the sale of Rupert's Land to the Canadian government in 1870, the HBC wasted little time in reorganizing its prairie business activities to cater to the transportation and material needs of the expected incoming settlers. During the winter of 1869-70, the *International* was extensively repaired and refitted at Lower Fort Garry. The HBC then advertised its services as a public carrier of passengers and goods, in addition to seeing to the Company's own transport needs. It was a wise decision as, during the season of 1870 alone, the *International* completed more trips than she had previously during her entire career, redeeming not only herself but also this mode of travel in general. Very quickly, beginning in 1871, various players entered the Red River steamboat transport business. But the period of competitive freight rates lasted only until the autumn of 1872, when the HBC, railway builder J.J. Hill, and various St. Paul boat owners and investors, such as Norman Kittson, banded together to form the Red River Transport Co. (RRTC). Once again, steamboat transport on the Red River was monopoly-owned and freight rates quickly rose to previous levels.

In 1874, tired of HBC monopoly on the Red, Winnipeg merchants, along with several St. Paul investors, started the Merchants International Steamboat Line. The new company built two boats, the *Winnipeg* and the *Manitoba,* and, in the spring of 1875, began hauling goods and passengers in competition with the RRTC. After a series of dirty tricks by the RRTC and "unfortunate accidents" including the ramming and sinking of the *Manitoba* by the *International*, the Merchants line was soon driven into bankruptcy. In the spring of 1876, the RRTC purchased the *Winnipeg* and *Manitoba* at a steep discount and incorporated them into its own fleet. With the collapse of the Merchants International Line, the RRTC tightened its hold on Red River trade. The *Monetary Times* of Toronto asserted that the greatest drawback to trade in Manitoba was the high cost of transportation to and from it. *The Times* article added that the cause of this situation was a steamboat monopoly on the Red River held by a company that had been able to declare a dividend of 80% on its stock in 1876. The American towns along the Red River were likewise disapproving of the St. Paul dominance. An excerpt from the *Moorhead Sta*r of May 31, 1876 spoke of the outside communication denied to the country by "*a force of circumstances over which we have no control - and will have no control, until there is a line of steamers on the Red River owned by, or subservient to, the people along its banks.*" *(Wishart'90 :30.)*

Never a Routine Trip

It was said that there was no such thing as a "routine trip" onboard a Red River steamboat during the bustling 1870s. Boats were frequently overcrowded, over-heated and constantly in an uproar. Aboard, one could find the various crew members scurrying about undertaking their duties. These often included

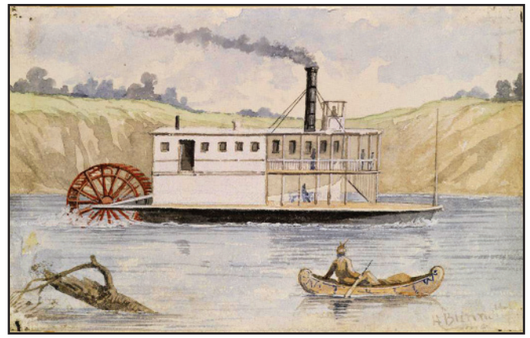

Figure 7.11.1. Above: First steamboat on the Red. 1859. Watercolour painting by H. Burnette of the steam wheeler, *Anson Northup*, first steamboat on the Red River. The vessel was built by its namesake, after an epic struggle hauling its boiler and construction materials overland from St. Paul, Minn. to the Red River during the harsh winter of 1858-59. *(ROM :Burnette Coll.)*

Figure 7.11.2. Above: The HBC *International*. An excellent photograph, taken in 1869, showing the *International* moored at The Forks with HBC Fort Garry dominating the background. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.11.3. Above: The *Selkirk*. 1873. The *Selkirk* and a barge at a riverside mooring. Note the barge being used as a wharf to aid in unloading cargo. *(A. of MB.)*

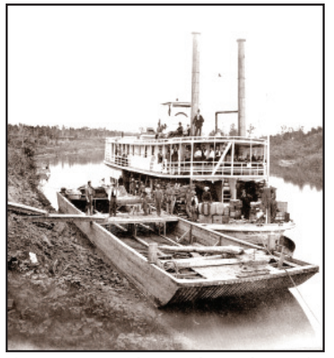

Figure 7.11.4. Above: The *Dakota*. The Red River Transportation Company steamer *Dakota*, photographed by the Boundary Commission photographer, unloading cargo at Dufferin during the summer of 1873. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.11.5. Above: The *Northwest* at Brandon. 1882. At 200 by 34 feet, the *Northwest* was the largest steamer on the prairies. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.11.6. Above: Fire on the Red River. A *Harper's Weekly Magazine* illustration from 1879, with the caption, "*The spirited illustration represents a scene witnessed by our artist, Mr. Rogers, during recent tour in the Northwest. Surveyed from the deck of the steamboat at night, the scene was grand and exciting. The flames had swept over the prairie, driving before them deer, wolves, and other wild animals, until they reached the wooded banks of the river. As the frightened creatures came in sight, emerging from the cover of the woods, the passengers and crew of the steamer amused themselves by firing at them with rifles or revolvers, with what result our artist, who was busy with his pencil, does not say.*" *(HWM'78-12-07 :973.)*

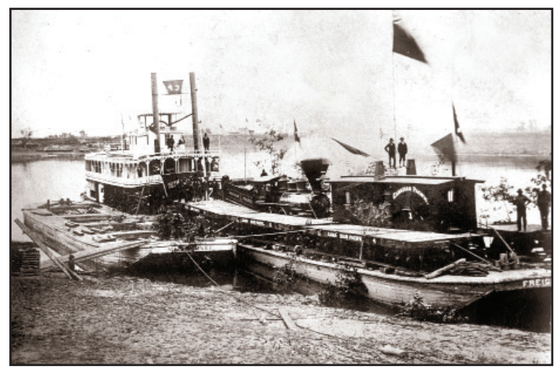

Figure 7.11.7. Above: Free Press Extra! Monday Oct. 8, 1877. "*The First Locomotive in the North-West To Arrive this Afternoon! Intelligence has just been received that the first locomotive and tender, with a caboose and six flat cars, which are being brought down for the Pembina Branch by Mr. Joseph Whitehead, will arrive here this afternoon at about four o'clock by the steamer Selkirk. Notwithstanding the short notice, we understand that a fitting reception will be tendered; and the mayor and corporation will take the necessary steps for the proper recognition of this important event in the history of the North-West. The steamer will probably stop at No. 6 warehouse, foot of Post Office Street. Let there be a grand rally of citizens on the occasion!*" *(WFP'77-10-06.)*

Figure 7.11.8. Above: Steamboat on the Assiniboine. 1882. A Francis Fitz Roy Dixon sketch showing an approaching steamboat on the Assiniboine River near the Souris River mouth area, where he homesteaded two years earlier. *(TPL :Dixon Coll.)*

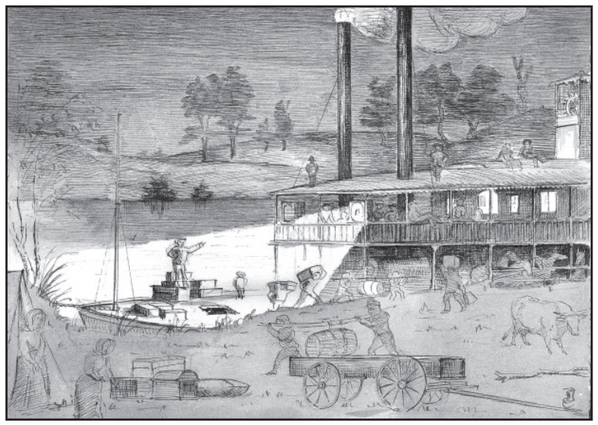

Figure 7.11.9. Above: Unloading on the Assiniboine. 1882. Another period sketch by early settler Francis Fitz Roy Dixon, this one a very interesting night-time riverboat unloading scene. Note the spotlight providing illumination for the men carrying loads onto the riverbank and, in the foreground, two women near a tent, a pile of luggage, a wagon, men carrying a barrel, and a free roaming cow at the far right. By 1883, railway service to Brandon opened and settlers to this district were arriving by train, rather than riverboat. *(TPL :Dixon Coll.)*

Figure 7.11.10. Above: Steamboat to the rescue. The *Assiniboine* sailing up Main Street in Emerson, bringing aid and assisting victims of the great Red River flood of 1897. *(A of MB.)*

farmers working as firemen, or storekeepers as pursers, and their daughters as maids. Métis roustabouts struggled constantly to keep the steamboat from snagging the shore on tight corners or working to free the vessel after becoming grounded on a sandbar or boulder. Mosquitoes swarmed in clouds feasting on new blood of naïve immigrants. The walls in the staterooms were often little better than the curtains separating the berths, with the shuffle of cards and the drunken ballad of the night's revellers adding to the constant "pang, pang, pang" of the paddle wheels, high-pitched hiss of the steam boiler valves, crying infants, and laughing excited children. Mingling with immigrant passengers and crew were inquiring industrialists, gentlemen adventurers, journalists, and curious well-to-do eastern farmers. Most of the steamboats required fairly large crews. The *Selkirk's* list of personnel in 1881 included "*Captain, Alexander Griggs; two pilots, two mates, two engineers, two firemen, two clerks, a steward, a cook and even two maids and two cabin boys; seventeen altogether. Besides these there were required from ten to fifteen roustabouts to handle the freight.*" *(McFadden'51.)*

Hazardous Navigation

The shallow and twisting Red River frequently made for difficult and hazardous navigation and seasoned skippers were forced to develop many unique navigation practices. Building temporary wing-dams (boulder and timber barriers extending part way into the river) to raise the water level if the vessel came to a halt in shallow waters, or winching steamers over boulders and ordering the crew and passengers overboard to push were commonplace. When Lord Dufferin made the first goodwill visit of a Governor General to western Canada in 1878, he and his group made the last leg of their journey by steamboat. The *Minnesota* was gaily decorated for the occasion and met the vice-regal party at Fisher's Landing.

- Lady Dufferin vividly described her experience on the *Minnesota* in her journal, "*Imagine sailing through hundreds of small ponds all joined together, the second concealed by the curve of the first, and you may form some idea of the Red River. I can only tell you that we go from one bank to the other, crushing and crashing against the trees, which grow down to the water-side. The branches sweep over the deck, and fly in our faces, and leave pieces behind them. We run against one bank, our steam is shut off, and in some mysterious manner we swing round till our bow is into the other. Then we rebound, and go on a few yards, till the sharp curve brings us up against the side. Our stern wheel is often ashore, and our captain and pilot must require the patience of saints.*" *(Barris'77 :39.)*

Owing to the frequent difficulties encountered in getting past Goose Rapids, a railway spur track, from Crookston to Fisher's Landing, Minn. was built in 1877 on the St. Paul and Pacific Railway's Pembina Branch line, then under construction. For the next few years, as the SP&P raised necessary funds to continue construction, Fisher's Landing became the new primary head of navigation, instead of Moorhead, where freight and passengers were transferred from railway cars onto riverboats or barges.

Millions of Pounds of Freight

The amount of freight transported by steamboats between Minnesota and Manitoba during the 1870s was enormous. It was reported that freight bound for Manitoba passing through Moorhead in 1872 (its first year of existence) amounted to five million pounds. The *Moorhead Sun* reported that, just one year later, the volume of freight leaped to 26.6 million pounds; in 1874, the total was 37.6 million pounds; and in 1875, the amount of freight nearly doubled, reaching 76.1 million pounds. Norman Kittson declared in 1876 that the Red River between Fargo and Winnipeg had carried more freight than the Mississippi between St. Paul and St. Louis. The transporting of steel rail in 1875 and 1876 was a major occupation for the *Selkirk*. Assisted by other boats at various times, it carried a total of 14,500 tons of railway iron, enough for 160 miles of track. The steamers also carried locomotives and flatcars on their barges. Cargos of nitroglycerin, for use in construction work, were hustled through customs and gingerly passed by the other boats when met on the river.

In 1876, the *Minnesota* made history by carrying the first shipment of Manitoba wheat, 856 bushels purchased at 80 cents per bushel. More than 10,000 bushels of wheat were shipped up the river in 1877, over half of which, 5,266 bushels, was shipped by J.H. Ashdown and Company. In addition to enormous amounts of freight, steamboats carried thousands of settlers into Manitoba. Individual settlers had been trickling in for many years, but the first large group to sail down the Red to new homes in Manitoba was made up of Mennonites. In 1874, in the span of two weeks, 880 Mennonites arrived on the *International* and the *Cheyenne*. In 1876, with the aid of barges, the *International* carried 423 Mennonites, 118 French Canadians, and 27 Scandinavians, all on one trip. In August of that same year, 1117 Icelanders arrived on two steamboats and their barges. During the next two years, immigrants made up the bulk of passengers of practically every steamer travelling on the Red River.

In December 1878, when the railway connection between St. Paul and Winnipeg was completed, the dominance and profitability of steamboats as a mode of transportation in the Red River area slowly, but surely, began to fade. Steamboat ownership changed hands and began to focus on the Assiniboine and Saskatchewan rivers. For a few years, before the CPR extended west of Winnipeg, the Assiniboine River gave Canadian-owned steamboats temporary opportunities for profit, transporting passengers and heavy farm machinery and other freight to new settlements being established along and near the Assiniboine. Navigation on the notoriously winding and shallow Assiniboine River was made easier by record high precipitation and river levels from 1880 to 1883. The *Alpha* and the *Manitoba* switched their schedules to the Assiniboine in 1880, followed soon after by the *Marquette* and *Northwest.* A number of steamboats were later transferred to the Saskatchewan River or retained for short-haul transport or recreational uses, before being abandoned, wrecked or dismantled. The last year for scheduled international steamboat traffic on the Red River was 1886.

- John Spearman arrived in St. Boniface by rail from Ontario on April 17, 1881. He first found work driving piles for the first Louise Bridge, then as a "wheelbarrow engineer" building the railway grade east of Winnipeg to the Port Arthur. In the spring of 1882, he took work on a riverboat plying the Assiniboine between Portage La Prairie and Grand Valley. He recalled, "*The water raging high at Treesbank drove the boat, at sharp bends in the river, through the tops of poplar trees. The entire valley being one great river, it was impossible for the captain to hold the ship to the regular river channel. The deck hands had no beds, but found shelter on the leeward side of a large box. Their food was sandwiches out of a basket with coffee out of a huge pail, using tin cups.*" *(McKitrick'00 :21.)*

RIVER NEWS!!

Following is a brief sampling of newspaper accounts and news involving steamboat traffic and vessels on the Red and Assiniboine Rivers during the settlement years in the BTNHR.

1875 May. First Boat of the Season. *The ice passed Winnipeg Thursday night, and the Selkirk, the first boat of the season, arrived at 7 o'clock on Friday morning, with 38 passengers and considerable amount of freight. (MFP'75-05-1 :9.)*

1875 June. New Rules for US Boats. *In accordance with instructions received from Ottawa, hereafter, American steamers will not be allowed to carry passengers from any one British point to any other, upon the Red River.(MFP'75-6-5 :2.)*

1875 June. Steamboat Collision. *The new, fast-sailing Merchant's Line steamer Manitoba has come to grief. People who took passage on her for the South, last evening, returned early this morning with the doleful intelligence that a collision had taken place, between the International and Manitoba, and that the latter was at the bottom of the river. It appears that the steamers were hugging a sharp point, just below Lemay's mill, and that the International ran into the Manitoba, sinking her almost immediately. Fortunately, no lives were lost. All sorts of rumors and versions of the story of the collision were, of course, immediately circulated. (MFP'75-6-12 :2.)*

1875 July. Stuck on Goose Rapids. *The Minnesota brought down a barge load of lumber for D.C. Kensie, which had been stuck on Goose Rapids for some time, a large number of reapers and mowers, and three small flooring mills. (MFP'75-7-17 :2.)*

1875 July. The *Manitoba*. *On Friday, Mr. Douglas was in the city and was of the opinion that the Manitoba would be hauled out of the water Saturday, and would be ready for business in a week to ten days. (MFP'75-7-13 :2.)*

1875 October. Flatboats. *The Fargo Times says that flatboat* (barge) *building is lively at that place. Mr Davidson is loading three boats with potatoes and other vegetables; Ed Burke, of Winnipeg, has four boats ready to launch, and will fill them with oats, butter, eggs, and vegetables; Messrs. Clark & McClure are sending twelve boatloads of flour, feed, etc, all for the Winnipeg market. (MFP'75-15-16 :4.)*

1875 November. Early Freeze-up. *The last boat of the season was the Selkirk, which arrived Monday night, Nov. 1st. The state of affairs upon the Red River may be stated as follows: The Dakota is frozen in at Scratching River, with a heavy load of freight; the Cheyenne, which took the Minnesota's cargo at Pembina, is fast at Emerson; the Alpha is in a similar fix, with an immense cargo; the Minnesota, light, will, per force of circumstances, winter about thirteen miles south of Pembina. The International has been hauled at Grand Forks, and is the only boat of the line that will be "at home" this winter. Mr Piper's fleet of flat boats were caught at DeLorme's; and Clark & McClure's at Emerson. The load of the former consists in great part of potatoes and apples, and will, it is feared, be considerably injured. The remains at Crookston about four hundred tons of freight, twenty-five of which is ordinary merchandise, and the remainder grain and flour. (MFP'75-11-6 :5.)*

1881 May. Lumber Raft. *Wednesday evening the big North West arrived bound for Winnipeg with a cargo of lumber. The same day arrived (at Emerson) the raft "Jerry Sullivan." The raft is to be cut into cordwood here and sold. (NM'81-5-20.)*

1881 May. Winnipeg and Return. *The steamer Cheyenne will leave Pembina, West Lynne and Emerson for Winnipeg on Monday 23rd of May and return Tuesday the 24th. Tickets for the round trip, $2.50. (NM'81-5-20.)*

1881 June. *Cheyenne*. *Monday, the steamer Pluck arrived, down the river from Grand Forks, with two barges loaded with wood for the West Lynne mills. A raft of half a million feet of lumber for Sutherland Bros. is now in town. In endeavoring to snub a raft belonging to J. Sullivan, in order to pass the Customs at West Lynne last Thursday, the snubbing rope broke striking one of the raftsmen a very severe blow. (NM'81-6-10.)*

1881 September. Steamboat Season Closed. *Navigation has closed on the Assiniboine River for the season. The Alpha has been tied up at Brandon, and the Manitoba tied up here. The City of Winnipeg is at Selkirk awaiting the Princess to tow her to Lake Winnipeg, whence she will push on to the Saskatchewan River after the injuries to her machinery are remedied. (NM'81-5-20.)*

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7.12 FIRE - A CONSTANT THREAT

There were many difficulties and dangers in the life of a Boundary Trail Region pioneer: injury, sickness and disease, freezing cold, even isolation. However, the most feared was fire, which was an almost ever-present danger both inside and outside the home. Prairie fires, both natural and man-made, were a centuries-old occurrence and were frequently noted by the early explorers and traders. They reported that the Assiniboine people regularly burned areas of southern Manitoba during the spring to promote early grass growth and to entice the buffalo to graze in those areas. The arrival of the settlers and the breaker plow did little to stop prairie fires and they were a danger even into the early 1900s, especially with wood and coal burning steam engines on the harvest fields. As well, with wood-burning kitchen stoves, open-flame candles and lanterns, and thatch and wood shingle roofs, house fires were a much more frequent and immediate danger to the settlers and their families. Local history and early newspaper accounts frequently make note of fire events in the Boundary Trail Region. Some of these include the following:

- **Andrew Barnard** recalled his family's close call with a prairie fire in the Killarney area. "*There used to be a great many prairie fires. One night, two Mr. Chapmans and a Mr. Rankin moved their threshing machine to our place to thresh in the morning. There was a fire away to the southwest. The men thought it could not cross the creeks but mother kept getting up and watching it. As last, she woke father, and they called the others. They harnessed a team and turned everything out of the stables, drew the machine onto some plowing and then prepared to fight fire. There were already fire breaks, and they back-fired from them and fought fire with pails of water and bags the rest of the night. While we watched from the window, we could see the flames leaping as high as the top of the stacks, but they kept it back so that nothing at our place was burnt. But many others were not so fortunate. Stewart Foster lost nearly everything and others lost feed, buildings, and grain stacks.*" *(Killarney WI'07 :45.)*

- **Alex Rankin,** who also grew up in the Killarney area, in his memoir, recalled: "*I had a trip in the fall of 1881 from Crystal City to old Desford and back, and had dinner and supper in one meal at Joe McKibbon's Badger Creek (stopping place). All the country was burnt black, not a blade of grass to be seen. A prairie fire had swept the country starting about where the town of Melita is now, and extended to Cartwright before it was brought under control.*" *(Killarney WI'07 :12.)*

- ***Nor'-West Farmer*** magazine, September 1888 issue contained a report by "*B.R. WM*" on the aftermath of a large prairie fire in the Glenboro district. "*I made a run out on the Southwestern to twelve miles beyond Carman and out the new extension as far as Glenboro mainly to see the nature of the damage done by fire. Shortly stated, four-fifths of the country is cleared of grass, and in the brush and scrub there is a heavy waste. The first and heaviest sufferer I met with was Mr. Henry Ardington, long known to me by repute as one of the best and most prosperous farmers on the Boyne, whose total loss is over $3,000. He was all safe with ploughing, except along the town line, and was away from home threshing when the fire came along from the south-west. His son was ploughing along this line when some worse-prepared neighbours came asking for help. After putting them right, he galloped back home and found the fire had backburnt within a few feet of all that was wanted to save, when the fire rushed over and was beyond control. He lost a granary of oak logs and 2,300 bushels of wheat and oats, a separator, a horse, 12 hogs, 25 tons hay, sleighs, wagon, harness, cutter, sulky rake, and all his small tools and implements. He bears his loss bravely, though out the earning of eight years' hard work. As he came to grief mainly by helping others, he deserves special sympathy. His neighbour, Mr. Wilton, lost sod stable, wagon, seeder and 250 bushels of oats, through the same fire, which leaped a guard 75 yards off. In the southwest, Napinka had serious losses. G.M. Newcombe, W. Dunbar, and A. White being the worst sufferers. Nearer Deloraine, A. Morton of 10-4-22W, had all his stacks, produce of 100 acres, burnt. Joe O'Mell, stacks burnt. Jim Gleeson, 25 tons of hay burnt. John Scott, of West Hall, horse burned on Tuesday and another injured.*" *(NWF'88 :297.)*

Another news report from the autumn of that same year: "*A sad result of the recent prairie fire near Killarney was the death of Mrs. Robert Rollins who, while assisting her husband in burning a firebreak, got so excited by the advance of outside fires that she was found dead by her husband who had gone along to another place to look after the safety of his hay. They were among the earliest settlers in southern Manitoba.*" *(NWF'88-11 :228.)*

- **John Adams** homesteaded on 9-3-12W in 1878 and with his wife and children were among the first settlers in the Preston district. Their home was twice burned to the ground. The first time, only the family Bible was saved and, the second time, only some bedding. *(Louise'79 :3.)*

- **Steam engines** visited many farms during the harvest season for custom-threshing purposes and small prairie fires were sometimes ignited as a result, such as the following 1888 incident reported in the *Nor'-West Farmer* involving legal action. "*An important fire-raising trial was held the other day at Brandon before Police Magistrate Todd. J.A. Henry brought action against Samuel and J. Martin. The charge was for kindling and leaving a fire without taking effectual means to prevent it spreading. Henry had, some days ago, 12 tons of hay burned, and his horses and his son considerably injured by the fire. His action was for damages. Some days before the fire, the defendants had been running a steam engine at Sutcliffe's, on 7-15W a distance away, and before removing they threw water on the ashes left by the engine, and as they thought, effectually extinguished all traces of fire. At night again, Mr. Sutcliffe went over the ashes with more water, and left the place, as he thought, perfectly safe. Some days after, while the machine was at work at Mr. Turnbull's, 36-7-15W, a heavy fire was seen to come from the direction of Mr. Sutcliffe's. Before it could be got under control, it did considerable damage not only to the prosecutor, Mr. Henry, but also to Mr. Turnbull. Henry and some neighbors traced the fire that did him damage to the very pile of ashes left at Sutcliffe's by the defendants. Mr. Daly appeared for Henry, and Mr. Sifton for the Martins. Verdict for plaintiff for $25 and costs, upwards of $50 in all.*" *(NWF'88-01 :2.)*

- **Daisy Gorden,** daughter of Reverend Andrew Gordon, recorded in her memoir. "*Do you want to have a look at Hades? asked Will, coming into the house from feeding the horses. 'It beats the pictures in that book of yours, Father!' We all trooped out of the parsonage to see an inferno set in a pitch black night. The grim picture filled everyone with dismay. A dozen fires were raging in the great valley. Some were burning straw stacks. The fire, running through the stubble, caught further on in the tall virgin prairie grass where it leaped and ran a swift race. One place it was seen to jump the firebreak, a wide swath of breaking around house, barns and sheds, and soon all was ablaze, the people taking refuge, with what they could carry, in a plowed field. It was a never-to-be forgotten picture. We had heard of horses racing and barely escaping the swift travelling fire. All eyes were riveted on a spot where a streak of fire was racing up the mountain. It was miles away, but all knew that this was a stretch of very long prairie grass about where Thornhill is now situated. We were protected on all sides, but the granary was just outside the northern side of a long pasture with a straw stack from newly threshed grain piled on the north side of it. Not a moment to waste. Father became General and issued quick orders. 'Bert and Rob, get six or eight bags and put a pail or more of sand in each. The girls will help. Will, you and I will carry a tub of water and all hurry across the pasture. We must save the grain and the granary.' The fire was fairly leaping through the long grass and our only safety was the fact that the long grass had been cut a little distance out. One could not have come near the burning tornado. Where it crept along in the shorter grass, the wet sand would extinguish it. Clear sighted vigilance was a must as, for an hour or more, everyone fought the fire. Although fiery forks tried again and again to steal in here and there, at last, the fight was won. It was a begrimed, tired family who wended their way to the farmhouse for a tub bath and then to bed to sleep off the terrors of that black night.*" *(Gordon'48 :147.)*

- **Woodburning stoves** and open-flame lamps were present in every home, thus house fires were common, often with tragic results. A great many house fires began as a result of a stovepipe fire. The stovepipes had to be cleaned every spring and fall to prevent the creosote buildup inside the pipe from eventually igniting. It was a dirty job and a dreaded day when the stovepipes had to be taken down and cleaned. The chimneys, during the early years, were just short brick chimneys on a bracket in an upstairs bedroom so the stovepipes were long and many. As a rule, a warm day was picked for the job and the pipes were all taken down and carried outside. They would be banged around to loosen and dislodge the soot built up inside the pipe. It was often a difficult task getting the tight fitting pipes properly back together again; but if neglected, the result was a chimney fire, that could and often did result in the burning down of the home. *(Louise'74 :43.)*

Figure 7.12.1. Above: Deloraine after the fire of December 27, 1888. Early town buildings in the BTNHR were also prone to catching fire, with wood or coal fired stoves and coal oil lamps in every home and business. Note, at front left, the large hotel bar counter among the rescued items. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.12.2. Above: Prairie fire. A magazine woodcut illustration of settlers gathering to fight a prairie fire. *(Flickr.com.)*

- ***The Nor'-West Farmer,*** November, 1888. "*A Clearwater correspondent writes: "The fire idiot has been accidentally dropping hot ashes from his tobacco pipe again and the prairie has been burning in all directions. Consequently, we have had the usual number of sufferers, Messrs. Brunet, Blow, McKinnon, A. McLaren and Moore being the principal losers. The former must have lost over a thousand bushels of grain, burned in a stack.*"

- **The dangers** of not regularly cleaning the kitchen stove pipes were pointed out in an 1888 farm insurance advertisement published in an Nor'-West Farmer, "*The recent painful and very nearly tragic experience of the Preston family at Pilot Mound is another forcible warning of the need of unfaltering vigilance in the care of stovepipes. We rub along with stove pipes that may have been in use for a whole season and are foul with soot, or over-worn, or unskillfully fixed, or we pile on the logs on an extra cold night with a resulting conflagration that means often financial ruin, occasionally death. Almost every extra cold snap is signalized by a blaze of this sort. Out of sight, out of mind, the bit of pipe that goes beyond the ceiling and through the roof is very often the place where the mischief starts. Take the very first fine day and devote it to a thorough cleaning and overhauling of your whole outfit of stove piping, and you will find it may save your wife and children the terror and suffering of fleeing half dressed at midnight to the shelter of a stable, and yourself from the almost ruinous loss of your home and its contents.*" *(NWF.'88 :188.)*

- **Morden On Fire.** From the *Morden Monitor,* 1896 July 2, 1896 issue, "*A Narrow Escape from Obliteration! Morden has had the narrowest of escapes from being wiped out by fire. Had it not been for the heroic and indominable perseverance of its people, it must have gone. It is bad enough, but the way the Morden people can fight a fire should have been witnessed to have been appreciated. The fire from some unknown cause commenced at about twelve o'clock in Brown's livery stable, Stephen Street. In five minutes after discovery, it was one mass of flames. The Chemical turned out and thousands of buckets of water were directed to saving adjoining buildings. The fire was so sudden that only one horse was saved by Mr. Haley who, at the risk of his life, untied one and returned for another but was driven back. Six horses were cremated, 700 bushels of oats, 20 tons of heavy, harness & C. A strong southwest wind was blowing and Snowden and Nelson's large two storey building was soon on fire, notwithstanding the roof was covered with men throwing buckets of water. The flames soon licked the millinery store of Miss Chambers, and great alarm was now felt, as the large building of Messrs. Shultz & Hansen and others were so scorched that the fire broke out in many places, at one time.*

Men, women and children swarmed at every window, throwing water in all directions to save their houses. The Salvation Army lasses and elderly women vied with each other carrying water. For an hour intense excitement prevailed. That the whole town was doomed everyone believed. Two circumstances alone saved it. The ice-house belonging to Snowden & Nelson prevented the spreading in one direction, although the casing was entirely burned off, while ropes were procured and the house of Mr. Topley was literally torn to pieces by a mighty tug of war of 200 men, led on by Geo Lundy, of the Queen's Hotel, and Alex Lawrence, MPP. The space left vacant prevented the skating rink from catching fire. Had this building caught the town must have gone, and everybody knew it, and worked accordingly. After three hours almost super-human efforts on the part of the whole population, the fire was got under control. Losses: Brown's livery, six horses burned, lost $5000; insurances $1100; Snowden & Nelson, $2000; Miss Chambers, milliner, $1000; Mr. Topley, $1000; Meikle and Coppinger's store, $250; Haley & Sutton, $250; Mr. -- $200; Mr. Spencer, $100." *(MM'96-07-01 :1.)*

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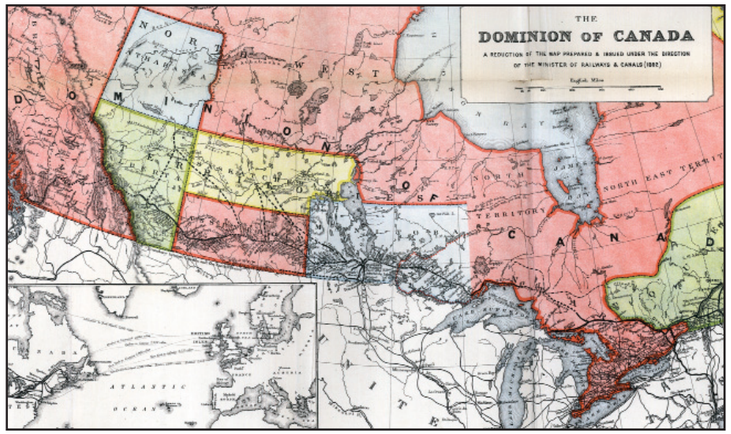

Figure 7.13.1. Above: Dominion of Canada. March 1881. Note Ontario and Quebec's northern boundaries follow the Hudson Bay watershed's southern boundary. *(A of MB.)*

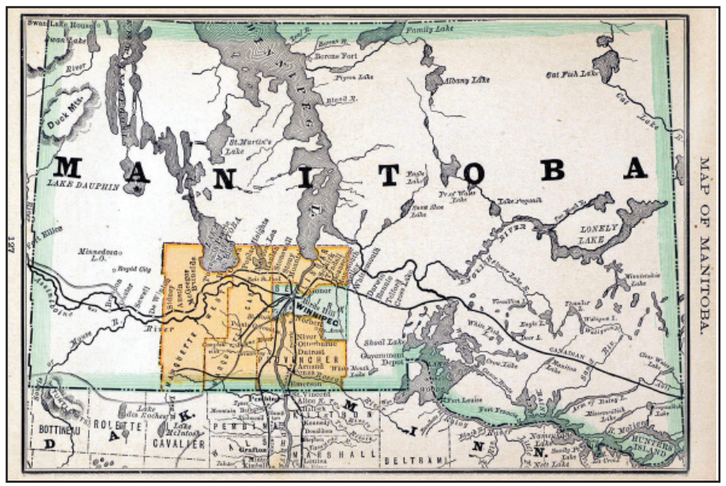

Figure 7.13.2. Above: Map of Manitoba, proposed new boundaries. Published map depicting proposed new Province of Manitoba boundaries approved by Parliament on March 21, 1881 and submitted to the Senate for approval, but opposed by the Province of Ontario, and overturned by the Imperial Prvy Council. *(Royal Ontario Museum.)*

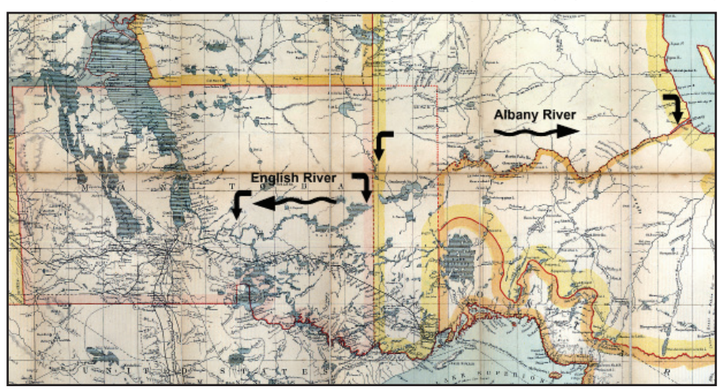

Figure 7.13.3. Above: Ontario boundaries. In 1884, the Imperial Privy Council accepted Ontario's claim to the region south of both the Albany and English rivers (arrows), effectively granting the "disputed area" to Ontario, by setting Ontario's new western boundary base point at the forks of the Winnipeg and English Rivers, and south to the US border. The solid red line showed Ontario's previous "Lake Superior watershed" northern boundary. *(A of MB.)*

7.13 THE MANITOBA - ONTARIO BOUNDARY DISPUTE

At the time of Confederation, Ontario's northern boundary was undefined, but generally accepted as being the "height of land" that divided the drainage basin of the Great Lakes from that of Hudson Bay. The western boundary ended somewhere near Port Arthur (Thunder Bay). In 1869, the HBC sold its Rupert's Land territories to the Dominion of Canada and, on July 1, 1870 the Province of Manitoba was officially created by an act of Parliament within the new "North West Territory." The new province was immediately referred to as the "postage stamp province", because of its tiny size, only 33,280 sq. km. Both the Dominion and the Manitoba provincial governments expected that Manitoba's boundaries would be expanded. On April 24, 1873, the Manitoba government made its first official request to the Dominion government for the boundaries to be enlarged.

Three years later on, April 12, 1876, John A. MacDonald's government passed an act that created "*…a separate territory within the North West Territory, an area the size of Manitoba's request (basically all of northern Manitoba and northwestern Ontario today) by the name of the District of Keewatin shall be created, and that the Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Manitoba, shall be Lieutenant Governor of the said District of Keewatin, …and shall make provision for the administration of justice in the said district, and generally to make, ordain and establish all such laws, institutions and ordinances as he may deem necessary for the peace, order and good government therein.*" The *Keewatin Act,* as it became locally known, made Manitoba responsible for the 300,000 square mi. of land it wanted, but was yet without title to.

The Ontario Government also had its eye on the District of Keewatin. In 1877, when John A. MacDonald's government was defeated, Ontario entered into negotiations with the newly-elected federal Liberal government to obtain it. Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie, who was openly sympathetic to Ontario's claim, appointed a Board of Arbitrators to resolve the question of where Ontario's western boundary lay; however, with no representation from either Manitoba or the District of Keewatin. On August 3, 1878, the Board ruled that Ontario's northern boundary should be marked by the Albany and English Rivers and its western extent by a line south from the forks of the English and Winnipeg Rivers, west of Rat Portage (now Kenora). Shortly after the Board's decision was released, Mackenzie's government was voted out of office and John A. MacDonald's Conservatives were returned to power. MacDonald refused to ratify the decision, stating that the Board had shown an "*utter disregard to the interests of the Dominion as a whole.*" As such, the land was not granted to Ontario.

Despite refusing to recognize Ontario's claim, in May 1880, MacDonald's government passed an "*Act for the Administration of Criminal Justice (in the Disputed Territory)*" (43V,c36). *The Act* provided that persons arrested in the Disputed Territory could be tried and punished under the laws of either Ontario, Manitoba or the District of Keewatin. The Act was to remain in force only until the end of the next session of Parliament. *(Shilliday'94.)*

Act Extending the Eastern Boundary of Manitoba

During the next session of Parliament, on March 21, 1881, the MacDonald Government "resolved" the boundary question and passed "*An Act to provide for the extension of the boundaries of the Province of Manitoba*" (44 V, c14). The Act extended the eastern boundary of Manitoba to a "*line drawn due north from where the westerly boundary of the province of Ontario intersects the boundary dividing Canada from the United States.*" As far as the governments of Manitoba and the Dominion were concerned, Manitoba's eastern boundary occurred where the Lake Superior watershed height of land, crossed into the US, a known point just west Port Arthur (Thunder Bay).

Within weeks, the Province of Manitoba began appointing officials to take up duties in the new Keewatin territory, including a coroner, an issuer of marriage licenses, constables, and, on September 7, 1881, established the County Court, appointed a registrar and established the provincial electoral district of Varennes in Rat Portage. Also on September 7th, the prohibition on intoxicating liquors that had been in effect was replaced with a new permit system. Ontario did not seem to be actively challenging Manitoba's authority in the area (at least physically), and, on July 7, 1883, the Manitoba Government indicated that it would be calling an election in the area for a seat in the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. The date of the election was set for September 28, 1883. *(Cherney'08-10-03.)*

The Rat Portage War

On July 9, 1883, realizing that their claim to the area was quickly slipping away, the Government of Ontario announced its refusal to recognize Manitoba's jurisdiction in the Keewatin region. And, despite the authority to do so under 43V, c36 had lapsed, also announced they would also be placing six provincial constables on duty in Rat Portage, building a jail and appointing a magistrate, initiating a series of events that came to be known as "The Rat Portage War."

By 1883, Rat Portage was evolving from a bawdy frontier town, into a more substantial growing community, with a permanent population that had grown to about 900 people, with several hundred transient railway workers temporarily calling Rat Portage home, which accounted for the fact that nearly half the buildings in it were either hotels or boarding houses. It was also reported that there were 35 saloons in the community at this time. One correspondent wrote, "*that Rat was inhabited by an army of gamblers and whisky peddlers, who preyed upon the railway workers.*" In the summer of 1883, the *Winnipeg Times* reported that Rat Portage was in "*a state of degradation, intensified by the appearance of a number of demi-mondes* (prostitutes) *with whom these desperadoes hold high carnival at all hours of day and night.*" *(WT'83-7-19.)*

With dueling police and judicial officials, chaos quickly ensued. Prisoners sent to jail by one authority were taken out by parties of men who claimed that they were upholding the rights of the other. One newspaper correspondent described the events of one day in July 1883,"*Dominion Commissioner McCabe with two policemen, Ontario Magistrate Burdon with 25 policemen, and Stipendiary Magistrate Brereton with 15 policemen acting on behalf of Manitoba, have been arresting each other all day; and the people have been siding, some with one party and some with another, to the imminent danger of the peace and of loss of life.*" *(Begg '94.)*

- Alexander Begg, in his 1894 *History of the North-west*, noted, "*While these interesting proceedings commanded the strict attention of the magistrates and police, it may be imagined that the gamblers and whisky pedlars enjoyed almost complete immunity, for it was next to impossible for a constable, zealous as he might be in the discharge of his duty, to observe the actions of evil-doers, while he himself was a fugitive from justice, engaged in dodging a warrant for his own arrest.*" *(Begg '94)*

To further complicate an already complex matter, on August 22, 1883, the Ontario Government incorporated Rat Portage as a township under the laws of Ontario. The Ontario Government further announced that, on September 28, like their Manitoba counterparts, they would be holding a provincial election in the area. The election (in both ridings) took place without incident. Attorney-General J.A. Miller was elected to the Manitoba Legislative Assembly while R.A. Lyon was elected to the Ontario Legislature. Thus, the town of Rat Portage, in addition to three sets of police officers and two organizations for municipal government, had representation in two provincial legislatures. Nevertheless, the district possessed less of good government and more lawlessness than any other place in Canada.

The matter would be sent to the Judicial Committee of the Imperial Privy Council, the highest law in Canada at that time. The Privy Council rendered its decision on August 11, 1884, confirming Ontario's 1878 boundary claim, awarding the entire parcel of land south of the Albany and English Rivers to Ontario. Manitoba remained, as it had been, a small "postage stamp" province, and its final boundaries were not established until 1912. *(Cherney'08-10-03.)*

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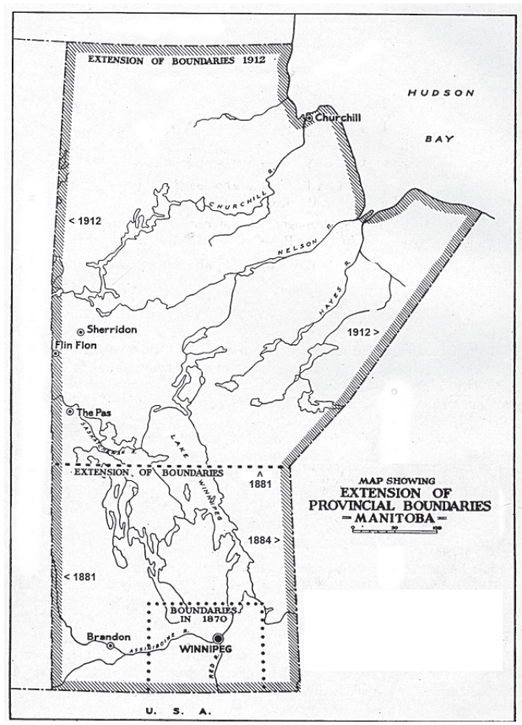

Figure 7.13.4. Above: Manitoba boundary changes.

7.14 INDIGENOUS - SETTLER RELATIONS

During the pioneer years, relations between the regional Indigenous population and incoming settlers was, almost without exception, friendly and amicable. Groups of First Nations people were often seen on the trails, camped along a local riverbank, or stopping in to settler's yards offering baskets, fish, wild game for sale and even offering to work for the settlers in return for food or cash. Early local history records cite many examples of friendly and cooperative relations, including the following:

- The RM of Louise local history, cited: "*Indians were kind to homesteader's wives, trading fish and game for flour. Indians often came visiting and trading fish and fancy coloured baskets for food or feed for their ponies. The Boundary Commission and Mandan trails were used by Indians who used to trade corn and pumpkins in Brandon. Each summer the Indians came and sold baskets, moccasins, and bead-work to the local people.*" *(Louise'67 :3.)*

- John Sanderson, who, in 1872, registered western Canada's very first homestead claim, (near Portage la Prairie), was quoted in a 1927 magazine article, "*Those of us who have not experienced the hardships and pleasures of the successful pioneer have gained from fiction, visions of Indians on the warpath, holding scalping bees and many other such acts calculated to impede the progress of the 'pale-face' in the settlement and cultivation of the vast prairies. But according to the experiences of Mr. Sanderson, the Indian gave no trouble if you treated him square. In fact, he says many of the white men of the desperado type were far worse.*" *(NWF'27-07-05 :21.)*

- S.H. Melson wrote a letter, in 1880, to his sister in England, "*You see no end of Indians out here and very jolly fellows they are. I saw a lot of them while working for La Riviere. They used to come and stand around and watch. We always shout 'bon-shue' when they come up and they say either 'bon-shue' back or 'oah'. What it means I don't know but it puts all square on both sides. They handle the rifle and knife well, but are a lazy lot and no good for the better class of farm work. They never plow or plant but loaf about with their tents and seem very contented. The men wear their hair as long as the women and the women smoke as big, or bigger, pipes than the men.*" *(S.Melson'80-11-15.)*

- Daisy Gordon, whose father was an early Methodist pastor in the BTNHR, later wrote in her memiors, "*When the Saskatchewan rebellion broke out, the Sioux Indians, coming along the Emerson Trail on their way to Brandon, were restless but, on the whole, were friendly. Once, Sue was at home preparing dinner and was startled when the sunlit, open door was darkened by a tall Indian who, without ceremony except a grunt, stalked in. No war paint or crown of feathers, but dressed in a pair of dark trousers and a rather none too clean shirt, he did not appear aggressive. His constant call of 'Buckety! Buckety!' was puzzling to Sue, who at first sight, all alone, was terror stricken. She was most relieved when Mr. Elliot appeared, breathless after running a quarter of a mile. He had noticed the Indian turning into the house and knew Susie was alone and would be frightened. When the strange word 'Buckety' was translated 'hungry' the Indian's need was soon satisfied. Sue was the heroine of the dinner hour. A little later, we were to see the Redman in feathers and war paint and to hear the shrieking squeak of the Red River Cart giving a long warning of its approach. The squaw, with her papoose in its laced hammock and other bundles on her back, walked heavily behind her tall straight master who was free of all family cares.*" *(Gordon'50 :46.)*

- Wm. Moncur, in *Beckoning Hills Revisited*, notes, "*The Wakopa area was known to have been a favorable camping area for Indians. The routes they used became the cart trails of early traders and buffalo hunters who converged on the Wakopa area. Old time settlers remembered a time, about 1885, when a winter epidemic killed off many of the local Indians. The burial custom of the Indians at the time was to make a pole platform, lashed to large trees, on which to place their dead. A sort of sky burial. But, with so many dead, in the spring the stench from the rotting bodies was unbearable. The white authorities in the area persuaded the Indians to bury their dead and supplied blankets in which to wrap the corpses, one for each corpse. But the living needed blankets, too. So, in the case of children, two or more corpses were placed in one blanket. Group graves were dug, with probably a family buried in each. Large stones were placed on the graves to keep dogs or coyotes from digging up the remains. The victims of the epidemic were not forgotten by their descendants. In 1978, an Indian family from St. John's, North Dakota, stopped at the farm of the Baldock Brothers to ask if they knew where the mass burial spot was. They were able to point it out to them. True to tradition, these Indians were reluctant to enter the spot without first making an offering to the spirits of the dead.*"

- James Law, of Darligford noted, "*Indians were seen almost every day. They were trappers and were generally good farm workers. At Pembina Crossing, when sports days were held, approximately half those in attendance would be Indians. At these celebrations, there would be ox races, foot races and Indian pony races. The Indian Reserve was located at Swan Lake.*" *(MHS'53 :Law.)*

- The Stephenson's obtained a half-section near the dying village of Nelson in 1891. A family member later noted, *"There were still a few Indians who camped in the bush around the district. They sold basket ware and were a very quiet people.*" *(MHS'53 :Mrs.Stephenson.)*

- The "Old Commission Trail" *went west from Cartwright through Enterprise and passed south of Killarney. The Indians travelled along this trail from the Turtle Mountains. Often, there was a string of carts a mile long with 4 or 5 ponies following each cart. These travellers put up tents near Cartwright so as to make a regular town. An Indian was never known to start a prairie fire. After the whites came in, timber fires began to occur.*" *(MHS'53 :Mooney.)*

- Louise Newcombe, in a 1955 article in the *Deloraine Times,* wrote, "*I was born in a log house on February 5, 1881, in what they called 'Sleepy Hollow,' in Old Deloraine, My first recollection is an old Indian, chief of the tribe, who lived on the hill near our valley. He and his squaw opened our door, stalked in demanded that my mother 'back-saw whay-a-pe.' This may not be spelled right, but it sounded like that to me. He said she was to cut bread for them, which she promptly did. We were scared to death. Afterwards, I lost my fear of the old chief and his squaw, and we became great friends. There was also an old squaw called 'Mary' who used to come to the house selling berries, etc. I think it was this Chief's son who died sometime later and they wrapped his body up in something and hoisted it up on high poles in the cemetery. I forget how long it remained there, but it was a long time.*" *(DT'55-06-16.)*

- Mrs. Thomas Bell who homesteaded on 4-3-12 with her husband in 1878, "*had many stories to tell of Indians visiting and bringing fresh fish to trade for food or for feed for their ponies, and with fancy coloured baskets to sell.*" *(Louise'79 :4.)*

- John Adams and family settled on 9-3-12W in 1878. Mrs. Adams is said to have been the first white woman living west of Pembina Crossing. While her husband spent the summer working at Nelsonville, blacksmithing, to earn much-needed cash money, Mrs Adams was left to tend to the livestock, garden and care for their three daughters. Mrs. Adams later recalled that indigenous visitations were common and that "*the Indians were kind to her, bringing fish and game in exchange for flour.*" *(Louise'79 :3.)*

- George Mutch who homesteaded 10-2-11 in 1880, recalled that two major trails, Boundary Commission and Missouri crossed on his farm, and that "Mandan Indians" would frequently be seen on the trail taking corn and pumpkins to Brandon to be traded. *(Louise'79 :24.)*

- Alex Rankin related, in his memoirs, "A *man by the name of Hill, a Hudson Bay trader, was out five days in a blizzard, his legs badly frozen to the knees and his arms to the elbows. He crawled from Wood Lake to Wakopa, a distance of five miles. The Indians found him and took care of him. They daubed the frozen parts with a knife before thawing, so that the congealed blood would ooze out in thawing, the parts healing perfectly."* Rankin also recalled *"There were some exciting days during the Riel Rebellion in 1885. We had rifles and bayonets issued to us by the government. There was one company of home-guards at Wakopa, and another at Maple Grove, of which I was sergeant. I still have my bayonet as a souvenir.*" *(Killarney WI'07 :12-14.)*

- Fred Hagyard recalled, "*Indians travelled south into the United States every summer. They returned in October. As many as 200 carts could be seen on the road at one time. Although the children were frightened, the Indians did not trouble anyone.*" *(MHS'53 - F.Hagyard.)*

Relations between settlers and Indigenous residents suffered it first setback during the 1885 rebellion, as a result of the press depiction of Native involvement and the formation of local "home guards."

- T.G. McKitrick, in 1900, noted in his booklet *Pioneer Days in Killarney,* "*At the April 1885 Louise Council meeting, a petition was presented praying that the Municipality maintain a mounted patrol as defence against Indians and Half-breeds. The May meeting showed that the 'Half-breed Rebellion of 1885' was on in earnest. A petition was received praying that a member of the militia be asked to form a battalion in the Counties of Rock Lake and Dufferin. This apparently in response to the efforts of the various councillors who, at the previous meeting, had been asked to organize home guards in their respective wards. Happily, the Indians in the reserve north of the Pembina were little affected by the trouble in Saskatchewan, and the settlers were at no time in general danger. They, however, suffered the disquietude of uncertainty as to the outcome of the uprising.*" *(McKitrick'00 :54.)*

- Mrs. W. Lyons, who grew up in the Lena district, recalled, *"In 1885, the time of the N.W. Rebellion, a 'home guard' was formed. It consisted of farmers in the south district, and the object was to enable each man to protect his home and property from the prowling Indian, who was out to steal anything he could carry away. The government supplied to each man an Enfield rifle, bayonets, and ammunition. Once a week, they met at Wakopa for drill. It was a good idea, as it furnished firearms for each home and taught the people the necessity of protecting their homes and property. When the Indian knew the white man was armed, he kept away from the homesteads. Those of us who were children in 1885, still fear and hate the Indian.*" *(Killarney WI'07 :20.)*

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Figure 7.14.1. Above: Our Indian neighbours. An Indigenous couple, with a horse-drawn travois, passing through a Millford area pioneer settler's yard, pose for a photograph, circa 1885. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.14.2. Above: Our Indian neighbours. During the Pioneer Years, Indigenous family groups were regularly seen on the Region's trails, camped at selected sites in river valleys, fishing, hunting, berry picking, collecting natural medicines, and stopping at farmyards selling game and willow baskets to settlers. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.14.3. Above: Our Indian neighbours. Pencil sketch make by a journalist accompanying the Marquis of Lorne during his 1881 trip west. He entitled it "Customers at Mr. Smart's store." *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.14.4. Above: Virden pow wow. 1887. PowWow on a commercial street in Virden by members of the nearby Sioux Valley I.R. #6. *(A of MB.)*

7.15 INDIGENOUS - GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

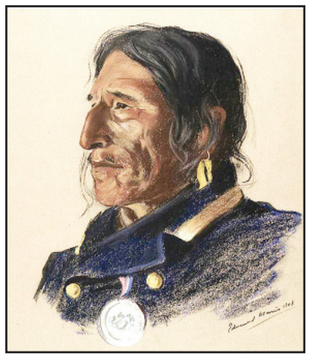

Figure 7.15.1. Above: Chief Yellow Quill. Painting by Edmund Montague Morris, 1908. Yellow Quill was an important Salteaux leader and well-known individual during the BTNHR settlement years. He was involved in the negotiations for both Treaties, No. 1 and No. 4 and was Chief of Swan Lake IR #7, from the 1860s until his death in 1910. The Yellow Quill Tail, a major hunting and transport route during those years, which led from the Portage la Prairie area to the bison hunting areas of the Souris Plains and beyond, was named after him. *(ROM.)*

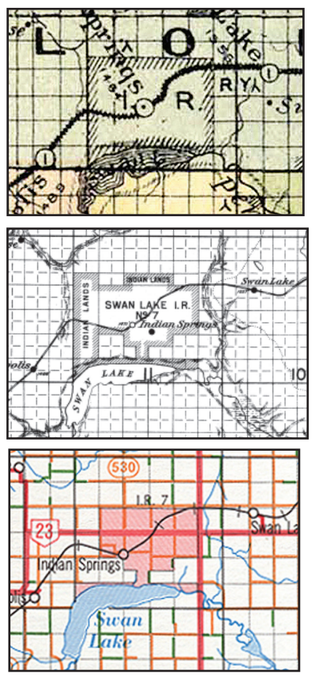

Figure 7.15.2. Swan Lake IR #7. Maps showing continuous reduction in size of reserve land base. Top: original 1876 survey; Middle: 1907, showing land removed to correct inclusion "errors" and "Indian Lands" to be surrendered and sold; Bottom map 2010 showing current band property. *(HRB.)*

While relations between the resident Indigenous population and the newly arrived settlers were, by most accounts, quite amicable, the same could not be said of relations between the Dominion Government and the signatories of Treaty No. 1. As historian, Jim Gallo, noted, "*The ink was barely dry on the Treaty when serious complications emerged.*" *(Gallo'77 :V11.)*

Treaty One

Treaty No. 1 was signed at Lower Fort Garry on August 3, 1871 after eight days of negotiations. Signatories included seven Indigenous bands and Indian Commissioners, Wemyss Simpson and Lieutenant Governor Adams Archibald, on behalf of the Dominion Government. The negotiated conditions included the establishment of a reserve school, medical assistance, off-reserve hunting rights, and annuities of $5 per adult. Also to be issued were "*a male and female of each kind of animal raised by farmers, a plough and a harrow for each family cultivating the land.*" Each Chief was to receive a $20 annuity and be issued "*a dress distinguishing him as Chief, a bull and a cow, and a buggy.*" Dresses were also to be issued to two of the Chief's councillors. Bands could choose the location of their reserve and the government would set aside reserves according to the formula agreed to in the Treaty "*160 acres for each family of five, or in that proportion for larger or smaller families.*" This was the same amount of land white male homesteaders could obtain for a simple ten-dollar registration fee and suggests the Chiefs misunderstood how much land an acre consisted of. In order to enable calculating the size of the reserves to be surveyed and the distribution of promised farm goods, the government officials immediately undertook a census of the individual Treaty 1 bands. *(Brandt'80 :250).*

Indian Commissioner Wemyss Simpson

In addition to negotiating the treaties with all the Indian bands in Manitoba, Commissioner Simpson was expected to distribute farm supplies, pay annuities and establish schools, and negotiate treaties with the Saulteaux at Fort Frances and the Cree and Blackfoot farther west. However, soon after Treaty No.1 was signed in August 1871, Simpson departed Manitoba to winter back home in Sault Ste Marie, Ont., leaving no one with the authority to get the reserves surveyed and deal with complaints from the Indians. To make matters worse, Simpson did not return to Manitoba until July 1872 and, without clearly-marked reserve boundaries, the white settlers were encroaching on proposed reserve locations. Throughout Simpson's short administration, both government officials and Indians complained loudly. Lieutenant Governor Archibald made a suggestion to Superintendent Howe "*But strictly 'entre nous' don't you think you could find some work at home for your Indian Commissioner? It is evident that Indian Affairs are not his strong point.*" *(Borutski'86 :91)*

By autumn of 1872, the Dominion government appointed Molyneux St. John, a clerk of the Manitoba Legislature, to the positon of local Indian Agent and created a Board of Indian Commissioners selected by the government to oversee important duties relating to affairs with the Indians. The government anticipated the new board would eliminate many of the problems of the past; however, the problems were more complex and deeply-rooted than the government anticipated. Most of the issues revolved around the interpretation and implementation of Treaty One. *(Borutski'86 :91.)*

The Portage Band

The Portage Band of Saulteaux moved from the Red Lakes region of present day Minnesota to the Red and Assiniboine rivers regions during the late 1780s under Chief Robe Noire (Black Robe). The Assiniboine, who had long occupied the Region, were decimated by smallpox during the early 1770s, allowing the Ojibwa, Cree and Métis to move into these lightly-populated territories. Chief Black Robe's band settled along the Assiniboine River near present-day Portage la Prairie and, with its rich natural resources and abundant wildlife, the Band prospered. By the 1860s, the Band had vegetable gardens at several locations. Swan Lake was a favourite hunting area for the band. Oo-za-we-kwun or Yellow Quill was the Chief of the Portage Band at the time of Treaty No. 1. He was not the hereditary chief of the Portage band but had been "appointed" Chief by the HBC in the early 1860s because the previous chief, Black Robe, left only one relative, "The Short Bear", who was too young to be chief.

In 1875, three years after signing Treaty No. 1, while the Portage reserve had yet to be located and surveyed, Short Bear returned and claimed the Chieftainship. As Lieutenant Governor Morris explained in a departmental memo, "*The Indians of this Band are divided amongst themselves on the subject of Chief. A large party of them have settled near the White Mud River and allege that they were not represented at the time of the Treaty; they have their own Chief, Nana-watche kapo-wo, their own habitation and land on the borders of the Lake Manitoba and they refuse to have anything in common with the Oo-za-we-kwun Band. Another party in the Band desire to secede, taking Kes-kee-maquah (Short Bear) for their Chief, the grandson of him who was in times past the Chief of the Whole Band.*" *(Borutski'86 :91.)*

On June 20, 1876, after days of negotiation, a revision of Treaty No. 1 was made to reflect an agreement that included the division of the Portage Band into three groups. Yellow Quill and his followers were to be known as the Swan Lake Band with a reserve at Swan Lake. Short Bear and his followers were assigned land in the Portage area and to be called the Long Plain Band. White Mud Band was to locate new land on the shores of Lake Manitoba and to be known as the Sandy Bay Band. *(Borutski'86 :101)*

Survey Fiasco

The first survey for the Portage Band's reserve occurred in August 1873, two years after signing the treaty. A parcel of 34,100 acres, mostly open prairie, was marked off about 20 miles southwest of Portage la Prairie, however, without consulting Chief Yellow Quill or his band who understood the reserve would include land they already occupied and where they had their vegetable gardens. After three months, the government concurred; but, with winter approaching the survey was put off to the next year. In July, 1974, a new surveyor, Roger Goulet, met with Yellow Quill and, after three days, submitted a reserve plan 20x30 miles in size (460,860 acres), instead of the 36,000 acres the government assessment concluded should be provided. Indian Affairs Superintendent General, David Laird, rejected the plan as completely out of hand and replied to Goulet, "*You can as much as possible accede his wishes in regard to the place of the Reserve – you may extend it along the river to include a place of his resort. But, I think we cannot let the quantity of land much exceed the quantity named in the Treaty. A small percentage increase might be allowed.*" *(Borutski'86 :91.)*

In September 1874, another surveyor was sent to stake out the reserve, but Yellow Quill refused to allow the work to begin unless the entire band was present to get full consensus. When this could not be arranged, the survey was postponed once again.

Despite Yellow Quill moving to Swan Lake in 1875, the majority of his followers did not want to abandon the Indian Gardens site. Swan Lake I.R. No. 7, was officially surveyed in 1876. At the time, the Band numbered 190, but the Dominion surveyor used the Indian Office calculation of 179 Band members, with the amount of land to be surveyed at Swan Lake being 12,300 acres. The majority of the Band refused to move to Swan Lake despite the Department of Indian Affairs officials being "*besieged by complaints and mutual accusations from settlers and the Indians in Townships 8-9W and 9-9W, and on more than once occasion violence threatened to erupt.*" *(Borutski'86 :90)*

The Department tried to induce the Band to accept the Swan Lake location without success. Finally, on June 25, 1883, the Department of the Interior formally created a one-mile square reserve, 11-9-9W, at Indian Gardens; however, the bulk of the reserve for the Portage Band remained at Swan Lake and slowly members of the Band moved from Indian Gardens to Swan Lake. *(Borutski'86 :105.)*

Land Surrender Pressure

Soon after the Swan Lake reserve survey was completed, officials realized that HBC and school sections, set aside in every township, were wrongfully included in the reserve plan (see Fig. 4.24). The original reserve was 13,330 acres, from which were to be deducted school lands (11 and ½ of 29), HBC 26 and ⅛ of 8) and land purchased by settlers (SW9, SW10, SE10). The Department of Indian Affairs tried to compensate by adding land adjacent to the reserve; however, by that time none was available. Land offered along the Assiniboine River was inspected and deemed "*unfit for agriculture being nothing but sand hills and muskeg.*" Figure 4.24. *(Gallo '77 :75.)*

The issue of compensation appears to have dragged on until April 1906 when Samuel Marlatt, inspector of Indian Agencies for Manitoba, without communicating with the Swan Lake Band, selected 2400 aces in the Tramping Lake District of Saskatchewan (1, 3, 13, and ¾ 23 in 36-20 3W). None of the Band members were interested in moving to the new property.

At this time, the MP for the Swan Lake District lobbied the Minister of the Interior, Frank Oliver, to obtain a surrender of the whole reserve and open the land for settlement. Oliver replied, "*I do not know that it will be possible to secure the release of all the reserve as a it is very difficult to get the Indians to remove, but as there seems to be more land than is of use to the Indians, I do not hesitate, to say that we will make an effort to secure of such portion of the reserve as we can get.*"

Oliver directed Department officials to attempt to obtain the Band's consent to surrender all or part of their reserve at Swan Lake. This involved contracting the local Methodist missionary, Reverend John McDougall, to help "*effect the surrender by the Band of the Tramping Lake land, but also, as much of Swan Lake reserve as could be obtained.*" McDougall, with the aid of Farming Instructor Campbell, convened a meeting at the schoolhouse. McDougall later reported, "*They turned down my first proposition to exchange the Swan Lake reserve for another farther west and north, but said they would consider the second, but could not come to any decision without consulting their Chief, Yellow Quill. I then arranged for bringing the old Chief and one of his men back to Swan Lake and there they submitted the following, Tell the government that we will not now surrender any land at Swan Lake. That we are willing to have the Battleford lands sold, but we want the whole of the money these lands will bring.*"

Despite having initially refused to include Swan Lake land in the surrender and sell-off, four months later, the Band agreed to include Sections 7, 18, 19 and south halves of 27, 28, and 30 from the Swan Lake site. The Band's decision to surrender part of their home reserve was tied to McDougall's promise concerning the restoration of the Indigenous religious practices, which had been prohibited under the Indian Act since 1895. Evidence suggests McDougall promised the Band the restoration of the right to free exercise of their religion. At the time, the Band members were still practitioners of the old religion and, in fact, Swan Lake was a major centre for rites and festivals of the ancient religion. The Saulteaux had rarely practiced the "torture" aspect of the Sun Dance and, by 1900, this feature had been abandoned altogether. McDougall reported that he told the Band that "… *excepting the old barbarities, the Government did not propose to interfere with any man's conscientious faith, nor belief, nor in his manner of worship.*" The Band signed the surrender on the strength of this promise. The formal surrender was concluded on January 21, 1908. The 28,800 acres at Swan Lake were sold at public auction on June 9, 1909, for an average price of $17.70 realizing $47,797.50. The 2,403 acres at Tramping Lake were sold on May 26, 1906 netting $33,950.50 or an average of $14.13 an acre. The Department deducted $6139.56 for "management" services. *(Gallo'77 :85).*

The survey debacle and land surrender were but two examples of serious problems over Treaty entitlements. Other issues, not included in the above, were residential schools (none were located in the BTNHR), a ban on the use of mechanized farm equipment; and unsympathetic Indian Agents and farm instructors, among others. A more detailed article on the early years of the Swan Lake First Nation can be viewed on the Pembina Manitou Archives and Swan Lake First Nation websites.

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7.16 TRAIL CONNECTED COMMUNITIES - LITTLE TOWNS ON THE PRAIRIE

One of the BTNHR's major claims to fame is that it was one of the very first regions on the Canadian prairies to be agriculturally developed and have towns and villages established. These early fledgling communities were all established at strategic locations along the Region's major trails, especially along the Boundary Commission Trail that was described by a journalist during this period as being nothing less than a "teeming highway" with vehicles of all descriptions. Many of these communities existed for a fairly significant period before the coming of the Region's first railway branchline and the resultant complete re-organization of the Region's transportation routes and townsite locations. The following discussion touches on some of the notable events and individuals regarding the BTNHR's pre-railway trail-side communities including:

- Emerson. 1-1-2E. Founded in 1878, was one of the first communities to be established in the province, outside of Winnipeg. It was a real estate project led by US interests and was located on the east bank of the Red River immediately north of the international border. At the time, the US railway network was expanding into the Dakotas and a branch line was being built north following the east side of the Red River, to connect with the communities of Pembina and St. Vincent located south of the border at the Pembina River mouth. It was expected that a border-town community on the Canadian side would surely thrive and a consortium of Wisconsin business men, friends of railroader J.J. Hill, successfully applied to the Dominion government for a land grant of four townships for settlement purposes to be administered by the consortium. Once surveying was completed and homesteading begun, Emerson increasingly became a major staging and supply point for incoming settlers. When the CPR Pembina branch line, running south from Winnipeg, connected with the American "St. Paul and Manitoba" branch line terminus at Emerson in late 1878, the community became an immediate "boom town" where growing numbers of incoming settlers could purchase goods and services before heading out to start farms. For a time, it was the sole market town for settlers from as far west as Turtle Mountain. Figure 7.16.1.

- West Lynne. 2-1-2E. When the Hudson's Bay Company sold its territories to the Dominion of Canada in 1869, it retained property at all of its former trading post locations, including North Fort Pembina, intending to capitalize on its strategic border-side location. Just like Emerson's founders, the HBC had the land reserve surveyed into town lots in 1879 and offered them for sale to entrepreneurs and professionals wishing to establish businesses and to profit from the growing rush of settlers heading for the Pembina Hills, Rock Lake and Turtle Mountain districts during the 1870s and 1880s. The new community was named West Lynne and, during the settlement years, was a major competitor to its neighbour across the river. Incorporated as a town in 1882, it became part of Emerson in 1889.

- Nelsonville. 36-3-6W. Adam Nelson Sr. homesteaded along Silver Creek with his wife and seven children in 1877. Recognizing that there was no local grist-mill or saw-mill in the entire Pembina Hills district, with his older sons, he purchased equipment and set up a saw and grist mill operation on his property. Business was brisk and, within a short time, a little village sprang up around the mill. It was quite similar to the situation and period portrayed in the 1980s television series "Little House on the Prairie." By 1880, the village was flourishing and growing quickly. As railway and real estate speculation grew, land in the district became valuable and difficult to obtain. Nelsonville was expected to become an important centre and quickly acquired the reputation and appearance of a coming city. Choice corner lots sold as high as $1000. A substantial brick town hall was constructed, which housed the offices of the Dominion Lands Registry, County Court and Council Chambers. By 1882, there were stores, hotels, banks, churches, lawyers, doctors, druggists, a newspaper, homes, gardens and lawns, and a population of over 500 residents. It was the picture of a well-established and progressive town, the expectation of 15 to 20 years fulfilled within a few short years. Oddly, not a single photograph of Nelsonville is known to exist.

- Mountain City. 24-2-6W. In 1875, F.T. Bradley, customs agent at West Lynne, purchased a quarter section at the crossing of the Boundary Commission and the St. Joe trails. Two years later, he had it surveyed into town lots, believing that, since the escarpment at that point was only a gentle rise, it was almost certain that any railroad from the east would pass through the community. The first resident of the townsite is believed to have been Mr. William Alderson who opened a general store here in 1877 and later became the proprietor of the famous British Lion Temperance Hotel. In 1879, Mr. Bradley was successful in persuading the new owners of the Nelsonville grist and saw-mill to relocate in Mountain City from Nelsonville. By the end of that year, in addition to the mill, two stores, the post office, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, a day school and several other buildings had been erected. In November 1880, the original survey was enlarged and the town continued to grow, largely under the stimulation of an assumed railway connection with a line coming from Emerson. New businesses included a tin-shop and blacksmith shop, post office and lumber yard. In 1881, Mr. Bradley erected what was, then, the largest building west of Emerson, a multi-purpose structure 38 by 46 feet, two stories high, at a cost of some $3000, housing government offices and a large assembly hall used for a variety of dances, socials, entertainment and political meetings. The June 2, 1881 issue of the *Emerson International* newspaper declared: "*Mountain City is destined to be, before many years, a first-class town. It possesses good timber and water and the surrounding country is the best in southern Manitoba*."

- Stodderville. 10-2-5W. Two miles from the Bedfords' homesteads at Allard Point, the Commission Trail crossed Calamity Creek and here former citizens of the Emerald Isle established themselves in sufficient numbers to justify the district becoming known as "an Irish settlement." They gave Calamity Creek the beautiful and appropriate Irish name, the River Liffey, after the stream that flows through the county and city of Dublin. Township 2-5W, Stodderville Township, took its name from the various members of the Stodder family who settled here, particularly the brothers John and James Stodder, pioneers of June 1875 and natives of Antrim County, Ireland. Mr. Alex Johnston, another Irishman, took up land that same year. Others joined them in 1877. Mr. John Stodder made his home available as accommodations for travellers along the trail. It soon became a well-known stopping house and, in 1878, the Stodderville post office was opened in his home. By 1880, stopping house facilities in Stodderville included not just Stodder's, but also Johnston's and Hazzard's. All were recommended as accommodations 45 miles from Emerson. *(BTHR files.)*

- Alexandria. 20-2-6W. In July 1877, a site on a hill overlooking the ford of the Boundary Commission Trail across Dead Horse Creek was purchased by Winnipeg resident and surveyor J.W. Harris. He surveyed 53 acres of it into 14 blocks containing 270 lots. In 1878, a store, stopping house and several homes were built, one of which had "the first post office established west of West Lynne." Figure 7.16.2.

- Darlington. 6-3-7W. During the summer of 1880, W.C. Alderson, a resident of Mountain City, put up a stopping house near the Boundary Commission Trail crossing at Little Pembina River. He named it Darlington after his hometown in England. In 1881, he had the site surveyed into a townsite at which time the name was changed to Darlingford. Believed to be a promising location, Manitoba Premier, John Norquay, and several notable Winnipeg residents, purchased adjoining quarters and laid out another townsite called East Darlingford, and advertised lots for sale.

- Pembina Crossing. 25-2-9W. A very old, well-known and beautifully-situated river crossing site and camping area in the Pembina River valley. The first building at this site was a small HBC log trading post that operated during the later years of the fur trade. In 1873, John E. Adamson and his older brother, Alan J. Adamson, came to Manitoba where they worked on the Dominion Survey crews and eventually took up land in the Nelsonville district. In 1879, 20-year-old John Adamson built a log store a few hundred yards from the Commission Trail's ford across the Pembina River. In November of that year, this store became the site of the Pembina Crossing post office. Shortly afterwards, he altered his premises in order to provide accommodations for travellers along the trail. Enlarged and rebuilt several times, the building eventually became the Valley House, one of the best-known stopping places on the Boundary Commission Trail. In March 1880, Reverend L.O. Armstrong and Mr. A. Poston, both of Emerson, in partnership, purchased three quarters of land at Pembina Crossing, S½ of 25-2-9W from the CPR and SE ¼ of 26-2-9W from the Hudson's Bay Company for $800. It was on the latter quarter that Mr. Adamson's stopping house was located and on which Mr. Armstrong had the Pembina Crossing townsite surveyed the following month. In 1882, property nearby was purchased by James Lowe of Ottawa, federal Secretary of Agriculture. A steam-powered lumber and grist-mill was later added. At this time, the HBC store was sold and converted into a church. There was also much anticipation of a rail connection. Figure 2.2.10. *(Kuehn'95 – BTNR files.)*

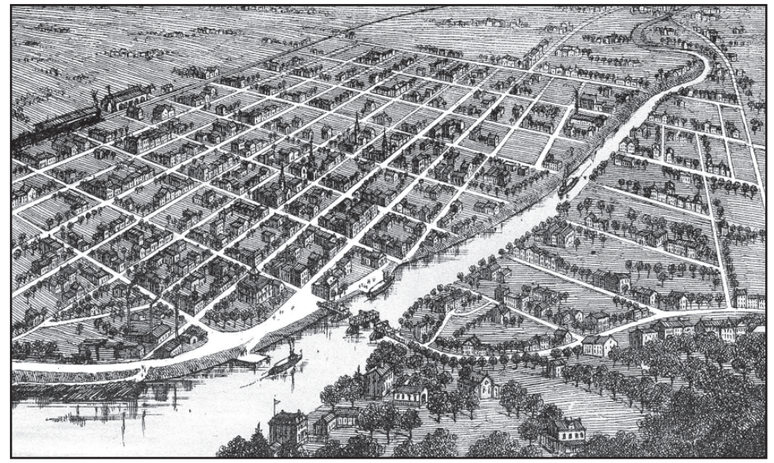

Figure 7.16.1 Above: Bird's eye view of Emerson, circa 1880. For more than a decade, Emerson serviced a huge economic hinterland. A single firm, A Harris, Sons & Co., noted in 1882, "*During the past year this branch has disposed of 13 complete steam and horse-powered threshing outfits, 64 binders, 60 mowers, 60 reapers, about 500 JI Case pattern plows, about 70 Wisner broad-cast seeders, 150 Snowball wagons, 75 hay rakes, 200 set of iron harrows and a proportionally large amount of supplies and other necessaries.*" *(A of MB; McCelland'92 :48.)*

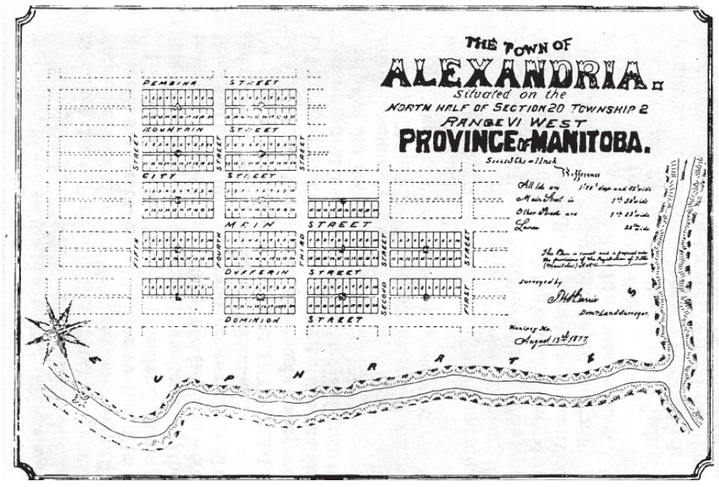

Figure 7.16.2. Above: The Town of Alexandria. Plan of Alexandria showing 14 blocks surveyed into lots and outlines for a dozen or more future block surveys. Street names included: Dominion, Dufferin, Main, City, Mountain and Pembina. Avenues were numbered. *(PMA.)*

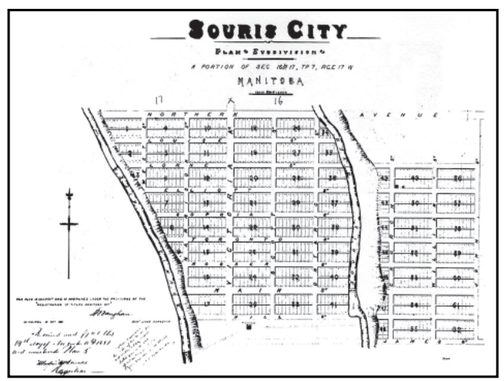

Figure 7.16.3. Right: Souris City. The site of Souris City was surveyed in 1881 on 16-7-17W, on the east bank of the Souris River near present day Wawanesa. Like many other "paper cities" in the BTNHR, it initially attracted some development but ultimately failed when, in 1889, the all important railway connection failed to materialize. The Northern Pacific and Manitoba railway line crossed the Souris River at the present site of Wawanesa instead. *(MP'72, Vol.17, No. 3.)*

Figure 7.16.4. Above: Early businesses. An image of a livery stable business at the trail-side town of Manitoba City, located near present day Manitou, in 1881. *(PMA - Manitou Coll.)*

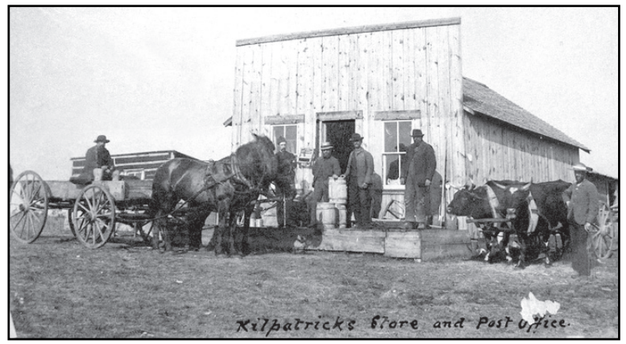

Figure 7.16.6. Above: "*Kilpatrick's Store and Post Office.*" Prior to the arrival of the railroad, the settlers of the BTNHR obtained their supplies and mail at country stores, such as the one above, strategically located along the Region's trail system. The Post Office, at the time of this photo, was located in the tar-paper shack located behind the horse and wagon at left. *(A of MB.)*

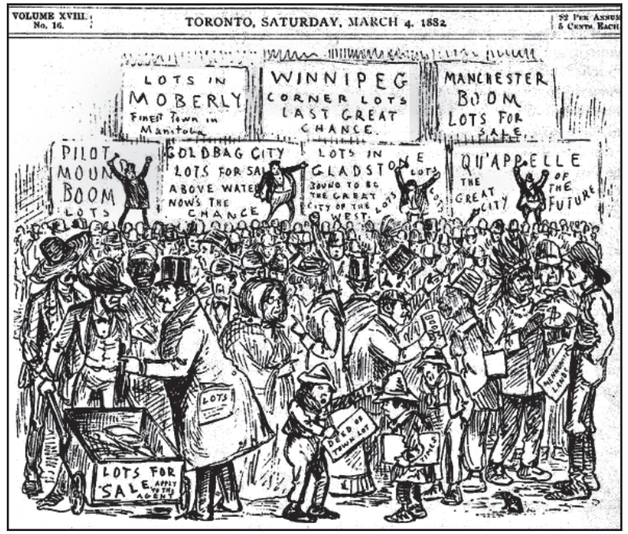

Figure 7.16.5. Above: "*Lots For Sale - Apply to the Agent.*" A Toronto newspaper cartoon, published on March 4, 1882 mocking the Manitoba real estate hysteria making national front page news at the time. Sign slogans include, "*Lots in Moberly - Finest Town in Manitoba, Winnipeg - Corner Lots, Last Great Chance, Pilot Mound - Boom Lots, Lots in Gladstone - Bound to be the Great City of the West*", and, mockingly, "*Gold Bag City - Lots for Sale, Above Water, Now's The Chance.*" *(VirtualManitoba.com)*

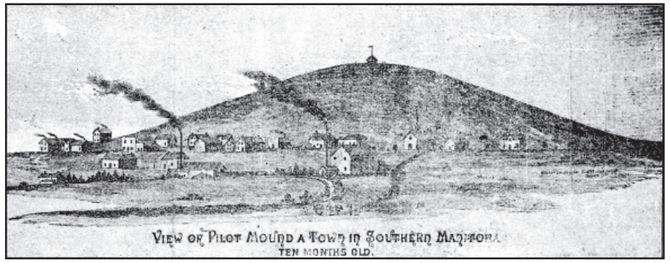

Figure 7.16.7. Above: "*View of Pilot Mound. A Town in Southern Manitoba. Ten Months Old.*" An 1879 sketch of "old" Pilot Mound which was located at the base of the Pilot Mount butte, two kilometers north of its present location. Very likely drawn from life, it shows about two dozen structures and at least two smokestacks from steam-engine powered flour and saw-mills. Note also the gazebo-like structure with the flag at the summit of the hill. The illustration was included in a "Christmas Number" published by *The Pilot Mound Sentinel i*n 1903 entitled "Pilot Mound Illustrated." *(Stewart'03 :03.)*

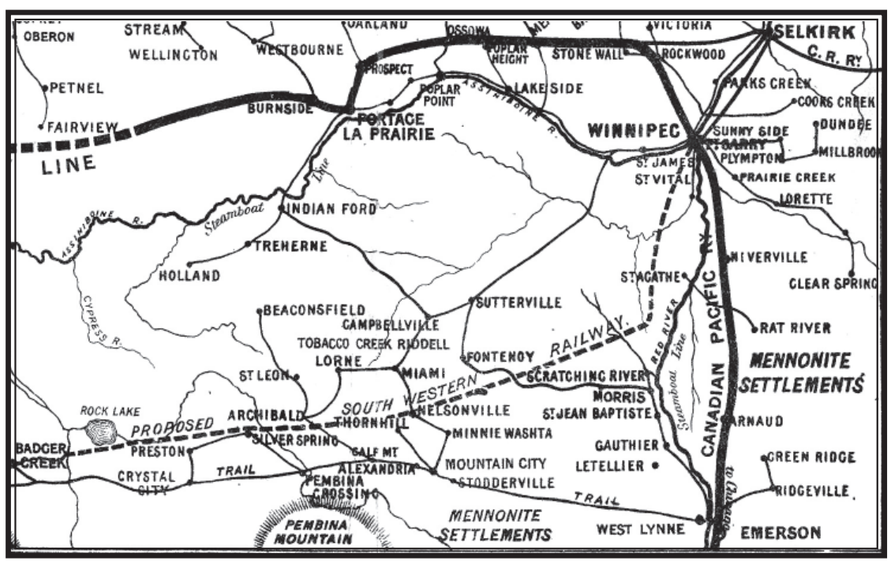

Figure 7.16.8. Left: Settlements and railway construction. Map dated 1881, showing CPR railway lines, overland trails, post office locations and the route of the "Proposed Manitoba South Western Railway." Note the map shows the proposed rail line passing through Nelsonville, at the time the largest community and fastest growing townsite in the entire region. It was widely assumed that Nelsonville was destined to be a large community. *(A of MB.)*

- Badger Creek Crossing. 18-2-14W. In 1879, two townsites were surveyed at the Boundary Commission Trail ford at Badger Creek; one on the farm of Patrick C. McKibbin, south of the creek; and another on the homestead of James Waugh, north of the creek. This gave rise to the name Badger Crossing or simply "the Badger." *(MHS:'53 :Mrs Austin Watts.)*

- Ruttanville. 24-2-10W. In April 1879, W.D. Ruttan, formerly of Adolphustown, Ont. took a homestead along the Boundary Commission Trail. He built himself a sod shanty and proceeded to develop the property to meet his homestead requirements, occasionally offering his home as a stopping place for travellers on the Commission Trail. By the autumn of 1880, the growing volume of trail traffic prompted him to replace the soddie with a large two-storey wood structure, the first wood frame structure in the district, which functioned as a store, a residence and a post office outlet. The building was enlarged and became the location of the first church services, concerts, and political meetings for the whole eastern portion of the Rock Lake Country. Like all other property owners along the Commission Trail, Mr. Ruttan was hopeful that the proposed railway would follow the route of the Boundary Commission Trail and that Ruttanville would become a large and important trackside community.

- Pilot Mound. 9-3-11W. In 1879, James Fraser purchased a section of land from homesteaders adjacent to the mound and surveyed a townsite. Town lots were sold to investors as far east as Toronto. The same year, he opened the town's first general store in a lumber shack. Later that year, a second general store, and a harness store were opened. In 1882, several new businesses set up operations: a hardware store, a boot and shoe store, a tinsmith business, an "A. Harris & Son" implement dealer, a law office, and a private bank. In 1881, a brick yard was started east of the Mound by a Mr. Carson who made bricks by hand. Beside the brick yard was a lime kiln and, on the banks of the creek, a saw-mill powered by a steam engine was in operation, which also powered a flour and grist mill. In 1883, a Dominion Land Office was opened in the village. By then, there was also a school, post office, church, hotel, and a number of residences. The community was fast becoming a bustling and growing community. Figure 7.16.7.

- Crystal City. 13-2-12W. The townsite was located on Tho. Greenway's homestead at the crossing of the Boundary Commission Trail and Crystal Creek. In 1880, J. Johnston built and operated the Brunswick Hotel at the site. A semi-monthly newspaper was published beginning in September 1881, the *Rock Lake Herald,* though actual printing at first was done in Emerson. *Henderson's Gazette & Directory* for 1884 noted: "*Crystal City - a post office 28 miles west of Archibald MB. Pop. 50. Wm Baker, hotel; Thos. Carriggan, contractor; D.W. Duff, carpenter; W.A. Kouk, hardware; C.R. Lundy, gristmill; James McNamee, shoemaker; Dr. Riddle & Co., druggists; R. Rollins, postmaster and general store; T. Rollins, livery; Chas. Secord, general store; Wm. Smallcombe, tailor; Robert Sullivan, blacksmith; J.G. Treleaven, harness maker; and W.E. Tweed, dentist.*"

- Clearwater. 16-2-12W. The settlement of Clearwater began on the homestead of Alec McLaren who kept a stopping place where the Commission Trail crossed Clearwater Creek. His land was purchased by L.O. Armstrong in 1880 and surveyed into town lots. Businesses soon began to arrive and, by 1881, Clearwater was booming. In December 1881 alone, Mr. Armstrong sold $4000 worth of lots to eastern bankers, bringing the number of lots sold to 150. 1881 brought an even bigger building boom. In March 1882, the *Manitoba Daily Times* reported, "*Crystal City and Clearwater, once four miles apart, are now within a mile of each other owing to the mania which prevails in regards to selling town lots.*" *(BTHR files.)*

- Deloraine. 30-2-22W. James Cavers and A.P. Stuart built a store and laid out a townsite on the banks of Whitewater Creek. This was called Deloraine after J. Cavers' old home in Scotland. They had to freight their goods 70 miles from Brandon. In 1886, after five years in this settlement, the town had two implement dealers, one general store, a Dominion Land Office, a grist mill, two blacksmiths, two ministers, six agents of various kinds, a law office and a school.

- Wakopa. 29-1-18W. Bernard B. La Riviere had been a successful fur trader in Crookston, Minn. Looking for a new location, he had scouted the Wakopa area in 1876. In 1877, he returned with several wagon loads of supplies, a herd of cattle and horses. His son-in-law, Clovis Guerin, came with him. He set up a trading post and stopping place on the southwest quarter of 29-1-18W by Long River. He freighted supplies from Nelsonville and Emerson. He once held 1600 acres in the district. His place was first known as "La Riviere" but, the story has it that an Indian chieftain called him "Wakopa" meaning "white father", so the name was applied to the settlement. In 1878, Matthew and William Harrison, with C.W. Williams, opened a store and were customs agents for the American Government. Weir was the first blacksmith and B.B. La Riviere the first Justice of the Peace.

Other trailside fledgling villages along the Region's major trails included Stanley City, Adelpha, Desford, Wassewa, Turtle Mountain City, Moberly, Waubeesh, Montefiore, Preston and Sourisford. Some of these communities were, in fact, only post office outlets located in an isolated stopping-house and/or store, like Ruttanville. However, others were actual villages with businesses, homes, churches and schools. All the residents of these settlements were very eager to have the railway come to their community to ensure survival and growth.

Enough Cities !!

During the pioneering years, in the BTNHR and elsewhere in Manitoba, especially during the railway branchline construction years of the early 1880s, many of the townsite locations being surveyed and registered with Land Titles included the word "City" in these names — town founders and property speculators believing it a way of attracting potential residents. Some of the Manitoba townsite survey names registered during these years included, Dominion City, Manitoba City, Crystal City, Rock Lake City, Stanley City, Turtle Mountain City, Dobbyn City, and Souris City, among others. The practise was becoming so frequent that it soon caught the attention of the Dominion postal department and, by about 1882, the department announced its disapproval and created a policy to no longer accept the establishment of post offices with the word city as part of its name. Crystal City is presently the only surviving post office in the BTNHR stemming from the time when "cities" were still permitted.

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7.17 SIDE-TRACKED!! NEW TOWNS AND TRANSPORT ROUTES

For the early settlers of the BTNHR, the arrival of the railway was a much-needed and anticipated event. Throughout the 1870s, most homesteaders had difficulty marketing their grain or other farm produce, and storekeepers had difficulty obtaining manufactured goods and other basic supplies. With a lack of cash money in the local economy, bartering for goods and services became commonplace. A railway connection would open the local district to outside markets and sources of goods. Everyone in Manitoba anxiously awaited the arrival of the CPR mainline construction crews. Everyone in the Boundary Trail Region was anticipating that the first branch line to be built would run through southern Manitoba and was hopeful it would be routed along the Boundary Commission Trail.

CPR Pembina Branch Line

The first section of railway track constructed by the CPR in western Canada was its Pembina branch line that opened in December 1878. It was built on the east side of the Red River and connected East Selkirk, St. Boniface and Emerson, with St. Vincent, Minn., opposite Emerson on the international border line, and the terminus of the American-owned Manitoba and Northwestern Railway. The last spike was driven at Roseau (Dominion City) on December 8, 1878 and, by the end of the month, it was open for freight and passenger service. More importantly to the CPR, it permitted men and construction material to be transported entirely by train from Eastern Canada or American urban centres. For the previous few years, supplies had to be transported by riverboat and barge from railway terminals at Fargo, N.D. and then Fisher's Landing (Crookston, Minn). With the opening of service on the CPR Pembina branch line, Emerson quickly became a "boom town", with many businesses opening to provide goods and services to its rapidly growing population and volume of traffic coming and going on the Boundary Commission Trail from as far west as Turtle Mountain.

Red River Crossing

Initially, the CPR had planned to cross the Red River at Selkirk and to construct their mainline directly east and west from there. At the time, the newly incorporated City of Winnipeg was much larger than was the small village of Selkirk and everyone expected the Red River crossing naturally would be at Winnipeg. The rightfully-alarmed Winnipeg business community and newly-created city government offered the CPR very generous incentives, including property tax exemptions and agreement to pay for the railway bridge to span the Red River, to change their plans and make Winnipeg, not Selkirk, the crossing point and CPR divisional headquarters. The City-built, Louise Bridge opened in December 1880 and, with that, Winnipeg instantly became a boom town and experienced exponential growth over the next few years, usurping much of Emerson's economic importance.

CPR Main Line

From Winnipeg, the CPR mainline was constructed east towards Thunder Bay and Ontario and west across the Prairies to the Rockies and the west coast. During the 1881 construction season, the mainline pushed slowly westward from Winnipeg, north of the Assiniboine River, reaching a point near Rat Creek, just west of Portage la Prairie. But, by the end of the 1882 construction season, under the watchful eye of newly-installed railway executive, Cornelius Van Horne, track laying reached well past present-day Regina. Freight and passenger service to Brandon opened in December 1882, allowing settlers travelling to Turtle Mountain and Souris Plains areas to take the train to Brandon and south overland from there, a shorter journey than along the Boundary Commission Trail from Emerson. The route of the CPR mainline was changed several times, causing much speculation and grief among speculators and landowners. Initial plans to cross the Assiniboine River at the "Grand Rapids" steamboat landing was changed to several miles farther west when the landowner stayed firm on a ridiculous price for his land. The "instant city" of Brandon and the CPR Divisional Centre, quickly arose as CPR crews bridged the river and pushed construction westward at a feverish pace. Railway sidings and boxcar loading ramps were constructed roughly every 10 to 15 km all along the mainline, spawning the creation of communities at most of these sidings. In Manitoba, these included Carberry, Brandon and Virden. The first transcontinental passenger train departed Montreal at 8 P.M. on June 28, 1886 and arrived at Granville (later Vancouver) at noon July 4, 1886, six days later.

The Manitoba Southwestern Railway

In 1880, as soon as the Red River crossing and "divisional point" matter had been resolved in Winnipeg's favour, the residents of the settled districts in the Pembina Hills and along the Boundary Commission Trail began petitioning the CPR for a branch line to be built through their region. Some of the early settlers had for as long as six years been required to travel long distances by horse and wagon to West Lynne to market their produce or purchase supplies. That same year, Canadian and US investors had obtained a rail charter, known as the Manitoba Southwestern Railway (MSW) to build a railway line from Winnipeg proceeding southward to a point just south of Carman and then west to the Pembina Hills and Turtle Mountain districts. (Figure 7.16.8.)

The beginning of construction encouraged settlers and business people to acquire land and start development; everyone wanted to be near a railway. Little else was talked about. Winnipeg merchants wanted the settlers along the Boundary Commission Trail as customers, and offered the MSW railway a bonus of $10,000 if they could lay 100 miles of track from Winnipeg to the Boundary Trail Region during the 1882 construction season. The exploratory survey for the line ran south from Winnipeg to Rosenfeld Junction and, from there, south about 15 miles to Smuggler's Point on the US border where the village of Hespeler (now Gretna) was surveyed in August of 1881. From Rosenfeld Junction, the survey went directly west between the existing communities of Nelsonville and Mountain City, up and over the escarpment, crossing the Little Pembina River more than a mile north of the Commission crossing and the fledgling community of Darlingford, and then northwest from there. By freeze up and the end of the 1882 track-laying season, the promised 100 miles of track of the much anticipated branch line had been laid. A turnaround-Y had been built at the 100 mile point, just short of the newly established community of Manitoba City.

Manitoba City - 1882 End of Steel

By the summer of 1881, the CPR acquired the charter to the MSW railway, which was experiencing financial problems, and had taken over construction. To the dismay of all living in Manitoba City, the route of the line was altered and the station siding was built half a mile to the south of the community. The change in siding location resulted in a scandal and the firing of General Rosser by Cornelius Van Horne and almost a gun fight on the streets of Winnipeg, when Rosser refused to be fired. The businesses and residents of Manitoba City, like those located in Mountain City and Nelson, had little choice but to move their structures to the nearby new railway town. When the line was extended to present day Deloraine in 1885-86, other trail-side communities, such as Pilot Mound and Crystal City, similarly were forced to physically relocate to new CPR station siding sites.

Figure 7.17.1. Above: Branch line construction. Photograph of railway construction on the Red River valley flat lands. Note the deep excavation trenches on either side of the railway grade, the large work crew in the distance, and the supply wagons and trail at the right. *(U of ND.)*

Figure 7.17.2. Above: Laying steel. Laying steel rails upon freshly laid wooden ties with the help of a wooden derrick. The derrick enabled the heavy steel rails to be brought forward and placed into position without having to be physically carried. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 7.17.3. Above: Branch line construction. A railway work crew laying ties pause to pose for a photograph. The hand tools shown include a shovel and adze, suggesting that some ties required some finishing work after being laid on the earthen grade and leveled. *(U of ND.)*

Figure 7.17.4. Above: Railway excavation site. A photograph from Library and Archives Canada's website, with the caption: "*Man. S.W. Ry. Extension, big cut from west side. October 1885.*" This location would have been in the Pembina River valley near present day La Rivière. Note the horse and dirt piles on the rim of the hill in the distance, the pile of large boulders at the right, and a temporary secondary track used to haul away material to be used in the approaches. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 7.17.5. Above: Railway kitchen crew. An undated photograph showing the St. Paul and Manitoba Railway's kitchen crew taking what was no doubt, a rare break from cooking and cleaning, to pose for a group photo. *(U of ND.)*

Figure 7.17.6. Above: Railway earth moving teams. Railway grade construction teams at rest, in township 3-14W near Neelin, in 1903. Louise Lake, in the Pembina Valley, can be seen in the background. *(U of BDN :McKee Col.)*

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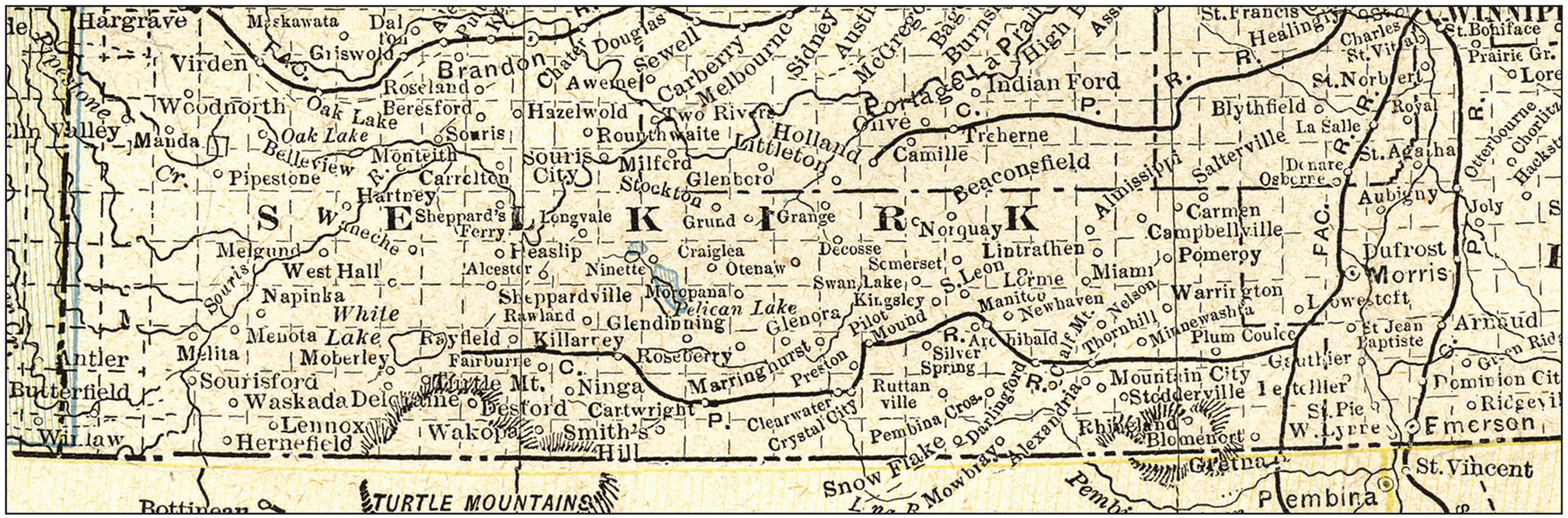

Figure 7.17.7. Above: Settlements and railway construction. 1885. Detail of a federal electorial map showing post office locations and railway lines in the BTNHR during the summer of 1885. *(A of MB.)*

Real Estate Boom and Bust

- Manitoba City. Annie Gordon, the daughter of Reverend Andrew Gordon, wrote about her father's 1882 assignment to the new community of Manitoba City, which was set to be the end-of-track season terminus for the Manitoba and SW Railway being constructed that summer from Winnipeg. As a result of "*a fair bit of real estate skullduggery*" by some railway officials and land speculators, the CPR "side-tracked" Manitoba City and laid out a siding a half mile to the south, in a new quickly-surveyed townsite registered with Land Titles as "Manitou." In 1950, Ms. Gordon recounted the experience of watching a whole town physically moved to a new site.

"*The first town, a few stores selling clothing and hardware, a blacksmith shop along with churches, manse, rectory and a one-room school, was built on the southern face of a gentle hill. This hamlet quickly grew to town proportions. In a remarkably short time, it had grown to a very respectable size and the arrival of an increased population suggested that the original choice of a name had been a most appropriate one. Manitoba City was to be the end of the railway line, but did the railroad ever find it convenient to build its line into a brand new town? It was rather their rule to build a short, or a longer line, in order to bypass the centers already established. Then, after stations and elevators were erected at the railroad's choice of a townsite, business places purchased land from the railroad and moved to the railroad's townsite. This is what happened in our new home. The new Methodist church and parsonage, (our new home), were almost a mile north of the line into the new townsite called Manitou. We would have to move.*

'It seems unbelievable,' Mother said to Sue, as she unpacked the dishes. 'This country seems to take a hop, skip and jump whenever a railroad is built.' 'Come here, Mother, look!' Sue called, and together they watched a sight new to their eyes. A good-sized store was moving slowly on huge rollers down the sloping hill to take its place on the new street already graded and ready for occupants on the south side of the railroad tracks. 'I'm glad,' said Father when he came in, 'that the church was moved in the spring before the snow was gone; rolling it is a big expense. The man who is doing this will make a fortune,' and he did. We would move when the snow between Manitoba City and Manitou was packed hard as a road. Jacked up, with two bob sleighs at the front and two at the back, the parsonage was ready to take a journey. 'We'll take this unique ride and see to the safety of our goods and chattels,' said Mother who was somewhat anxious over the wisdom of following the advice to leave things in the usual place. Indeed, she had turned the book shelves to the wall and packed dishes from what she judged might be precarious locations into a clothes basket.

As the sleighs were pulled into the snow, coasting in a house speeding down hill was an exhilarating experience. The swaying of the house sent pictures dancing back and forth. The business people lining the street gave the coasters hearty cheers as the horses tugged at what was now a heavy pull. With dint of cracking whip and vociferous 'Get up,' we reached the south side of the town and the house came to rest over the earlier-prepared cellar. Our home now faced south overlooking virgin prairie with scrub and, not far distant, our view of the Pembina Hills. 'It's just as we would wish it,' said nature-loving Father.

What did the coming of regular trains mean? In the British tradition, mission fields and schools preceded the building of railroads, for it was the former which opened the new country to nineteenth-century civilization and, in turn, the arrival of more people who needed more churches, schools and business places. However, it was expectation that a railroad was on its way which led speculators to wildly stake out towns along the expected line. It was a boom which soon spent itself and left broken lives in its trail." *(Gordon'50 :123)*

- Emerson. Excerpt from a letter written by S.H. Melson in November 1880 to his sister back in England. "*Lea came to Xing* (Pembina Crossing) *today and had dinner with me. He is very pleased with his success as a bit of a speculator. He had just made $4000 at one smack in buying and selling Emerson property. There was a great scare there about two months ago when it was said the railroad was not going through and property went down very much. Lea bought about $3500 worth and sold it again three days after it was known for certain that the railroad was coming through for $7500 or therabout, both bona fide transactions. He came to the mill this afternoon and had a long talk. He goes to Emerson tomorrow on a similar errand.*" *(BTHR.)*

An 1888 description of Emerson noted the disastrous effect the CPR's MSW railway had on the community as a settler transient point and supply centre. "*In 1881, Emerson boasted a population of about 3000, but by 1888, it had dwindled down probably by one half after the real estate crash of 1882. Nevertheless, a thriving trade remains and the town possesses several good stores, excellent hotels, two newspapers, churches, schools, etc. West Lynne, formerly Hudson's Bay trading post, developed into a town rapidly, and as quickly sunk into a deserted village, presenting the appearance of severe dilapidation expressed by the phrase 'rack and ruin.' With the proposed construction of the Red River Valley Railway, however, Emerson and West Lynne may well regain some of their former prosperity.*" *(Hamm'88 :72.)*

- Deloraine. The original village of old Deloraine was founded in 1881, when Messrs. Cavers and Stuart opened up a general store. At the time, there were barely any settlers in the district, but soon after, they came pouring in and, by 1882, the village had a large flour mill erected by Sheppard Bros., which, despite being nearly 70 miles from a railroad, did a very large gristing business. The village also possessed the Dominion Lands Office, registry office, Methodist and Presbyterian churches, a lawyer, doctor, general store, and a good number of private houses. When the railway was extended south of the village in the fall of 1886, it generated quite a boom of activity, and there were many very extensive sales of land made to intending settlers. "*A large number of carpenters and others engaged in the building business were employed during the entire winter putting up new structures in the new townsite, while the old town, with the exception of Sheppard Bros.' mill and McTavish's hotel, was moved up bodily to Deloraine's current location.*" *(Hamm'88 :72.)*

- Mountain City. From the *Nelsonville Mountaineer,* September 28, 1881 issue,"The syndicate railway passes three miles to the north of Mountain City, leaving that thriving burgh, so to speak, out in the cold." *(NM'81-09-29.)*

- Nelsonville. The Dominion government had virtually promised that the CPR would run through Nelson and leading citizens should be prepared to offer the railway inducements. When rumours persisted that the railway surveyors were by-passing Nelson, Mayor Thomas Duncan led a delegation to Ottawa to see Sir John A. MacDonald and General Manager Van Horne of the CPR. Assurances were made in Ottawa and Mayor Duncan came home to inform the town it would have a railroad by the fall of 1884. In the fall of 1883, the Dead Horse Creek area was merely a stubble field. A year later, it was the town of Morden. The unhappy citizens of Nelson decided that, if the railway wouldn't come to them, they would go to the railway. *(Brown'74 :62.)*

- Manitou remained the end of track until 1885 when the matter of where to cross the Pembina River Valley appeared to be resolved. The MSW survey had the railway continue northwest along the north side of the valley, turning southwest after passing by Swan Lake and crossing the Pembina River valley at Glendenning at the south end of Pelican Lake. The route had been surveyed and staked in 1882 and, very quickly, a townsite named Tisdale was surveyed and established on section 2-4-16W, with a sawmill, a blacksmith, two stores and several houses. The survey continued westward to the Rowland district and, at section 10-4-18W, at what was expected to become a thriving town, another townsite was surveyed. A stopping place, store, blacksmith shop with a large feed and sales stable, consisting of poplar poles and "prairie brick", and a commodious tent were erected. However, as early as the winter of 1883, rumours began to circulate that the route had been changed to a more southerly route. These rumours were confirmed in the spring of 1885, as construction of the grade west from Manitou commenced, crossing the Pembina River Valley directly west of Manitou at present-day La Riviere. Over the summer and autumn, steel was laid across the Rock Lake district north of the route of the BC trail, skirting the south shore of Whitewater Lake with end of track at freeze up at 3-3-23W. Sidings were built at roughly six to eight miles apart, including Oak Lake siding which became Killarney, and Cherry Creek siding which was later renamed Boissevain. Deloraine, on the Commission Trail, moved over to the end of track and became the new site of Deloraine. Wakopa similarly soon declined without an all-important rail connection. Service on this new section of line began January 1, 1886. Deloraine remained the end of the line until 1892, leaving the unfortunate settlers in the districts nearer to the Souris River many miles from the nearest railway line for another five years.

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Figure 7.17.8. Above: Towns on the move. A winter house move, using sleds and horses – a common sight in the BTNHR during the early 1880s. *(A of MB :Foote.)*

8.0 WHEAT BOOM AND PROSPERITY 1890 to 1920 AD

Steam Locomotives, Wheat Kings and Horseless Carriages

After 1890, life in the BTNHR gradually began to improve. Railway lines now connected most districts of the Region with Winnipeg and the industrial east. Also by then, most of the good land had been broken and put under cultivation, and most farms had built up a good-sized herd of cattle and horses. Also significantly, "Red Fife" wheat, which ripened in 120 days, began to give way to "Marquis" wheat, which ripened in 104 days, so there was considerably less loss due to frost kill. The demand for number one, Canadian Northern Hard Red wheat was growing world-wide and, some years, was worth as much as 85 to 95 cents per bushel. The years 1891, 1895 and 1915 were particularly bountiful years. Wheat acreage in the Region increased rapidly during the so-called "Wheat Boom Era", which lasted from approximately 1890 to 1920. Average farm income was rapidly growing, and during this period, many of the original settlers were able to build large houses and barns of modern design. Fieldwork was becoming more mechanized and more efficient. There was more time for recreational and cultural activities. Finally, life was good. For a great many living in the BTNHR, these were the golden years, later to be fondly remembered.

After the difficulties and deprivations of the Pioneer Period, it was a much anticipated time of prosperity and growth on the farms and in the communities that were still being established at regular intervals along the many secondary branch lines being constructed throughout the Region. The branch line railway network reached its maximum extent during this time and, in the glow of optimism and prosperity of the times, the railway companies greatly overbuilt the network with lines crisscrossing the region. The BTNHR could make the claim of having possessed the densest railway branch line network of any similar-sized region on the prairies, if not the entire country.

In rural areas, the Wheat Boom Era was a time of growing farm mechanization with the adoption of new lines of steam and gasoline tractors and the introduction of a growing variety of new types and makes of farm implements and machinery. During this period, the use of oxen gradually faded, as the use of horses for field work and transportation became commonplace. Portable steam engines, used primarily for harvesting during the pioneer years, were increasingly being replaced by much larger self-propelled steam tractors, such as the classic CASE steam tractor, still often seen in advertising and on television. Massive-sized steam tractors were becoming more affordable and commonplace. In addition to powering larger and more efficient threshing machines, the new steam tractors were widely used for breaking and capable of pulling a 12-bottom plow. Tilling was still done with horses, which were much more maneuverable that the bulky steam tractors. Around 1910, smaller and less expensive internal combustion gasoline tractors began to make an appearance; however, with the outbreak of war in 1914 and a post-war recession after 1918, they would not be widely adopted until the late 1920s. Horses and steam engines remained the primary types of farm power on BTNHR farms throughout the Wheat Boom Era.

Farm buildings erected during this period also exhibited vast improvements, in both size and comfort, over the crammed soddies, log cabins or simple frame lumber buildings built during the 1870s and 1880s. These pioneer era structures were now being rapidly replaced with substantial homes of brick or stone construction. After 1900, these new homes often included interior plumbing, electrical plants for power and light, and central heating. Many brick-manufacturing operations were started up in many communities. There was a farm building construction boom with owners attempting to outdo their neighbours by erecting big modern structures, under the popular belief that it was a clear sign of having "succeeded" as farmers. If one's farmhouse or barn was larger or better equipped than others in the district, one clearly was a "master farmer", to be admired and emulated. Many lived to regret overbuilding when the recession of the 1920s and depression of the 1930s hit the BTNHR, along with the rest of the world.

As with farm homes during the 1890s, most barns were replaced with large new facilities for the growing herds of horses and other livestock. Large vertical-sided timber-framed "southern Ontario style" bank-barns were erected on most Anglo-Ontario farmsteads in the Region, with thick fieldstone or concrete stable level walls and room for significant numbers of horses and other livestock. These barns were often immense structures and could easily be seen above farmyard shelter belts. Many became longtime landmarks along the trails and roads. After 1900, those erecting a large new barn tended to choose newly-designed all-frame lumber structures. The hip-roofed Wisconsin barn with open-span hay lofts became very popular in the years leading up to the First World War.

Transportation during the Wheat Boom Era, as noted above, consisted mainly of horse-drawn vehicles, a wagon, buggy, or democrat and, during the winter, a farm sled or lighter cutter. Automobiles began to be introduced around 1905 and, before long, became popular due to their relatively low cost. However, road conditions were often poor during the spring and autumn, and automobiles could not be driven at all during the winter months, when only horse-drawn sleighs could traverse the snow-drifted roads and trails. Provincially funded highway construction did not begin until the late 1910s, and it was not until the late 1930s when all season roadways began to be built. Only then could motor vehicles be used during the winter months.

In the many towns and villages popping up along the expanding railway branch line network, life was similarly quite prosperous and comfortable. Many towns installed electric plants for light and motors. Telegraph communication accompanied the railway lines, and by 1910, telephone exchanges were being set up in many towns. Typical businesses during this period would have included blacksmiths, tinsmiths, harness makers, lumber yards, doctors and dentists, storekeepers, hotel keepers, bankers, lawyers, dress makers, millers, and mechanics, among many others.

It was a golden era; however by 1912, the optimism began to fade. The world economy was starting to stall, political tensions were rising around the world, fear of war in Europe was growing, and many farmers found themselves in debt after having expanded farming operations during good times and low interest rates. Worse, farm produce prices began falling, and in 1915, as war raged in Europe and with a massive bumper crop of wheat in the fields, farm prices around the world crashed.

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8.1 RAILWAY BRANCH LINE EXPANSION AND NEW COMMUNITIES

1878 - Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), Pembina Branch Line. The CPR line connecting Emerson to Winnipeg opened on December 7, 1878. Connecting, at Vincent Minn., on the international border, with the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Manitoba Railway, the CPR Pembina Branch Line was the first operating section of CPR track in western Canada and provided the first all-rail link from Manitoba to the industrial east.

1879 - CPR Main Line, Eastbound. With supplies and material arriving from the east via the CPR Pembina Branch Line and its connection to the US railway network, mainline construction proceeded eastward towards Lake Superior.

1880 - CPR Main Line Red River Crossing. Louise Bridge over the Red River in Winnipeg was constructed by the City of Winnipeg for the CPR, as part of an agreement with the CPR to establish its regional centre there, rather than at Selkirk. With the crossing of the Red River completed, westward construction of the mainline commenced in earnest.

1881 - CPR Main Line, Westbound. Laying of track from Winnipeg westward was completed as far as the Rat Creek crossing just west of Portage la Prairie before freeze-up stopped work.

1882 - CPR Main Line, Westbound. End of track at the end of a phenomenal 1882 construction season, reached 25 mi. east of present day Medicine Hat, with 418 mi. (800 km) of track laid that year. The CPR Assiniboine River crossing site and the CPR Divisional Point instantly became a booming townsite, which was given the name Brandon after the nearby Brandon Hills. The townsite grew so rapidly that it was incorporated as a City in its first year of existence. **Also in 1882, CPR Main Line Eastbound.** Track between Winnipeg and Thunder Bay opened for travel in June 1882 connecting travel between Thunder Bay and southern Ontario, available by Great Lakes steamship.

1882 - Manitoba & South Western Railway (M&SW), Winnipeg to Manitou. Begun as a private investor-funded initiative, the project quickly ran into financial difficulties, and by July, the charter had been bought out by the CPR. The line's name was changed to the CPR "Pembina Mountain Branch Line", as was the original planned route and proposed station siding locations. At season's end, the line had been completed to Rosenfeld Junction, and from there, one line ran west to the eastern edge of Manitoba City, just north of present day Manitou, and another, shorter line, ran south to Altona and Hespeler (Gretna) at the US border. From Rosenfeld Junction west, station sidings were established at Horndean, Plum Coulee, Winkler, Morden, Cheval, Thornhill, Darlingford, Rudyard and Manitou, that remained the end of track until 1885.

1883 - CPR Main Line. Westward construction reached five mi. (eight km) east of Kicking Horse Pass. Construction along the difficult north shore of Lake Superior progressed steadily.

1885 - CPR Main Line. Last spike on the North Superior section was driven on November 3, 1885 near Jackfish, Ont. Last spike on the western section was driven at Craigellachie, B.C., on November 7, 1885. However, so many cost-cutting shortcuts were taken in constructing the railway through the Rockies that regular transcontinental service was delayed for seven months while reconstruction occurred along various sections of the track and snow sheds constructed to keep the line open during the winter months.

1886 - CPR Main Line. The first transcontinental passenger train departed from Montreal, Que. on June 28, 1886, and arrived at Port Moody, B.C. on July 4th. **Also in 1886, CPR Pembina Mountain Branch Line** was extended from Manitou to Deloraine. The original M&SW proposed Pembina River cossing site and route westward was altered by CPR, "sidetracking" the existing trailside communities of Tisdale, Rowland, Darlington, Manitoba City, Pembina Crossing, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Clearwater and Deloraine. West from Manitou, CPR station sidings were established at Binney, La Rivière, Wood Bay, Pilot Mound, Crystal City, Clearwater, Mather, Cartwright, Holmfield, Killarney, Rhodes, Ninga, Boissevain, Cadzow, Whitewater, Naples, Kilbourne and Deloraine.

1888 - Northern Pacific & Manitoba Main Line (NP&M). New line laid from the international boundary to Portage la Prairie and Winnipeg and, before long, sold to the Canadian Northern Railway (CNoR).

1890 - CNoR Belmont Spur Line. New line constructed running west from Morris to Belmont, with station sidings at Moyers, Lowe Farm, Kane, Myrtle, Roland, Jordan, Rosebank, Miami, Deerwood, Altamont, Somerset, Swan Lake, Indian Springs, Mariapolis, Baldur and Belmont. **Also in 1890, CPR Souris Branch.** New line constructed from Brandon (Kemnay Junction) southwest to Menteith.

1891 - CPR Souris Branch Line. Track extended from Menteith to Melita, with station sidings built at Hartney, Napinka and Melita.

1892 - CPR Souris Branch Line. Track extended from Melita southwest to western border of Manitoba, with station sidings established at Elva and Pierson. **Also in 1892,** a new CPR spur line was built between Deloraine and Napinka, with station sidings at Leighton, Medora and Napinka. **Also in 1892, CPR Glenboro Branch Line** extended from Glenboro to Souris, with sidings at Newstead, Carroll, Nesbitt, Methven, Banting, Treesbank, Chaucer, Stockton and Souris. **Also in 1892, CNoR Reston Branch Line** extended from Schwitzer Junction (near Souris) west to Reston, with station sidings at Menteith, Denbow, Deleau, Findlay, Pipestone and Reston.

1898 - CNoR Hartney Spur Line. New branch line constructed from Hartney Junction (near Belmont) west to Hartney, with station sidings at Tiger Hills, Ninette, Ontop, Dunrea, Margaret, Minto, Minmar, Fairfax, Elgin, Underhill, Argue and Hartney.

1899 - CPR Snowflake Spur Line. New spur line constructed from Wood Bay Junction to Snowflake, with station sidings at Harbor, Purves and Snowflake.

1900 - CPR Waskada Spur Line. New spur line constructed from Deloraine, southwest to Waskada with station sidings established at Goodlands, Cramwell and Waskada.

1901 - CNoR Stephenfield Spur Line. New branch line begun and completed from Carman west to Stephenfield, with station sidings at Carman, Graysville and Stephenfield.

1902 - CNoR Leary's Spur Line. Line extended from Stephenfield westward to Leary's, with station sidings built at Roseisle and Leary's. **Also in 1902,** new CPR spur line constructed from Lauder west to Tilston, with station sidings at Bernice, Ruth, Broomhill and Tilston. **Also in 1902, CPR Waskada Spur** extended from Waskada to Lyleton, with station sidings at Dalny, Coulter, Blette, Cameron and Lyleton.

1903 - CPR Snowflake Spur. Line extended from Snowflake southeast with station sidings at Mowbray and Windygates, both adjacent to the US border.

1904 - CNoR Greenway Branch Line. New branch line begun with track laid from Greenway Junction southwest to Adelpha, with station sidings at Glenora, Neelin, Louise, Holmfield, Enterprise, Lena, Wakopa and Adelpha.

1905 - CNoR Somerset Spur. Line extended from Leary's, west then south, to Somerset with station sidings at Babcocks, Cardinal and Somerset. **Also in 1905,** CPR spur line constructed from Rudyard Siding (near Manitou) to Kaleida.

1906 - Manitoba Great Northern (MGNo), Brandon Branch Line. New US branch line built from Devil's Lake, N.D. to Brandon, with Man. station sidings at Bannerman, Wakopa, Desford, Fairburn, Boissevain, Alcester, Minto, Heaslip, Bunclody, Beverly Station, Hebron, Hayfield Station, McKelvie, Roseland and Brandon.

1907 - MGNo Morden Branch Line. New US branch line built from Grafton, N.D. to Morden, with station sidings at Haskett on the US border, Glencross and Morden. **Also in 1907,** a third MGNo branch line constructed from Grafton, N.D. to Portage la Prairie, with station sidings, in Manitoba, at Gretna on the US border, Bergman, Plum Coulee, Kronsgart, Roland, Graham, Carman, Bradburn, Magnus, Layland, Dunn and Portage la Prairie. **Also in 1907, CNoR** built a short spur line from Notre Dame Junction (Cardinal) north to Notre Dame des Lourdes.

1910 - CNoR Greenway Branch Line. Canadian Northern branch line extended a short distance west from Adelpha to Wassewa, with station siding at Turtle Mountain.

1913 - CPR Pembina Mountain Branch Line. CPR built a short line connecting Boissevain and Lauder, with stations at Schaffner, Orthez, Dunallen, Croll, Regent, Dand and Lauder.

1914 - CNoR Greenway Branch Line. Line extended from Adelpha northwest to Deloraine, with station sidings at Bannerman and Desford. **Also in 1914,** CPR Snowflake spur, short spur line built west from Snowflake, with station sidings built at Hebb and Fallison. This was the final section of track to be constructed in the current BTNHR.

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WINNIPEG, GRETNA, WINDYGATES, NAPINKA

READ DOWN 231 Mo.Th	123 Fri.	121	Miles	TABLE III Central Time		122	124 Sat.	READ UP 120 Tu. Fr.	232 Mo.Th
	A.M.	A.M.				P.M.	P.M.		
.....	9.00	b 9.00	0.0	Lv WINNIPEG ‖	Ar	c 1.50	1.50	.....	.....
.....	ƒ	ƒ	4.9	Portage Ave		ƒ	ƒ	.....	.....
.....	ƒ	ƒ	9.3	Fort Whyte		ƒ	ƒ	.....	.....
.....	ƒ 9.27	ƒ 9.27	11.6	Fortress		ƒ 1.19	ƒ 1.19	.....	.....
.....	9.41	9.41	18.3	La Salle		1.07	1.07	.....	.....
.....	9.53	9.53	24.4	Domain		12.54	12.54	.....	.....
.....	10.03	10.03	29.7	Osborne		12.43	12.43	.....	.....
.....	10.14	10.14	35.5	McTavish		12.32	12.32	.....	.....
.....	10.30	10.30	42.6	Morris		12.18	12.18	.....	.....
.....	10.45	10.45	49.9	Sewell		12.01	12.01	.....	.....
NOON	11.01	11.01	56.1	Ar Rosenfeld	Lv	11.48	11.48	A.M. 7.10	A.M. 10.45
12.00	.....	.....	56.1	Lv Rosenfeld	Ar	.....	.....	6.50	10.25
12.20	.....	.....	62.9	Altona		.....	.....	6.30	10.00
12.45	.....	.....	69.9	Ar GRETNA	Lv	.....	.....	A.M.	A.M.
P.M.	11.01	11.01	56.1	Lv Rosenfeld	Ar	11.48	11.48	.....	.....
.....	11.16	11.16	61.4	Horndean		11.35	11.35	.....	.....
.....	11.26	11.26	65.7	Plum Coulee 109		11.26	11.26	.....	.....
.....	11.47	11.47	73.8	Winkler		11.07	11.07	.....	.....
.....	12.07	12.07	81.2	Morden		10.50	10.50	.....	.....
.....	12.28	12.28	87.8	Thornhill		10.33	10.33	.....	.....
.....	12.49	12.49	94.5	Darlingford		10.21	10.21	.....	.....
249	1.07	1.07	102.3	Manitou		10.08	10.08	250	
We.	ƒ 1.14	ƒ 1.14	105.4	Binney		ƒ10.00	ƒ10.00	We.	
P.M.	1.30	b 1.30	112.9	Ar LA RIVIERE ‖ 114	Lv	c 9.45	9.45	P.M.	
2.10	.....	.....	0.0	Lv LA RIVIERE	Ar	.....	.....	7.40	
2.35	.....	.....	7.5	Wood Bay		.....	.....	7.10	
ƒ 2.50	.....	.....	11.9	Harbor		.....	.....	ƒ 6.50	
3.05	.....	.....	17.3	Purves		.....	.....	6.30	
3.35	.....	.....	23.7	Snowflake		.....	.....	6.00	
4.10	.....	.....	33.4	Mowbray		.....	.....	5.30	
4.40	.....	.....	39.8	Ar WINDYGATES	Lv	.....	.....	5.00	
P.M.	1.50	b 1.50	112.9	Lv LA RIVIERE	Ar	c 9.35	9.35	P.M.	
.....	2.08	2.08	120.4	Wood Bay		9.15	9.15	.....	
.....	2.20	2.20	125.3	Pilot Mound		9.04	9.04	.....	
.....	2.32	2.32	129.9	Crystal City		8.52	8.52	.....	
.....	2.43	2.43	134.1	Clearwater		8.41	8.41	.....	
.....	2.59	2.59	141.6	Mather		8.25	8.25	.....	
.....	3.14	3.14	148.4	Cartwright		8.11	8.11	.....	
.....	3.29	3.29	155.7	Holmfield		7.56	7.56	.....	
.....	3.49	3.49	164.3	Killarney		7.37	7.37	.....	
251	ƒ 4.02	ƒ 4.02	170.6	Rhodes		ƒ 7.23	ƒ 7.23	252	
Wed.	4.13	4.13	175.1	Ninga		7.14	7.14	Tue.	
Sat.	4.31	4.31	182.7	Boissevain 119		6.56	6.56	Fri.	
P.M.	ƒ 4.40	ƒ 4.40	187.9	Cadzow		ƒ 6.41	ƒ 6.41	A.M.	
7.25	4.49	4.49	193.2	Whitewater		6.31	ƒ 6.31	10.35	
ƒ 7.38	ƒ 4.58	ƒ 4.58	198.2	Napinka		ƒ 6.20	ƒ 6.20	ƒ10.22	
7.51	5.09	5.09	202.8	DELORAINE 119		6.10	6.10	10.09	
ƒ 8.03	P.M.	ƒ 5.21	207.9	Leighton		ƒ 5.57	A.M.	ƒ 9.57	
8.15	Table	5.31	213.1	Medora		5.48	Table	9.45	
P.M.	119	b 5.50	221.4	Ar NAPINKA 119	Lv	c 5.30	119	A.M.	
.....		P.M.				A.M.		.....	

Figure 8.1.1. Above: Time card. Train schedule for the CPR Pembina Mountain branch line communities during the 1920s. *(A of MB.)*

Northern Pacific Railroad.

TIME CARD.

Taking effect Sunday, Nov. 1, 1891 (Central or 90th Meridian Time).

NORTH BOUND. Freight No. 155. Daily ex Su.	Passenger No. 117. Daily.	Miles from Winnipeg.	STATIONS.	SOUTH BOUND. Passenger No. 116. Daily.	Freight No. 154. Daily ex. Su
7.30 a	4.55 p	0	Winnipeg	2.30 p	12.05 a
7.16 a	4.16 p	3.0	Portage Junction	2.38 p	12.21 a
5.49 a	3.25 p	23.5	St. Agathe	3.25 p	2.02 a
4.35 a	2.44 p	40.4	Morris	4.03 p	3.27 a
4.05 a	2.27 p	46.8	St. Jean	4.19 p	4.00 a
2.40 a	1.41 p	65.0	Emerson	5.00 p	5.45 a
9.45 a	9.40 a	161	Grand Forks	8.50 p	3.55 p
	5.45 a	226	Winnipeg Junction.	12.45 a	
	8.00 p	453	Duluth	10.05 a	
	8.35 p	470	Minneapolis	9.55 a	
	8.00 p	381	St. Paul	10.30 a	

Morris-Brandon Branch.

EAST BOUND. Frt No. 138 Mon. Wed. and Friday.	Pass No. 136 Tu. Thur. & Saturday.	Miles from Morris.	STATIONS.	WEST BOUND. Pass No. 137 Mon. Wed. and Friday.	Frt No. 139 Tu. Thur. & Saturday.
7.00 p	2.35 p	0	Morris	4.05 p	8.45 a
5.02 p	1.38 p	25.9	Roland	5.07 p	10.44 a
3.43 p	1.05 p	39.6	Miami	5.39 p	11.52 a
1.52 p	12.10 p	62.1	Somerset	6.32 p	1.49 p
1.20 p	11.55 a	68.4	Swan Lake	6.47 p	2.20 p
11.22 a	10.57 a	92.3	Balder	7.45 p	4.20 p
10.34 a	10.35 a	102	Belmont	8.13 p	5.08 p
9.05 a	9.53 a	120	Wawanesa	8.51 p	6.37 p
7.00 a	8.50 a	145	Brandon	9.50 p	8.45 p

Figure 8.1.2. Above: Time card. Northern Pacific Railway St. Paul, Minn. to Winnipeg main line, and the Morris to Brandon branch line, schedules in 1892. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.3. Above: Miami railway station. Built in 1889 by the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railway, the Miami station was recognized in 1976 as the last of its design and was designated as a National Historic Site. It is now a railway museum that operates during the summer. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.1.4. Above: Morden railway station. This station design was used at many of the larger CPR towns in the BTNHR. The Morden station is now preserved at the Pembina Threshermen's Museum. *(A of MB.)*

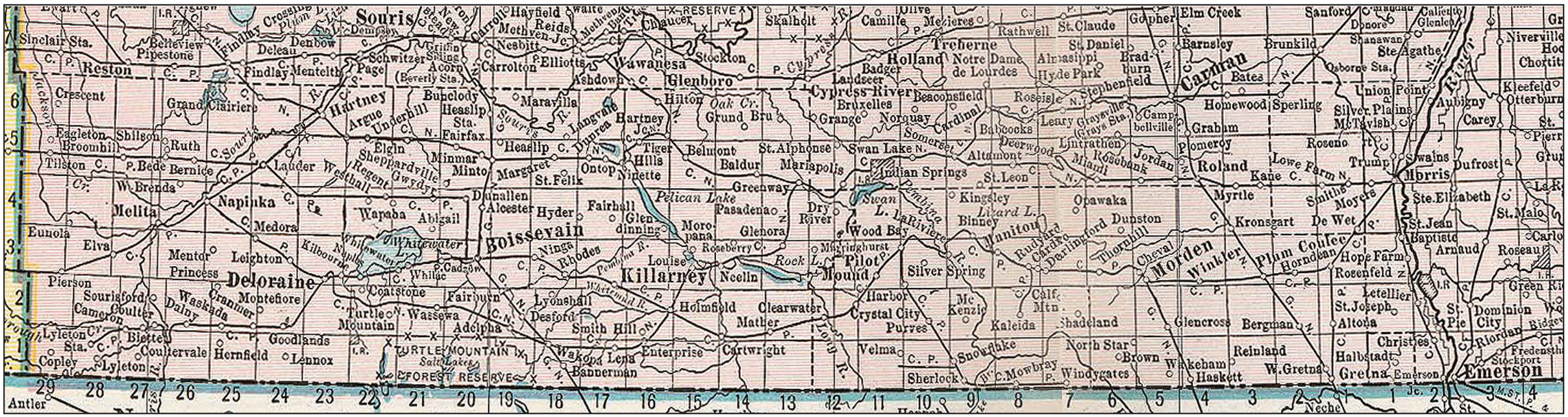


Figure 8.1.5 Above: Railway branch lines. Detail from a 1921 map showing railway lines, railside communities, rural post office locations, as well as the township grid and waterways. The BTNHR was at its peak of development during this time. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 8.1.6. Above: Melita. 4-27W. A photo taken in 1891, showing an earthen railway grade, without steel rails, and the fledgling town of Melita beginning to rise in the background. Railway grades normally remained without steel for up to a year of natural settling before ties and rails were laid upon it. Note that virtually all of the newly built structures are still unpainted and several are still under construction. The break in the grade, visible at centre, may have been made to permit wagon traffic to cross until the rails were laid and a proper crossing constructed. *(Melita Museum)*

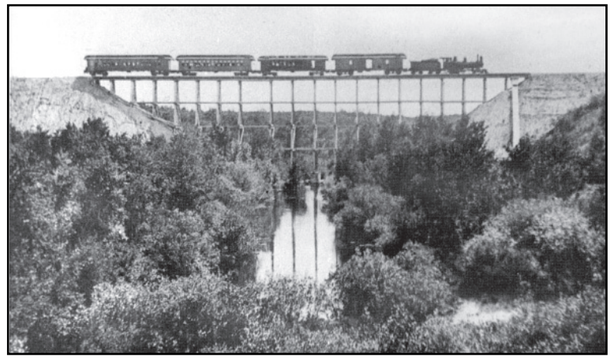


Figure 8.1.7. Above: Clearwater trestle. 2-12W. Built in 1885, the original timber trestle over Long River at Clearwater was 300 ft. long and 80 ft. high, and was the tallest rail trestle in Manitoba. It remained in use until badly damaged by ice and high water in April 1969 and replaced by a modern steel structure. That bridge is now preserved as the "Clearwater Skyway" pedestrian bridge. *(MacAulay'00 :61.)*

Figure 8.1.8. Above: "*Wakopa, Man.*" 1-8W. Photograph showing the Wakopa station siding and general store, circa 1914. Many station siding sites, such as Wakopa, never grew beyond "hamlet" size. *(Myna Cryderman photo.)*

Figure 8.1.9. Above: Baldur. 5-14W. Baldur photographed a year or two after the arrival of the railroad and construction of a station siding at this site in 1890. Note that most of the town buildings are still unpainted and, at left, the community's first grain elevator with boxcars on the siding. *(U of BDN.)*

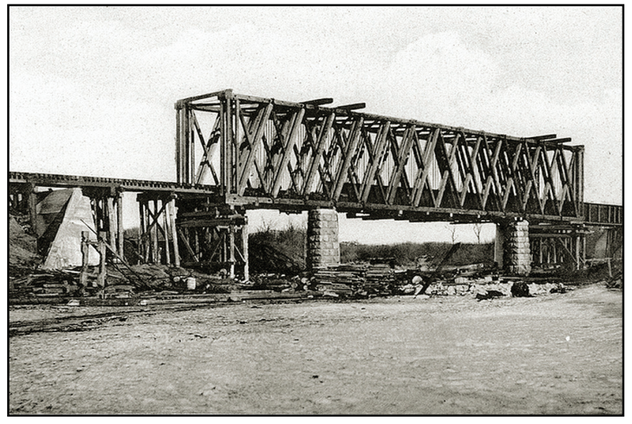


Figure 8.1.10. Above: Souris River crossing. Railway bridge nearing completion, in 1892, near Melita. Note the above-deck, "pony-truss" timber design, stone masonry and timber piers, and piles of construction material on ground. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 8.1.11. Above: Clearwater. 2-12W. Clearwater CPR railway station and water tower with a grain elevator in the distance. This water tower still exists and, as the sole survivor of its type in Manitoba, was designated a protected provincial heritage site on September 26, 1996. It currently functions as a public water supply depot. *(A of MB.)*

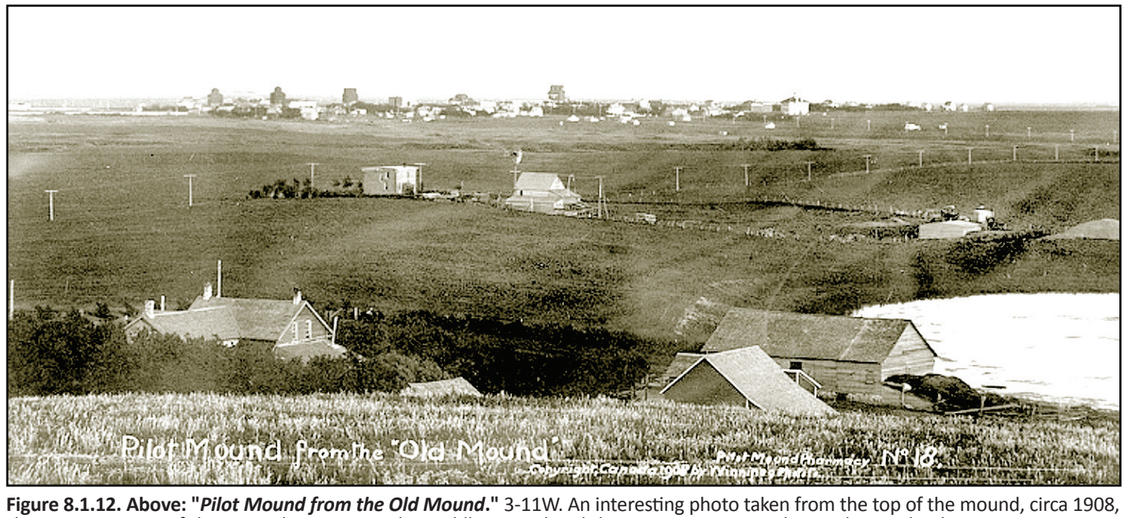


Figure 8.1.12. Above: "*Pilot Mound from the Old Mound*." 3-11W. An interesting photo taken from the top of the mound, circa 1908, showing remnants of the original townsite in the middle ground and the new townsite two km to the south. The two-storey square structure at centre left was the town's original hotel. It was among the last surviving structures at the Old Mound townsite. *(A of MB.)*

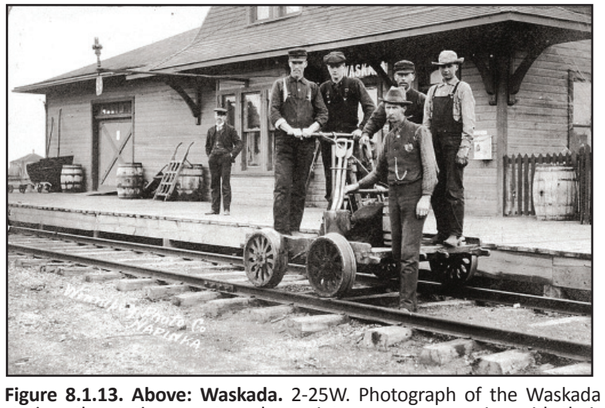


Figure 8.1.13. Above: Waskada. 2-25W. Photograph of the Waskada station, the station agent, and a maintenance crew posing with their hand-powered "jigger", possibly about to depart for rail inspection and maintenance work along their section of the line. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 8.1.14. Above: Hartney. 6-23W. Steam locomotive pulling into Hartney, circa 1910. Note the two sidings, the box cars next to the shed at lower right, the large brick residence at the left, and two shelterbelts on an otherwise flat treeless plain. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.15. Above: Baldur. 13-5-14W. Excellent photograph of "downtown" Baldur and a quintessential view of a typical railside prairie town in the BTNHR, circa 1910, with wood frame, brick and stone commercial buildings, rail sidings and long lines of box cars, several grain elevators, and a town grist mill. Most every town in the BTNHR would have had a similar setup, albeit in different geographical settings. The town's name was suggested by the district's Icelandic settlers after Baldur, son of Odin, famed Norse god who personified the nobler qualities of human nature and beauty. He was also the god of innocence and the summer sun. *(U of BDN.)*

Figure 8.1.16. Above: Goodlands. 2-24W. 1909. Goodlands was founded in 1900, when the CPR built a spur line running southwest from Deloraine. Note the treeless Souris plains in the background and, in town, from left to right, two churches, a lumber yard, a number of wooden commercial buildings, and a wooden boardwalk. Note lack of fencing and tree plantings. *(A of MB.)*

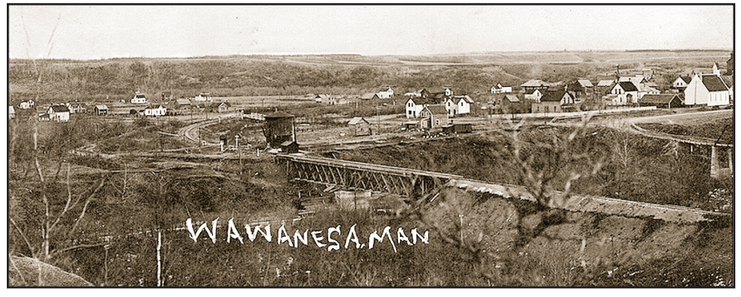


Figure 8.1.17. Above: "*WAWANESA. MAN.*" 26-7-17W. Wawanesa was founded in 1890, when the CNoR railway by-passed nearby Souris City and crossed the Souris River at this site instead. First called "Sipiweske", an Indigenous term believed to mean "beautiful vista", the name was changed when settlers felt it sounded like "sip of whiskey." *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.18. Above: Winkler. 4-3-4W. Established in 1892, 10 years after the CPR railway came through, the community was named after Valentine Winkler, local businessman, land owner, and politician, after he offered the CPR half the town lots if they would build a railway siding at this site. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.19. Above: St. Jean Baptiste, Settled in 1876 by French Canadians from the US who bought up Métis scrip in the area, it was named St. Jean Baptiste by Archbishop Tache after the patron saint of French Canadians. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.20. Above: Reinfeld village. 26-4-2W. Established in 1875 and located just east of where Winker would later be established, the name means "*clear field*" in German. Photograph circa 1890. *(A of MB.)*

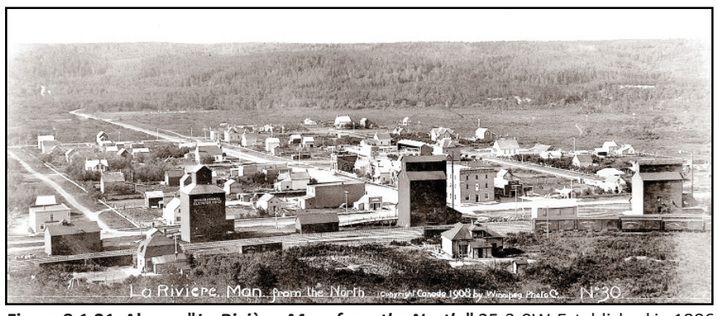


Figure 8.1.21. Above: "***La Rivière, Man. from the North.***" 25-3-9W. Established in 1886 and named after the Honourable Alphonse La Riviére, a prominent Francophone MLA, MP, Senator, and founder of the newspaper *Le Manitoba,* the community was a CPR "divisional point" with additional sidings, an engine turntable and repair shed. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.22. Above: "*Thornhill, Man. On A Rainy Day.*" 8-3-6W. Train with one baggage car and two passenger cars at a stop at Thornhill station. Note the grain warehouse and elevator, stores, and a view of the back yard of the railway station, with privy and garden. *(A of MB.)*

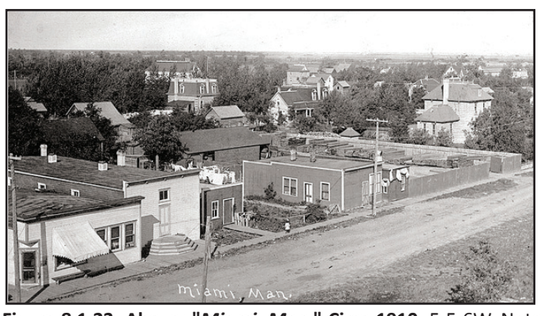


Figure 8.1.23. Above: "*Miami, Man.*" Circa 1910. 5-5-6W. Note the two storey homes and mature tree plantings and, along the front street, a store, a hall, and lumber yard. Miami was an "assigned" name with native origins meaning "mother." *(A of MB.)*

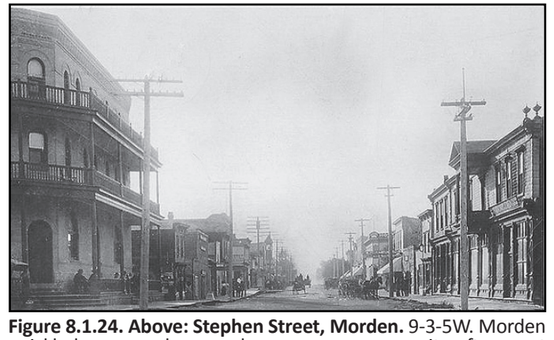


Figure 8.1.24. Above: Stephen Street, Morden. 9-3-5W. Morden quickly became a large and prosperous community after most homes and businesses were physically moved from Nelson and Mountain City into the new townsite. Photo circa 1900. *(A of MB.)*

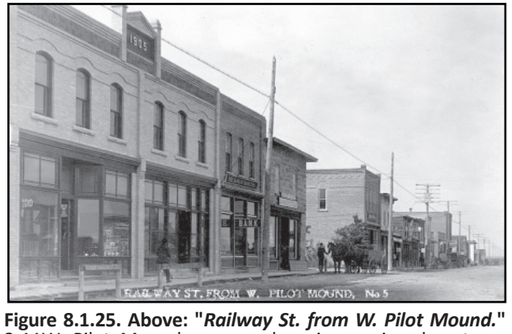


Figure 8.1.25. Above: "*Railway St. from W. Pilot Mound.*" 3-11W. Pilot Mound possessed an impressive downtown with many brick commercial structures. *(A of MB.)*

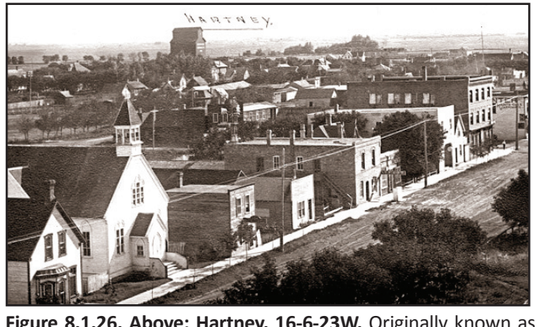


Figure 8.1.26. Above: Hartney. 16-6-23W. Originally known as Hartney Farm, after postmaster James Hartney, the community thrived for years with its two railway connections. *(U of AB - Peels.)*

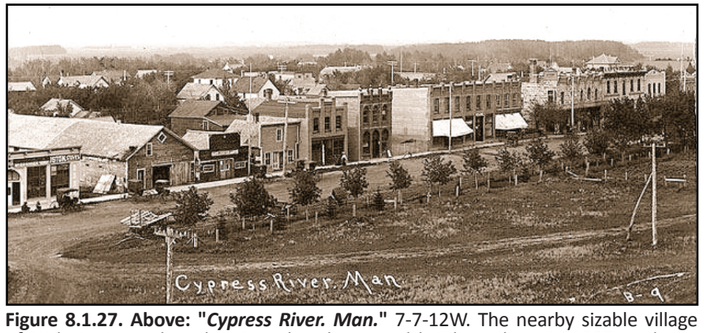


Figure 8.1.27. Above: "*Cypress River. Man.*" 7-7-12W. The nearby sizable village of Littleton moved to this site when by-passed by the railway in 1887, and was renamed Cypress River after the nearby waterway. *(A of MB.)*

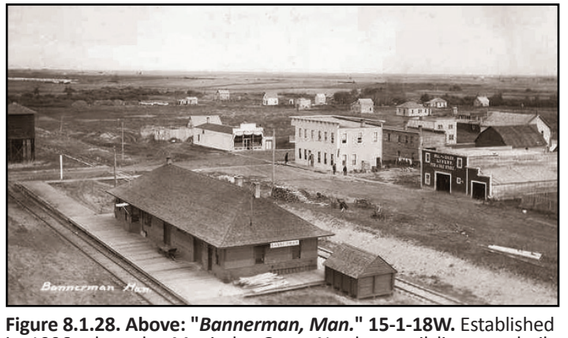


Figure 8.1.28. Above: "*Bannerman, Man.*" 15-1-18W. Established in 1906 when the Manitoba Great Northern rail line was built between Devils Lake N.D. and Brandon. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.1.29. Business advertisements. Following is a sampling of advertisements published in local BTNHR newspapers during the settlement period. These include: *The Darlingford Comet,* Nelson's *Manitoba Mountaineer*, *The Ninette News*, *The Morden Chronicle and Morden Herald,* Emerson's *Southern Manitoba Times*, *The Swan Lake Echo and Somerset News, The Turtle Mountain Country* among others. *(PMA.)*

ANGLO-AMERICAN HOTEL,
Corner of Main and Church Streets,
EMERSON, MAN.,
Good Stabling in Connection.
Free Bus to and from all Boats and Trains.
RATES: $1 and $1.50 per Day.
The Travelling Public will find this Hotel Second to none in the Province.
Office of the Morris and Nelsonville Stage Lines.
J. E. JOHNSTON, Proprietor.

EMERSON HOTEL
Corner Main and Dominion Sts
The Best Accommodation for Travellers.
FIRST-CLASS BAR AND BILLIARD PARLOR.
Close to the Boats and Trains.
C. PRUD'HOMME, Proprietor.

Money at 9 per cent.
The National Investment Co.,
OF CANADA, (Limited,)
Will Advance money to
Actual Farmers Only,
AT 9 PER CENT. YEARLY.
Payable at end of term or in instalments to suit borrower.
CASH WITHIN ONE WEEK.
after application.
EXPENSES LOW.
Interest payable here.
J. B. McLAREN, - NELSON.

Morden Meat Market
Wholesale and Retail
OPPOSITE DUFFERIN HALL, STEPHEN STREET,
is the place to go for best quality and greater variety of Fresh and Cured Meats, Poultry, &c. Fresh Salmon Trout from Lake Superior per express every Thursday.
SNOWDEN & NELSON, PROPRIETORS.
P.S.—We do not claim to be Pioneers but what is of far more importance, thoroughly practical.

WATSON'S MILL
PEMBINA CROSSING,
Will be in complete running order THIS WEEK
Cash Paid for Sawlogs and Firewood.
The New Hall will be finished shortly.
DICKSON & BAIRD
Pembina Crossing, Dec. 11, 1882

Haslam & Wilson,
Dealers in all kinds of Agricultural Implements.
Whitewater Wagon, Best in the Market.
Smith's Falls Plows, only Canadian Plow already a Success in Manitoba.
TORONTO REAPER AND MOWER.
Sawyer Grain Savers, Oshawa Seeders & Rakes, Waterous Champion Engines.
Warehouses: Winnipeg, Emerson, West Lynne, Portage la Prairie, Rapid City.

Hardware, Stoves!
TINWARE!
All Lines Full and Well Assorted.
Also, a few good SEWING MACHINES that I will sell CHEAP.
T. B. GODFREY,
Nelson, Manitoba.
Nelson, May 14, 1884.

FRESH LIME AND BRICK,
IN ANY QUANTITY, on application to the
Whitewater Brick
MANUFACTURING CO.,
BOX 570, DELORAINE, MAN.

WEST LYNNE
CARRIAGE & WAGON SHOP,
Second Street.
All kinds of Farming Implements, Spring-Boards and fancy buggies. Made to Order.
Repairing done neatly. City and farm work, attended to with promptness. Satisfaction guaranteed.
HORSE SHOEING
—AND—
General Blacksmithing
FRITH BROS., Proprietors.

WINNIPEG ALPHABETICAL DIRECTORY. 65
H. BOSE,
Drover, Butcher, and Packer!
Beef, Mutton, Veal, Pork and Lamb. Game, Poultry and Fish in Season. Dealer in
WORKING AND FAT CATTLE Milch Cows and Young Stock.
Hogs, Sheep and Live Poultry constantly on hand.
Land taken in trade or on Mortgages
Stall No. 5 and 7 City Market, Packing House and Yard
Corner Portage Avenue and Smith St., 100 yds. west of Main.

ASHDOWN & CO.,
EMERSON, MAN.
CASPER KILLER, EMERSON. J. H. ASHDOWN, WINNIPEG.
IMPORTERS AND GENERAL DEALERS IN
Groceries,
Hardware,
Dry Goods,
Glassware,
Boots & Shoes,
Drugs, etc.,
Farming Implements,
Hats & Caps,
Ready Made Clothing,
Etc. Etc.
The Only Place that can Fit Out Immigrant Parties Complete.
Constantly on hand a Large and Varied Stock at ROCK BOTTOM PRICES.
Brick Store, Corner Main and Dominion Streets.

Pianoforte
Mrs. T. Martin Harper
(CERT. L. C. M.)
London College of Music, England
TEACHER OF PIANOFORTE.
Belmont • Manitoba

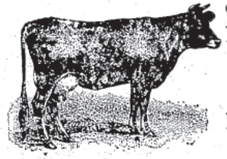
WM. GARRETT,
MACHINIST AND
GENERAL BLACKSMITH,
MORDEN, MAN.
SOLE AGENT in Southern Manitoba for Wallace's ACETYLENE GAS APPARATUS, the best light ever produced. Correspondence solicited.

MORDEN
HARNESS SHOP.
Harness Cheap.
PRICES REDUCED ON TEAM HARNESS.
No. 1. Team Harness, one and a-half in Trace, Crooper and Hip Strap, for
$28 CASH,
Old Price $32.
Good Flat Trace Harness for
$22 CASH.
Team Collars from $1.00 to $5.50 per pair.
J. H. RUDDELL.

War in Hardware
THE CRASH HAS COME.
PRICE OF STOVES CUT IN HALF
Queen Heating Stove
Leads them all.
SKATES. SLEIGH BELLS.
DUNCAN GUNN, - - MANITOU

PILOT MOUND
BLACKSMITH & CARRIAGE SHOP.
Having manufactured Buggies, Buckboards, Spring Waggons, Cutters and Sleighs for some time, I intend going into it more extensively in the future. I get my wood work up from the best Houses in Ontario, and I am prepared to put out first-class work at prices as low as the quality of the work will allow. All kinds of repairing done. Satisfaction guaranteed. Thanking my patrons for past orders and soliciting a continuance of the same.—I remain, yours truly,
JAMES STUART, PILOT MOUND.

Swan Lake Meat Market
Come to us for Fresh
Beef & Pork
Home Made Sausages
Pickled Beef and Pork
The Best COOKED HAM



E. BOISSONNAULT,
BUTCHER & STOCK DEALER SWAN LAKE

FALL AND WINTER, 1896.
We start out this Fall with a complete stock of Fall and Winter
Pure Woolen Goods.
Our White and Grey Blankets, Shirtings, Tweeds, Etoffes, Flannels, Serges, Weaving and Knitting Yarns, all colors, are manufactured here in Morden, and we guarantee them to be free from shoddy.
Only Pure Manitoba Wool used. Our Blankets and Shirtings are the best value in the Dominion.
Special attention to farmers exchanging their Wool. Call and inspect our stock. Terms Cash or Wool, and one price to all.
MORDEN WOOLEN MILLS.
P. S.—We are prepared to take Good Green Wood in exchange for our goods.

Revere - House!
Opposite Ogilvie Elevator.
OLDEST ESTABLISHED HOUSE IN THE CITY.
C. WILLIAMS, - - Proprietor
EVERY ACCOMMODATION FOR TRAVELLERS
Comfortable Sitting Room for Ladies. Good Beds; firstclass Table; large Sample Rooms; a first-class House in every repect. RATES. $1.00 and $1.50 per day.
CHOICE LIQUORS AND CIGARS.
Stage Office for all points West and South of Deloraine.

MONTGOMERY & CO
NORTH OF REVERE HOUSE.
Sole agency for the celebrated Rapid City yarn.
TEA BY HALF CHESTS A SPECIALTY.
If you want a Hat, Bonnet, Dress, Mantle, Suit or overcoat made, give us a call.

MISSES
Balfour & Robinson,
Dress and Mantle Makers.
Will be pleased to receive a call from the Ladies of Crystal City and vicinity. All orders will receive careful attention.

MANITOU CARRIAGE
AND
GENERAL REPAIR SHOP.
WHILE thanking my patrons for past favors, I beg leave to state that I am in a better position than ever to attend to their wants in my line. Having placed machinery in my workshop, I am now prepared to turn out work expeditiously and at a reduction on former prices.
All kinds of Repairing, Sawing and Turning done on short notice.
J. C. FINDLAY
Manitou, Manitoba.

MACHINE SHOP
WE HAVE A SHOP FITTED WITH THE MOST MODERN MACHINERY AND ARE PREPARED TO DO ANY KIND OF REPAIRING TO ALL KINDS OF MACHINERY.
THRESHERMEN
GET YOUR REPAIRING DONE BEFORE THE RUSH SEASON COMMENCES.
REPAIRS
ALL KINDS OF THRESHERMEN'S REPAIRS AND SUPPLIES CARRIED IN STOCK.
HARRISON BROS.
HOLMFIELD, MANITOBA

P. W. F. Law,

BUTCHER
DARLINGFORD AND THORNHILL
'Phone No. 7.
CHOICE
Beef, Pork, Veal and Mutton
FISH IN SEASON.
Smoked and Salt Meats always on hand.
Highest Price Given for Hides, Wool and all kinds of Furs.

LIME

Preston Bros.'

ROCK LAKE LIME KILNS.

Apply P. F. CURTIS,
MERCHANT, BALDUR.

Furniture and Undertaking

HILL & McAULEY

—SUCCESSORS TO—

SAUNDERS, HILL & CO., MANITOU.

Cartwright Livery and Feed Stable.

Dont forgot when in town that I keep on hand first-class horses and rigs and careful drivers.

T. J. IRESON, Prop.

ELLIS HOUSE, Manitou

Opp. the Station.

The Favorite Hotel Of Southern Manitoba.

Affords every convenience for the comfort of guests. Lighted throughout by Acetylene Gas. Moderate rates.

R. H. SHORE, Proprietor.

Victoria Hotel
CRYSTAL CITY
W. Williams.
PROPRIETOR.

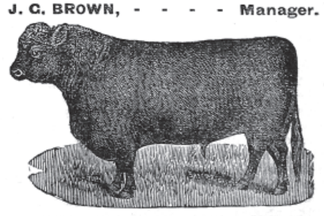
First class accomodation. Sample Room for Commercial men.

LIVERY IN CONNECTION

Every attention given to guests and the travelling public generally.

CHARGES MODERATE.

HOPE FARM
St. Jean Baptiste, Man.
J. C. BROWN, - - - - Manager.



GALLOWAY CATTLE.

Foundation of herd imported direct from Scotland. Imported Bulls at present on hand. Sheep for sale. Pure-bred Durhams and high grade stock for sale.

The Cheap Store
BUY
Your Groceries
Confectionery, Fruit, and Oysters
At Morden Grocery,
Opposite the Queen's Hotel, Morden.

P.S.—The accounts of the estate of Mr. A. E. SINCLAIR will be handed in for collection after December 5th, if not settled by that date.

FREEBORN & Co

CARTWRIGHT
Skating and Curling
RINK
Open Every Night of the Week

First class accommodation for both Curlers and Skaters.

CURLING

Gentlemen	$5 00
Ladies	4 00

SKATING

Gentlemen	4 00
Ladies	3 00
Children	2 00
Family	8 00
Combined Skating & Curling	8 00
Casual skaters per night	0 15

One dollar rebate on out-of-town ticket holders. Neighboring clubs always welcome.

Cartwright Skating and Curling Rink Company.

W. J. BARKER, Sec'y. JAS. GRAY, Pres.

Interesting Notice.

A young man, fairly good circumstances, good connections, who gets his mail in Cartwright, desires to correspond with a number of young ladies, with a view to matrimony. Encumbrance no obstacle. Address,

K. REVIEW, Cartwright.

Baldur Flour Mills

FLOUR, POT BARLEY
ALWAYS ON HAND.

GRISTING AND CHOPPING A SPECIALTY.

Band & McDonell,
PROPRIETORS.
BALDUR, MAN.

CRYSTAL CITY.

Roller Mills!

NOTICE TO FARMERS.

Those desiring Chopping and Gristing, will require to bring in their grain before June 25. After that date the Mill will be closed down for three months for repairs.

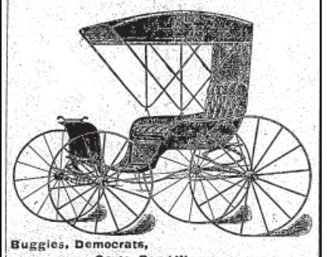
GREENWAY BROS.

Kempsey House.

First Class Hotel accommodation. Choice cigars and liquors at the bar. Livery and feed stable in connection. Horses for sale or exchange.

J. J. Lindsay
Proprietor

CLOSING OUT.



Buggies, Democrats, Carts, Road Wagons, Sulkies, Etc.

I have on hand about thirty five rigs of various descriptions which must be sold at once as I am giving up business. Call at once for bargains.

Emerson July 1st, 1893. J. W. McDONALD.

Scott & Rutherford
DEALERS IN
FURNITURE
of all descriptions

UNDERTAKING
a speciality
MORDEN, MAN.

Phone 37 ring 6. Phone 37 ring 6.

Poultry Season

We pay the highest prices for poultry. No poor birds will be taken.

Poultry must be delivered at Ninette not later than Wednesday of each week.

Slip your poultry to us.

Joseph Hughes
Ninette - Manitoba.

THIS IS THE STOVE THAT SAVES YOU MONEY

The New Perfection Oil Cookstove uses kerosene,—the cheapest fuel to use. Costs less than gas, coal or wood—5 to 10 cents a day is its fuel cost for the average family.

Besides, the New Perfection is ready when you want it—no fires to build, no smoke, no ashes. In 1, 2, 3 and 4 burner sizes at these dealers:

T. E. Poole, Baldur.

Royalite Coal Oil gives best results.

THE IMPERIAL OIL COMPANY LIMITED
BRANCHES IN ALL CITIES

McClung's Strawberry Compound Cures All Summer Complaints.

R. W. McCLUNG & Co., Druggists, Pilot Mound.

If You Require,

Lumber, Lath, Shingles, Lime, Cement, Plaster, Sash and Doors,

—BUILDING PAPER,—

Come to Darlingford Yard

HEAVY Timber,
FINISHING Lumber,
Always on hand.

G. E. Davidson. Darlingford

Mr. Mark Scott begs to announce that his

Clyde Stud-Horse
"MAC"

Color, Bay; Weight, 1,700 lbs.

Will stand for service, during the coming season, at

DARLINGFORD

A full line of Lister Engines and Melnotte Cream Separators

A Full line of J. I. Case Threshing Machinery and Supplies

T. J. BOYCE
Implement Dealer SOMERSET, Man.

Phone 40 P.O. Box 904.

F. Bolton.
General Commission Agent.

Ogilve's Flour and Rolled Oats.
- - Best on the Market - -

Manitou Flour, Wheat Granules, Graham Flour, Bran and Shorts.
The Best and the Cheapest.

Try a bag of Graham Flour and tone up your digestive organs.

Gasoline by the bbl. always on hand.

Corrugated-Iron
Siding Ceiling and Roofing.
Lumber, Lime and Cement.

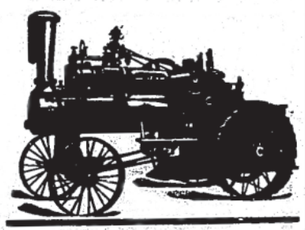
Bring in the measure of your Storm Windows and Doors. and be prepared for Winter.

F. BOLTON,
Railway Street, South. Darlingford, Manitoba.

A. C. HOUGHTON,

J. I. CASE
...Threshing Machine...

Dealer in
Raymond Sewing Machines



Main Street, Belmont, Man.

Care for a Ride Tonight?

SHAKE the dusty cobwebs from your brain. Enjoy the exhilarating freshness of the country. Take an evening's spin to the bathing beach,—to the trout pool.

A week-end in the woods with gun and dog are yours for the asking. Do not envy your neighbors.

A Ford Touring Car will give you daily pleasure. Your family will appreciate it too.

Ford Runabout $660. Touring $690. On Open models the Electric Starting and Lighting equipment is $100 extra.

Coupe $975, Sedan $1,175. Closed model prices include Electric Starting and Lighting Equipment. Demountable rims, tire carrier, non-skid tires on rear as optional equipment on closed cars only at $75.00 extra.

These prices are f. o. b. Ford, Ont., and do not include War Tax.

Buy only Genuine Ford Parts
796 Canadian Dealers and over 8,000 Service Garages supply them.

J. & G. PLAYFAIR, Dealers, Baldur

Sam Long Laundry.

Having started a laundry in Cartwright, I am prepared to do work at the following prices:

White shirt	15c, 2 for 25c.
Collars	3 for 10c.
Cuffs	2 for 15c.
Undershirts & drawers	2 for 15c.
Socks, per pair	5c.
Handkercheifs	4 for 10c.

SAM LONG, CARTWRIGHT.

MILLINERY

Having opened up a fine stock of all the latest styles in Millinery, ladies wishing anything in my line will do well to call before going elsewhere. Prices Low.

Miss RAE, Wawanesa

Restaurant AND French Bakery

Ice Cream Parlor

Cigars Cigarettes Tobacco

Fruits in Season

Try a Loaf of our Bread

Agents at Altamont, Cardinal, Swan Lake, Marinpolis, Baldur, Greenway, Wakopa, etc

L. Laporte, Somerset

J. P. Spafford

Dealer in

Groceries, Flour, and Feed.

Lands for sale.

Agent for Massey Harris Coy Implements.

Bannerman. Man.

Gus. Bates
Butcher

Dealer in

Fresh and Salt Meats.

Fish and game in Season

Highest price paid for Stock and Hides.

Bannerman. Man.

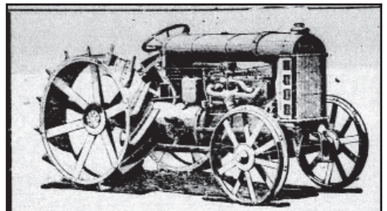
Bricks!

The Darlingford Brick & Tile Co., Ltd.,

For Sale
No. 1
White Brick.

Write for Prices to:—
C. E. Martin, Secretary.

Darlingford Man



The Fordson for grinding or cutting straw is unexcelled by any motive power. It will also plow your fields Pull your Binder, and Thresh your Crop when hitched to the Hood Bros. Steel Separator the cheapest, easiest, running, up-to-date Thresher on the market. Repairs always on hand at

J. STRANG & CO., Baldur, Manitoba

Dealer in Fords and Fordsons

Agents for the Universal Car

8.2 BUSINESS AND COMMERCE

With the extension of the CPR's Pembina Mountain branch line westward across the BTNHR during the early 1880s, life for the vast majority of residents improved fairly quickly and the pace of settlement quickened. Fledgling towns and villages sprang up all along the rail line, wherever railway station sidings and loading platforms were built to facilitate loading and unloading of boxcars. These station sidings were established at regular intervals along the line, about 6 to 10 mi. (15 km), the distance a horse-drawn farm vehicle could comfortably travel to and return home in a single day.

Most of the new townsites were owned, or co-owned, by the CPR, which would purchase the intended station siding site from the homesteader, and/or provide the original land owner with a selection of town lots in exchange. Standard plan townsites were often automatically surveyed by the CPR. Lots would be sold locally and at regular real estate auctions held in Winnipeg and some eastern cities. Buildings began to be erected as soon as the raised earthen rail grade bed was completed. The earthen grades were left to naturally settle, for a minimum of six months, prior to the laying of ties and rails. As soon as it was assured that the grade would indeed be receiving rails and be completed, (not always a certainty), businesses of various sorts would be erected. These were most often located along the street facing the station grounds, which the CPR almost always named "Railway Street", while along the siding itself, grain elevators, loading platforms, livestock pens, and flour mills would be erected. Various residences, churches, and a school would also normally accompany the establishment of various businesses in these new townsites. Figure. 8.3.8.

Towns were quick to be established along every new line, and during railway expansion, obtaining construction materials for town structures was often difficult, even with the railway as a carrier, as noted by one observer from Deloraine. "*The railroad service at this time could not bring in lumber fast enough to supply the demands, and it was no uncommon sight to see a string of teams on the trails from Brandon and Boissevain hauling in building material, even long after the railway track had been laid.*" *(Hamm'88 :79.)*

Often the new business establishments were relocated older establishments, as shown by the following personal recollection. "*On January 2nd, 1886 T.J. Lawlor arrived at Killarney station with a railway car load of general merchandise and building material. In the meantime, he had arranged to have his store in Tisdale taken down and the material hauled overland to the new town of Killarney. Mr. Mills, of Gretna, was the first carpenter on the scene, and with the lumber of the Tisdale store and the supply shipped from Rosenfeld, he proceeded to erect the first building on the townsite, a new store for T.J. Lawlor.*" *(Killarney'70 :4.)*

For the farmers out on the land, the arrival of the railway was a much awaited connection to the outside world. With daily train travel to Winnipeg and points between, a greater variety of goods were now just an afternoon's wagon ride away in town. As well, perishable farm produce, such as vegetables, butter, eggs, poultry and dressed meat, even berries and fish, could now be sold at various stores in town, which were shipped the next morning by train to stores and customers in Winnipeg. The week-long trip by team and wagon to Emerson, or after 1882 to Manitou, for basics and supplies were now, thankfully, a thing of the past. The BTNHR could now truly be fully settled and developed. Everybody felt that better days were sure to be just around the corner.

The many new railside towns would have been fairly similar in terms of the types of businesses and services established. Most early railway towns would have had at least one general store, but some had two or three. There would have been a butcher, a hardware store or two, a grist mill, and often a lumber mill and tinsmith. A shoemaker and tailor would also be found in each town, often located in premises above a general store that sold shoes or materials and patterns used by the tailor or housewife, to make articles of clothing. There would also have been a schoolhouse and one or more churches. The town would have had a hotel or stopping house and other businesses catering to the needs of travellers and their horses, including livery stables, harness makers, and blacksmiths. As the farm economy in the BTNHR began to pick up, due to improved grain prices and a number of bumper crops during the 1890s, the increased cash flow, and growing population, attracted and sustained increased numbers and variety of local town businesses such as private and corporate banks, jewelers, doctors and lawyers, furniture stores, carriage makers, photographers, bakers, loans and insurance agents, milliners for hats and dresses, among others including, in some communities, creameries, cheese plants, and brick manufacturing operations.

General Stores

It was said that the early general stores might have been small, but they provided just about anything you might need: fresh produce that was brought in by local farmers when it was in season, dry goods, sugar, flour, oat-meal, raisins, boots and shoes, hardware items, medicines, overcoats, fur caps, shirts, corsets, skirts, moccasins, and even agricultural implements. Smaller goods were all arranged neatly on shelves that lined the walls from top to bottom and on counters located about the room. Many food items such as raisins, flour, sugar, salt and apples came in big barrels and were sold in bulk. The customers would bring their own container to be filled. General stores also had a unique smell to them. The scent of spices, bolts of new material, fresh leather, candy and all the other goods, including floor oil, combined to form a unique memorable aroma not experienced in any store today. Until the arrival of the railway, it was hard for the stores in the western districts of the BTNHR to get their stock and orders delivered quickly, requiring many days of travel to the nearest supplier. Stores located in the new railway towns quickly out-preformed the old trailside village stores and most moved to the nearest railway connected town. As time went on, stores began to be more specialized, and the old pioneer era "all-in-one general store" faded from the economic scene, but not from the memories of those who lived during those heady days. *(Louise'79 :117.)*

Blacksmiths

Every town had its "village smithy" for shoeing horses and other metalwork and repairs. Like the early general stores, the town blacksmith shop was a most interesting and much frequented place of business. Horseshoes and pieces of metal of all sizes and description would have been hung from the rafters and stacked against the walls, assorted tools and equipment would be strewn about, and everything was coated with coal dust. A large forge would be located in one corner where a hot fire

Figure 8.2.2. Above: A busy day on First Avenue, Reston. Farm wagons and buggies on the streets of Reston. Note absence of electrical wiring and utility posts along the street suggesting the photo was likely taken during the later 1880s or early 1890s. *(A of MB.)*

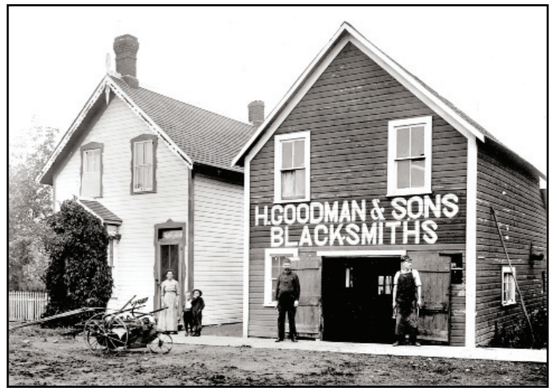


Figure 8.2.3. Above: "*Goodman & Sons Blacksmiths.*" Baldur. Circa 1910. Note the family residence with Mrs. Goodman and two small boys at left; the family blacksmith shop, with Mr. Goodman and, likely, an older son, on the right; and a sulky plow, likely in for repair, at left front. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.4. Above: Blacksmith shop interior. Boissevain. Circa 1910. Note the blacksmith, at right, with the hammer and anvil, and the other, at left, using a belt-driven mechanized hammer, powered, no doubt, by a gasoline engine situated at the back of the shop. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.5. Above: Grand Central Hotel in Killarney. Circa 1910. During the late 1880s and early 1890s, wood frame construction still predominated, but soon gave way to brick and stone. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.6. Above: Hotel bar. Boissevain. Circa 1910. All hotels had a barroom, where male guests and local male residents, could enjoy a libation or two. Note the spittoons, the brass foot rail and the elk trophy head on the rear wall. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.7. Above: Typical commercial strip, circa 1890. Most towns in the BTNHR, during the 1890s, would have had a scene similar to the one photographed above in Carberry, which includes adjacent businesses, consisting of a hotel, livery stable, agricultural implement dealership and a blacksmith. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.8. Above: Butcher shop interior. Note the sides of meat on the cutting table and on the wall at the rear, the bone saws and trophy head on the side wall, and weigh scale and wrapping paper stand on the counter. *(MHS'53 :Turnbull.)*

Figure 8.2.9. Above: T&T Jones, Butchers. A typical, early butcher shop, with residence overhead, in Virden, 1900. Daniel Armitage, of Manitou, recalled butchers were not very common in early days. He added that Mr. William Bradley was one of the first butchers in Manitou and that "*he smelled worse than a dead animal.*" *(MHS'53 :Armitage.)*

Figure 8.2.10. Above: Hardware store interior. Somerset, circa 1910. Note among the many items available, the hand-cranked butter churn, at left, and a more basic "plunger" type churn, at the front right. Note also a treadle sewing machine and kitchen stove at centre right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.11. Above: Harness shop interior, 1908. George Pulford, in his harness shop in Dunrea**.** He was in great demand at the time, and served an area from Minto east to Ninette and south to KIllarney. He was known to fix anything that was leather related. *(A of MB.)*

blazed all day long with the blacksmith heating metal to be shaped and sharpened, and pounding with all his strength on glowing horseshoes, chisels, and other tools.

Much of a blacksmith's time was spent sharpening plowshares or patching share tips broken off by impacting a stone. Harrow teeth required regular sharpening, accomplished by pounding each tooth on all four sides, while red hot, and bringing the end to a point. Buggy shafts were also brought to the blacksmith to be repaired. Every autumn, the blacksmith would be busy setting wagon wheel rims. During the summer, the hot dry weather would cause the wooden felloes to shrink and the metal rim surrounding it would loosen or fall off. The rims would be carefully heated and cooled to slightly shrink the circumference. If not done correctly, the whole wheel might burst under the pressure. Occasionally, the metal band around the wooden wheel hub had to be tightened, although not as often because it was seldom in water, as was the felloe. The village smith could do just about anything with metal, from shaping horseshoes and hinges to making his own forge tools. Pieces of scrap metal were made into hinges and custom made hand tools for area farmers. A good blacksmith was able to tell if a piece of metal was of good quality by the tone it made when struck while balancing it on his finger, much like a tuning fork. *(Louise'74 :128.)*

Livery Stables

Almost every early town in the BTNHR had a livery stable that rented horses or looked after your horse while you stayed at a hotel or stopping place. They also rented teams of horses and buggies, wagons, or cutters. At one time, it cost 15 cents to stand your horse and 50 cents if you wanted it fed. Many livery stables were run in conjunction with hotels as a service for their guests. At Christmas time and during dances, the livery was always full. There would be horses tied in each stall and, then, if more came, a rope would be run through rings on the side of the stalls and more horses tied to this rope. The Crystal City livery stable did a very brisk business during the wheat boom years, as there was a great deal of coming and going. "*Mr. Snowball had several good driving horses; also, buggies well-equipped with buffalo robes, or rugs for cold weather. Buffalo robes were as common as house-blankets are today. One day an Englishman came into the barn and asked if he might have a horse and buggy to drive out in the country some distance. Mr. Snowball assured him that he could and as he went to get the horse he asked the traveller if he would like a buffalo as the day was rather cold. He replied quite indignantly, 'Nooo, I don't want a buffalo, I want a blooming 'orse.' So, like most Englishmen, he got what he wanted.*" *(McKitrick'00 :21.)*

Harness Makers

Found in most early BTNHR communities was a harness maker who would sell and repair horse harnesses. Leather was expensive during the early days and more harnesses were repaired than sold in such shops. A farmer might buy half a steer hide and cut his own straps to repair parts of the harness on his own. Boot and shoe stores often also dealt with leather and harness repairs, if there wasn't a harness shop in town. In such cases, the store owner often had an apprentice to help him with the harness side of the business. The skillfully sewn fancy driving harness, lines, and collars, etc. made by experienced harness makers were said to have been a wonderous sight to behold, as well as smell. Russell Wyman who, as a child, lived in Cypress River during the early 1900s, later fondly recalled in a self-published biography, "*The harness shop was a wonderful place to visit. That heady smell of leather! Harness and horse collars in various stages of advancement, and all sorts of things from saddles to sleigh bells hanging on the walls! Years later, on a visit to Cypress River, I revisited that shop with dad and experienced the same smell and elation.*" *(Wyman'88 :14.)*

Peddlers and Travelling Salesmen

In the early years, travelling salesmen were commonplace, toting their goods across the Region, by train, by foot and by horse and wagon. The "commercial salesmen" usually travelled from town to town visiting the store keepers. "Peddlers" dealt directly with the farmers and travelled the countryside, going from farmhome to farmhome. Their wagons would be filled with pots and pans, soaps, potions and notions, along with various items they picked up along the way. Goods, often never before imagined by the settlers, were unveiled by the salesmen as he drew back the lids of his trunks. Consequently, the travelling salesman was a welcome visitor, as the following recollection suggests, "*As time went on and money became more plentiful, the travelling salesman was a popular visitor. He came with his covered van drawn by a team of horses and the delights that van held! Shiny pot and pans, yard goods, patent medicines, talcum powder, soaps, and articles too numerous to mention, suddenly appeared at the door as if by magic. Peddlers also sold 'Hole Comfort' ranges door to door, and 'Chatham' kitchen cabinets. Many homes also got their first piano or organ from a door to door travelling salesman. Sometimes, he would accept a horse in trade as payment. In later decades, the door to door salesman came by automobile and sold wares for companies such as Fuller Brush, Wearever Brush, Watkins, Rawleighs, and Kressy to name but a few.*" When automobiles became more affordable and common, housewives could buy their own specific needs in easily accessed nearby towns using the family car, and the profitability of being a travelling salesman diminished. However, to those who grew up during the early decades of the BTNHR, a visit by the travelling salesman was always an exciting and memorable event. *(Louis'74 :44.)*

D.A. McKay's father owned a store in Crystal City. He recalled the travelling salesmen fondly as well: "*Most of the 'Commercial Travellers,' as they were known, came from Toronto or Montreal. They carried 10 or 12 big trunks of dry good samples. They would come over to the store, after making arrangement to have their trunks delivered to the sample rooms at the hotel. On entering the store, and shaking hands all around, they would present my father with a cigar and make an appointment to show their goods. Often, if it were an old friend, my father would ask him up to the house for supper.*" *(Gosnell'68 :386.)*

Draying

Draying, or custom freighting, was another common early enterprise. William Duncan went into the draying business soon after arriving in Crystal City in 1885. Building construction material, and freighters to haul it to building sites, were both in high demand at the time. He charged customers $2.00 a barrel for lime, and $1.50 per cubic yard for sand needed for mortar. Field stone cost $8.00 per cord, a cord consisting of four loads. Lumber cost $15.00 to $20.00 per thousand linear feet. Also, both town livery stables and home stables required a steady supply of hay, which was bought locally, and for which William charged $1.50 to $3.00 per rack load hauled into town. *(MHS'53 :Duncan.)*

1888 Business Reviews

In 1888, a commercial business directory was published highlighting major businesses in towns located along the CPR's new rail lines, including in the new communities of Gretna, Manitou, Killarney, Boissevain and Deloraine in the BTNHR. These descriptions provide an excellent overview of the types and nature of typical businesses established in rail-side communities across the BTNHR, including the smaller communities established a few years later as the spur lines were built from various strategic points along the main regional branch line. A sampling is copied below. Some passages have been edited for length. *(CHP'88 :72.)*

Gretna

***"E. Penner & Co., Wholesale and Retail Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Hardware,* Groceries and Provisions**. *An important branch of commercial activity, and one deserving of prominent mention, is that enterprising and successful concern of E. Penner & Co., dealers in silks, woolens, linens, hosiery, clothing, gents' furnishings, hats, caps, hardware, groceries, provisions, etc. Employment is given to 28 people. The premises occupied are large and commodious, being 26 x 75 feet in size, and well adapted for the trade, situated on Main Street, in the centre of the business portion of the city. The business was established some 13 years ago in Niverville, Man. They moved to this place in 1883, being one of the oldest firms located here, and since its inception has enjoyed a prosperous career. The members of the firm are E. Penner, Otto Schulz and H.P. Hansen. Mr. Penner is a member of the Municipal Council and treasurer of the School Board, while Mr. Schulz is Justice of the Peace. The firm has a branch at Reinland. The members of this firm are well known in commercial circles as honourable, conscientious business men.*

Queen's Hotel, John N. Braun, proprietor. *The travelling public cannot find a better conducted or more popular hotel at which to stop in Gretna than the Queen's. The proprietor of this popular hotel came to this town about four years ago. Previous to this time, Mr. Braun was proprietor of the Sherman House at Winnipeg. The Queen's is situated in the centre of the business portion of the town, and is large and commodious, being two storeys in height. On the first floor is the office, bar, dining-room and sample rooms. On the second floor are the parlours and 14 handsomely furnished sleeping rooms, all large, airy chambers. The dining-room is a very spacious one, and the table is always provided with the very best the market affords and all delicacies in season. The billiard-room is the most commodious in the town, while the bar is stocked with the best wines, liquors and cigars. A free bus and a porter meet all trains, and every assistance is rendered to guests on arrival at the station."*

Manitou

"***R. McKenzie, Carriage Manufactory, Main Street.*** *The prosperity of a town is greatly enhanced by the encouragement of its manufacturers; its importance as a purchasing point is also increased, resulting alike in advantages to the manufacturer, merchant and citizen. Of all the classes that go to make up a community, none is more deserving our regard than the manufacturer. He invests his capital, time and talents in producing that which gives employment to man. Among the noted manufacturers of carriages, wagons and sleighs in our country, we take pleasure in calling attention to Mr. R. McKenzie's, on Main Street, who has been engaged in this line here for over four years. Mr. McKenzie's success has been in a great measure due to the excellence of his work, everything turned out of this establishment being unexcelled by any manufactory in the country. He is an extensive builder of buggies, wagons and sleighs, and is ready to build any kind which his patrons desire. Horse-shoeing and general carriage work also form a large feature of his business, repairing being done most thoroughly, and at the same time expeditiously. Mr. McKenzie is highly respected, and has won an enviable reputation in his branch of business, and the large trade he has secured is the result of his earnest endeavours to do his work in the best style and at moderate prices.*

Kerr & Magee, Furniture Warerooms, Main Street. This firm carries on one of the most extensive furniture establishments in Southern Manitoba, and a visit to their warerooms, at the above mentioned place, will be well repaid by a view of one of the finest assortment of all kinds of furniture to be found in any city on the M.&S.W. Railway. The firm occupies a building on Main street, which is of large dimension, giving them by far a larger amount of floor space than is possessed by any similar establishment in the country. The stocks of furniture embrace the most chaste and beautiful in bedroom sets, while the richly upholstered parlour suites are certain to excite the admiration of all. In desks, plain and rolling tops, office furniture, dining-room and kitchen sets, there is the most complete variety, the whole constituting a splendid assortment. Messrs. Kerr and Magee are highly esteemed by the community, and are entitled to the success which they enjoy."

Pilot Mound

"***J.T. Gordon, Wholesale and Retail Lumber, Sash, Doors, etc., Grain Buyer and Stock Dealer, office, Railway Street.*** *In an historical review of the manufacturing and business interests of the Northwest, the establishment of J.T. Gordon, whose office, warehouse and yards are located on Railway Street, is deserving of special mention and a prominent position. This business was established in 1886. Mr. Gordon is one of the heavy grain buyers and shippers of livestock in this part of the country. Being one of the first to venture in business here, it is but just to give him credit for his financial success. He handles all kinds of lumber, sash, doors, blinds, lath and shingles. Mr. Gordon is an enterprising and energetic business man, and is highly esteemed by all who know him.*

J.A. Hobbs, Drugs, Stationery and Fancy Articles, Railway Street. *This business was started in 1886, and from its inception has proved a success. The premises occupied are spacious and commodious, admirably arranged and equipped for the accommodation of a large and valuable stock, embracing a fine assortment of drugs, medicine, toilet articles, druggists' sundries, jewelry, watches, clocks, etc., books, stationery and musical instruments. Special attention is given to the careful compounding of physicians' prescriptions, which department is under the special supervision of Mr. Hobbs. He is a gentleman of large practical experience, having served a lengthy apprenticeship previous to starting business in this place. Mr. Hobbs is widely known and highly esteemed in pharmaceutical circles as an energetic, clear-headed business man, honourable, liberal and fair in all transactions, and well meriting the success he is achieving.*

Baird Bros., Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Groceries, etc. Grain Buyers, Railway Street. *Among the leading business establishments of southern Manitoba is that of Baird Bros., dealers in dry goods, clothing, boots and shoes, groceries, etc., also buyers and shippers of grain. This is one of the most enterprising firms in Pilot Mound, and is worthy of extended mention in a work devoted to a description of the leading industrial and business interests of the county. Baird Bros. established themselves here in 1883, and by strict attention to business, coupled with a straightforward system of honourable dealing, have won their way into the front rank of our most substantial merchants. The premises occupied are commodious*

Figure 8.2.12. Above: Hotels. During the boom years, large two and three storey hotels, like the Hotel Manitoba in Morden, above, were profitable enterprises, as almost all out-of-town visitors arrived by train and required accommodation. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.13. Above: Commercial blocks. Fowler Block in Baldur was typical of many commercial buildings erected in the BTNHR during the wheat boom years with businesses on the main level and rental commercial or residential apartments above. Photo circa 1910. *(U of BDN :Wall Coll.)*

Figure 8.2.14. Above: General stores. Interior of Alex Fowler's Store, Baldur. Note the glassware on the back wall, packaged and tin goods at right, towels on the overhead rack, and weighing scale on the counter. *(U of BDN :Wall Coll.)*

Figure 8.2.15. Above: Hardware stores. Note, at left, the dishes and cookware on the shelves, the rolls of building paper with the tin pail on top, and the stove barrel in the middle of the room. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.16. Above: "*Merchant's Ltd. Cartwright.*" Many commercial buildings in the BTNHR, built between 1890 and 1910, were constructed of locally sourced granite boulderstone such as this excellent example formerly located in Cartwright. The sign atop the cornice states "Grocery Store, Moore & Hills" *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 8.2.17. Above: Farm implement dealerships. Interior of James Winram's implement shop, located in the north half of the Winram Block, in Pilot Mound. Equipment visible in the photo includes, two seeders, several gang plows, a wagon, a buggy, and various horse collars. *(MacAulay'00 :13.)*

Figure 8.2.18. Above: Town halls. During the wheat boom years, large civic structures were erected in many of the BTNHR's larger towns. The Boissevain Town Hall shown above was built in 1910 and housed meeting and event rooms, a courtroom, jail and fire hall. *(A of MB.)*

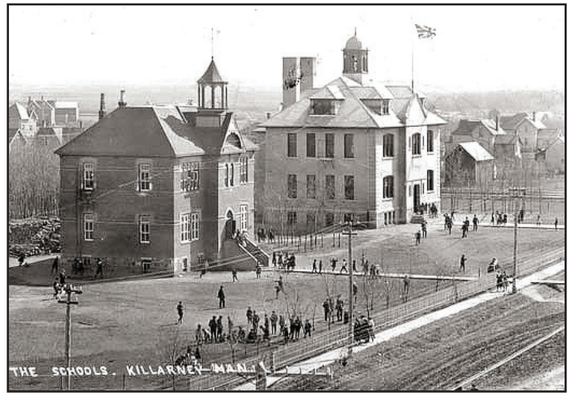


Figure 8.2.19. Above: Town schools. Towns also possessed impressive large schools built of locally manufactured brick or locally sourced building stone. The caption for the above circa 1910 picture postcard image reads: *The Schools, Killarney. Man.* *(PMA.)*

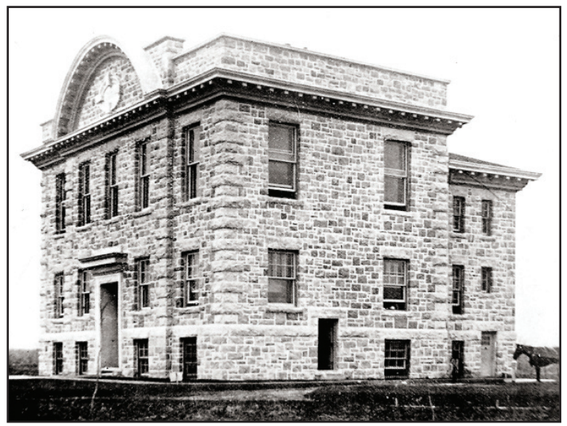


Figure 8.2.20. Above: Provincial buildings. The Morden Courthouse, erected in 1906, is one of the most impressive and likely the best surviving example of granite fieldstone construction in the entire BTNHR. The extreme range of temperature on the Prairies often led to cracked and crumbling masonry. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.2.21. Above: Provincial buildings. The Boissevain Land Titles Office, which still exists, was built in 1903 for $12.000. It features a field stone foundation; solid, cream-coloured, brick walls with ornamental semi-circular arches over the windows and doors; and decorative title stones and roof cornice with heavy wood mouldings. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.2.22. Above: Town residences. Decoratively finished brick residences, such as the MacDonald home in Hartney, pictured above, were commonplace in many BTNHR communities during the 1900-20 period. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.2.23. Above: Town residences. After 1900, in the BTNHR, brick, stone and even "moulded" concrete blocks were favourite construction materials for building town residences, such as the above example, a church manse on Park Street, in Emerson. Note the two children riding in a pony drawn shay. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

and well adapted for the transacting of their business. The members of the firm are J.B. Baird and R. Baird, both gentlemen of sound, practical experience, and are esteemed by all."

Killarney

"***Alf Ashdown, Hardware. Stoves, Tinware, etc., Main Street.*** *Among the leading houses in this line is that of A. Ashdown, whose premises are situated on Main Street, in the centre of the business portion of the town. His establishment is large and commodious, and is divided into two departments, the front portion being occupied as a salesroom, while in the rear is the workshop, where all kinds of tinware is manufactured. Mr. Ashdown, besides manufacturing tinware, does roofing, spouting and general job work to order, employing none but the best workmen. The stock of hardware comprises a complete line of shelf and heavy hardware, house-furnishing goods, ranges, stoves, grates, etc., including all the most popular makes and styles, keeping desirable goods and selling at low figures. He has worked up a good established trade, to which he gives close attention. Mr. Ashdown is an enterprising and energetic business man, and enjoys the confidence and esteem of all who know him. Mr. Ashdown is agent for the Watson Manufacturing Co., handling all kinds of farming implements, Watson Deering binder, John Able steam thresher, seeders, mowers, rakes, fanning mills, plows, etc.*

C.W. Williams, Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Groceries, etc. Main Street. *One of those representative concerns which so convincingly demonstrate Manitoba's mercantile supremacy in the Northwest is the general store of Mr. C.W. Williams, situated on Main street. The business was established at Wakopa, 14 miles southwest of this place, in 1880, by the present proprietor. The railroad reaching Killarney in 1886, Mr. Williams moved to his present location the same year, being one of the first business houses starting here, since which time he has built up a large and lucrative trade, which extends to all parts of the surrounding country. The premises occupied are commodious and well arranged. Here will be found a heavy stock of dry goods, dress goods, hosiery, fancy goods, clothing, boots and shoes, staple and fancy groceries, etc. Mr. Williams is United States Consular Agent for this district, and is held in the highest estimation in commercial life for his sterling qualities and strict integrity.*"

Boissevain

"***J.A. Wright, Drugs, Toilet Articles, Fancy Goods, Books and Stationery, Railway Street.*** *This very competent druggist has but recently commenced business (1886), but in a way that plainly indicates his intention of remaining in it. The premises are commodious and are complete in all details of arrangement, evincing in every part the taste and culture of the proprietor. The establishment contains a full and complete stock of pure drugs, chemicals, toilet articles, books and stationery. Mr. Wright is a thoroughly educated pharmacist, and devotes special attention to the careful preparation of family recipes and physicians' prescriptions. Prescriptions are made a specialty, in the fullest sense of that term; besides, a greater variety of articles of taste and luxury, such as toilet articles, etc., are found on the shelves and in the cases of the establishment. Mr. Wright possesses that thorough knowledge of his business which is so indispensable to accurate and reliable druggists.*"

Deloraine

"*At the present time, (1888) Deloraine has no fewer than five first-class hotels, five implement firms, one weekly newspaper, about 25 stores, boarding-houses, three or four lumber-yards, and six firms are engaged in the grain business. It also possesses good public schools, institutions without which no town is complete. There is also a bank there.*

Cavers & Stuart, Dry Goods, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Groceries, Provisions, Crockery, etc., corner Broadway and Railway Avenue. *This is the oldest general store in this part of the country, having been established as far back as 1882, at what is called the old town, before there was any railway communication with this part of the Northwest. It was founded by the present proprietors, and finally, when this became the terminus of the M.&S.W. Railway, they moved to their present quarters in 1886, and since which time the firm has ably maintained their reputation in this line, and number their customers all along the line of railroad and country tributary to Deloraine. Limits of space prevent our attempting to give the enormous list of goods carried here. The array in the salesrooms includes everything in dry goods, clothing, boots and shoes, groceries, provisions, crockery, hardware, etc. The firm dealing in such round lots is enabled to offer special advantages to the trade regarding both price and quality.*

W.H. Mallett & Co., Jewelry, Watches, Diamonds, Clocks, Silverware, etc., Railway Street. *Among the various and growing industries of Deloraine which exercise an important influence upon our general trade, there is none perhaps occupying a more useful position than the manufacturing jewelry trade. Among the enterprising and popular gentlemen in this line is W.H. Mallett, whose well-fitted up establishment is on Railway Street. Mr. Mallett started business in this town some two years ago on a medium-sized capital, which has since been largely increased, until at the present time he is carrying a large and complete stock of watches, diamonds, clocks, silver and plated ware, and jewelry of all descriptions. His store is the finest jewelry establishment in this part of the country, and is a credit to his push and enterprise. Mr. Mallett manufactures jewelry of all kinds, and the work turned out by him is unexcelled for beauty and originality of design, superior and elaborate finish, and artistic elegance.*

H.I. Montgomery & Co., Dry Goods, Millinery, Dressmaking, Tailoring, Clothing, Boots and Shoes, Groceries, etc. *In a careful, accurate review of the Northwest's leading business interests, that of the general store trade at once attracts prominent attention. Both as regards the extent of the capital invested, extent and completeness of stock and magnitude of trade, the leading houses in this line compare favourably with any in Canada. Representative among the number is the widely known firm of H.I. Montgomery & Co. Everything has been specially arranged to suit the requirement of their heavy trade, while the fittings and accommodations for display and storage of stock are unrivalled. Everything required in the way of dry goods, dress goods, millinery, hosiery, clothing, boots and shoes, staple and fancy groceries, crockery, etc., can be had here at prices which command the attention of the closest buyers. They are direct importers of teas from Japan, handling direct consignments of the finest new crop Oolongs, Japans, Gunpowder, Young Hyson, English Breakfast, etc. The firm has also, in connection with a dressmaking department, under most skillful management, and acknowledged to be the most stylish dress and mantle maker in Manitoba; also, a tailoring department, having a first-class cutter, and all garments leaving this establishment are marvels of artistic taste, elegance and perfect fit. Those entering into business relations with this house will find their interests well guarded, and their orders promptly and satisfactorily filled.*"

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8.3 GRAIN WAREHOUSES AND ELEVATORS

The BTNHR has long and important connections with the history of grain elevators on the Canadian prairies. Western Canada's very first "standard plan" country elevator, the now iconic, tall, wooden, hipped-roof grain elevator, was erected in the BTNHR in 1881, by the W.W. Ogilvie Milling Company in Gretna, 1-1W. As well, abandoned and deteriorating, the oldest known surviving "standard plan" grain elevator on the Canadian Prairies, built in 1897 by the Lake of the Woods Milling Co., is located in Elva, 3-28W, near Melita. As in other regions, elevators were not only a critical component of a district's farm and town economies, they were dominant landmarks on the landscape, and their distinctive shape soon became a widely recognized symbol of the Canadian Prairies, and revered by artists and photographers much like the lighthouses of the eastern seaboard.

While the "slope-shouldered" elevator design was the most prominent in the BTNHR and on the Prairies during the wheat boom years, there were several different types of grain elevators built. The 1878 Niverville elevator was an unusual round structure with a 25,000 bushel capacity. It was built by entrepreneur Wm. Hespeler to store and ship grain purchased from the recently arrived residents of the nearby Mennonite East Reserve. This design was not duplicated in Manitoba until similar design, corrugated-steel, grain bins became common place, beginning in the 1960s. As soon as the railway towns in the BTNHR were established, grain storage warehouses were erected to store grain, oats and barley, but mostly wheat, purchased by so-called "grain-buyers", or purchasing agents, hired by the many newly established grain companies and private entrepreneurs getting into the grain business.

The early one-storey "flat warehouse" design was prevalent throughout the 1870s and early 1880s. At the time, all the grain was handled and transported in two bushel jute sacks; however, by the mid-1880s, both railway and grain companies increasingly demanded that grain be loaded and shipped in boxcars in bulk form. Thereafter, warehouses switched to receiving grain from farmers in sacks, but shipping it out in bulk. These early warehouses were typically 8 x 20 x 40 feet in size, with bins arranged on opposite sides of a central alley, and holding approximately 4000 bushels. First-hand descriptions of grain warehouse operations are rare, but local BTNHR history records provided a few informative recollections.

- W.K. McNamee, who grew up in Crystal City, recalled, "*Following the arrival of the railway* (in 1886), *two or three grain firms built warehouses in Crystal City for handling our cereals. The grain warehouse was built with its floor level with the boxcar floor, and usually contained from four to six bins on each side of a central gangway. A platform at the front had a thousand pound scale. The grain had to be placed on the platform; six or eight bags high on the scales, then carried into the warehouse and the sacks emptied into a bin. In loading cars, the grain was shovelled from the bin into a two wheel truck, or cart, and dumped into the rail car, but a lot of grain had to be shovelled from cart to car.*" *(MHS'53 :McNamee.)*

- Oliver Law, whose parents homesteaded in the Cartwright district, also remembered the early warehouses in even greater detail, "*During the winter, the grain was hauled to the warehouse, or later on, to the elevator. There it was weighed on a platform scale in bags, and then dumped into bins. Hand carts, holding 6 or 7 bushels, with a trap door in one end, were used to move the grain from the warehouse bins to the railway cars. The grain back then was very clean. The grading of grain was largely by individual judgment. The grades were, of course, modified by the company. All grain was bought at approximately one cent per pound, except barley which was a little less. During the time in which the grain warehouse was in service, barley was generally only used for feed.*" Oliver also recalled, when he was farming, his father, James Law, hauled to Emerson, Mountain City and Nelson, for sale and milling. *(MHS'53 :Law.)*

Receiving grain in sacks, but shipping it in bulk, was soon found to be a backbreaking and labour-intensive process. Improvements were soon made by constructing raised overhead bins into which grain could be mechanically loaded, and then spouted by gravity into waiting boxcars. These "elevators" were initially, horse-powered, and later operated by steam engine. However, the railways, led by the CPR, soon demanded larger, more efficient, railside grain storage buildings of uniform specifications, that could take full advantage of gravity to move grain and quickly fill boxcars. The early standard plan elevators were 50 to 60 feet in height, and were powered by steam, and later, by diesel engine. The main storage structure was constructed of dimensional lumber that, for strength, was stacked or "cribbed" with overlapping corners. Standard plan elevators also had a smaller receiving shed, or driveway connected to it, containing weigh scales and a receiving pit. A short distance outside, in a separate structure, was the elevator agent's office and engine room. The elevator "leg" is what gave the name to, and determined the shape of, the standard plan grain elevator. Bulk grain was transported from the receiving pit to the top of the structure by an endless cup conveyor, located within a wooden box structure, the leg, running the height of the building, and allowed to flow down via a network of ducts into the various bins, pieces of equipment such as cleaners, or into waiting boxcars. The first generation of standard plan elevators were all 25,000 bushel sized. Beginning in the early 1900s, the elevators' capacities rose, up to 75,000 bushels, but their essential form and design remained relatively unchanged until well into the 20th century, before being replaced by modern "silo" designs of metal and concrete construction. At its peak in 1933, there were more than 6000 elevators on the Prairies.

Community grain elevator rows were dominant landmarks on the Prairie horizon for generations of travellers on BTNHR's Prairie roads. The elevator row, or solitary elevator, announced the presence of the next community from miles away. Elevator rows were popular subjects in the "picture postcard" business for a great many years. Their strong visual appeal survives to the present day and, as their rate of demolition increases, "grain elevator artwork" is literally booming with its distinctive form being memorialized in various media, including sculpture, photography, painting, weaving, and ceramic, among others. Though some elevators featured slightly different roof treatments, the sloped shoulder form was the most popular design. Currently, there are fewer than 100 standard plan elevators surviving in Manitoba. Of the remaining 10 oldest, five are located in the BTNHR. In addition to Elva's 1897 Lake of the Woods Milling Co., there are Cameron's 1902 Lake of the Woods, Napinka's 1902 Ogilvie Milling Co., Kaleida's 1905 Ogilvie Milling Co., and the former Maple Leaf Milling Co.'s elevator in Purves. *(Everitt'92.)*

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Figure 8.3.1. Left: First grain elevators. A photo of three grain elevators in Niverville, showing the early sequence of elevator design. The round structure at the far right was constructed in 1878 and was the first railside grain storage warehouse on the Canadian Prairies. The building at the far left is a "flat warehouse" type of grain storage facility, popular during the 1880s and early 1890s. When photographed around 1911, this particular warehouse had already been "modernized" with the addition of a cupola and a horse-powered system of belts and buckets, or elevator leg, for easier grain handling. The elevator at centre was constructed in 1904 and was typical of the square-plan or "pyramidal" type of commercial elevator which were popular until approximately 1910 and the advent of the now familiar hipped roof standard plan elevator. *(A of MB.)*

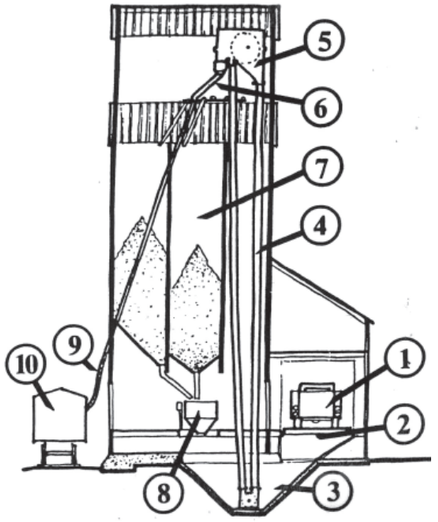

Figure 8.3.2. Above: Elevator workings. When receiving grain at an elevator, the loaded grain truck enters a driveway (1) and the entire truck is weighed on a platform scale (2), and then tilted so the grain empties through a grate in the driveway floor and into the pit (3). The grain is then lifted to the top of the elevator by the leg (4), a vertical conveyor belt with cups attached. At the head (5) the grain passes through a distributor (6) that deposits the grain into a selected grain bin (7). To ship grain, the contents of a selected grain bin is allowed to flow into a hopper scale (8) where it is weighed, dumped into the pit (3) and lifted by the leg to the distributor (6). The grain flows down the direct spout (9) and into the waiting rail car (10). *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.3.3. Above: Early grain elevators. Photograph of men cutting ice on Plum Creek, undoubtedly to stock someone's cold-storage ice house for the coming summer. Note, the partially loaded wagon at the far right. "Ogilvie's No. 31" grain warehouse was built in Plum Coulee fairly soon after the railway passed through in 1882. The warehouse elevator leg was said to have been originally horse-powered and had been converted to steam power by the time this photo was taken around 1902, and was later powered by a gasoline engine. The far elevator was built a few years later than the warehouse and is a typical early standard plan country grain elevator with a 25,000 bushel capacity. *(U of BDN :MacKee.)*

Figure 8.3.4. Above: Ogilvie's No. 8. Gretna. Built in 1881, soon after the grade was completed, but before steel was laid, Ogilvie's grain warehouse No. 8 was the first "standard plan" grain elevator on the Canadian Prairies. It was demolished during the 1950s. (VirtualManitoba.com.)

Figure 8.3.5. Above: Queuing up. Wagons waiting at the Baldur elevator, circa 1895. Note the tin-sheathed elevator. Pressed tin shingles and siding were very popular at this time, prompting J.H. Ashdown to establish the Metallic Roofing Co. and erect a manufacturing plant in Winnipeg in 1905. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.3.6. Above: Grain grading. A photo of an elevator agent and a farmer discussing, most likely, the quality of the grain being delivered. Price was determined by pureness, quality and moisture content, all subjectively judged by the agent. *(L&AC.)*

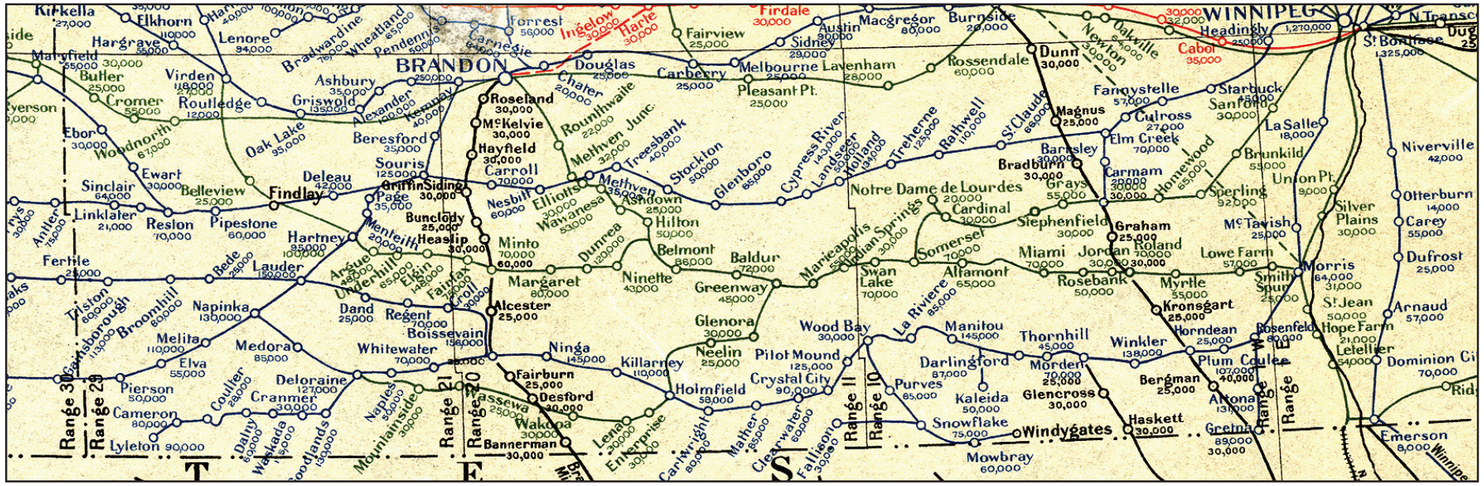

Figure 8.3.7. Above: Community grain storage capacities. A 1917 Canada Department of Trade and Commerce map, showing railside communities in the greater BTNHR and total grain (elevator) storage capacities, in bushels, within those communities. The map shows the railroad branch line network at its maximum extent. Line legend: Blue - Canadian Pacific Railway, Green - Canadian Northern, Red - Grand Trunk Pacific, Black - Other Railways. Hartney, with 195,000 bushels, appears to possess the highest capacity. *(A of MB.)*

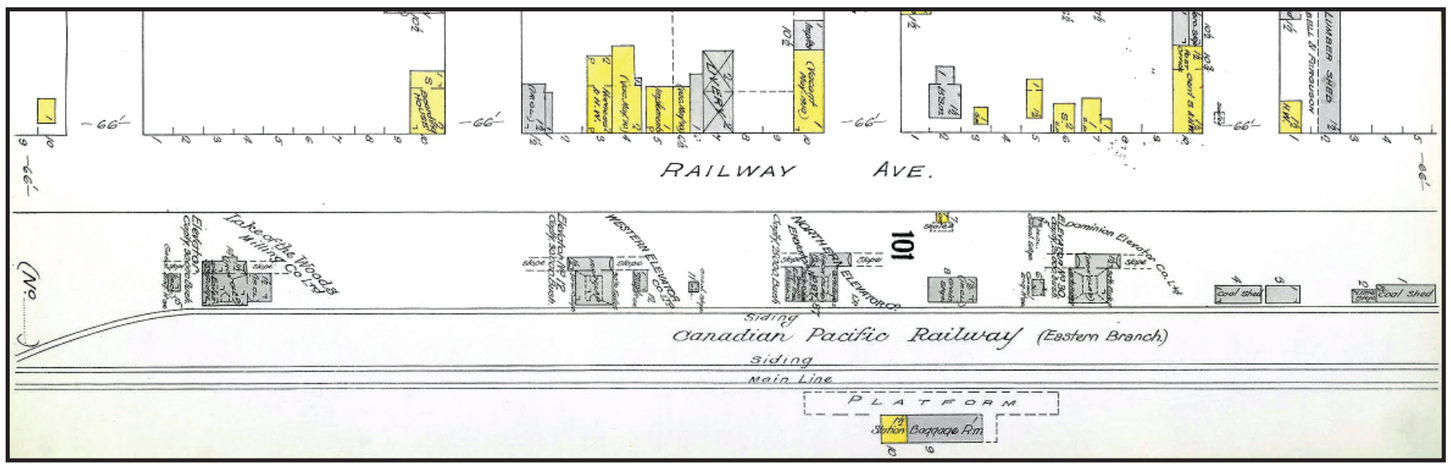

Figure 8.3.10. Above: Railway Avenue, Elva. A map from a 1910 fire insurance atlas, showing structures along Railway Avenue in Elva, including, elevators built by, L-R: Lake of the Woods Milling Co., Western Elevator Co., Northern Elevator Co., and the Dominion Elevator Co. Also shown, on the railway yard, is a station and baggage building and a loading platform, coal sheds, and weigh scale, among other structures and, along the north side of Railway Avenue, a number of commercial buildings. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.3.8. Left: Morden elevator row. The nearest of the five elevators in this image is actually a combined elevator and flour mill, and almost identical to one located in Manitou. Large milling companies owned multiple elevators in the BTNHR, including Lake of the Woods, Ogilvie, Maple Leaf and Western Canadian Flour Mills to supply their own needs, but did not construct mills in the Region, which were mostly locally owned, during the early years. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 8.3.9. Left: "*Elevators, Lauder, Man.*" Circa 1910. Elevator ownership ranged from local farmers and businessmen to large eastern corporations. Some of the BTNHR's early elevator companies included the Winnipeg Elevator Co., Western Elevators, Northern Elevators, Dominion Elevators, International Elevators, Standard Elevators, Imperial Elevators, State Elevators, Canadian Elevators, Farmers Elevator Co., and the Co-operative Elevator Association, among others. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 8.3.11. Above: First grain trucks. A sign of changes to come, an International-Harvester, model-S24 farm truck, equipped with a "grain tank", approaches a grain elevator in Wawanesa, during the early 1920s. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.3.12. Above: Federal elevator, Snowflake. Constructed in 1962, and memorialized by artist Chris Walker in 2013, the Federal elevator in Snowflake, was one of the last standard plan elevators built in Manitoba. *(Walker'13.)*

Figure 8.3.13. Above: "*Elevators, Pierson.*" Elevator rows were a favorite subject for picture postcards, popular during the early 20th century. Note the unusual multi-sided, conical-roofed "Winnipeg Elevator Co. No. 82" grain storage building, at lower centre. *(WPL :McInnes.)*

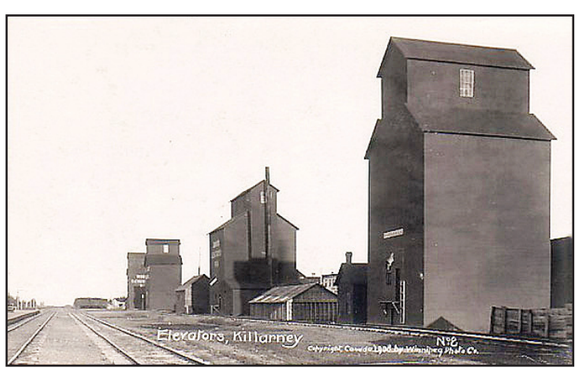

Figure 8.3.14. Above: "*Elevators, Killarney.*" A Winnipeg Photo Co. postcard of Killarney's elevator row, circa 1908. Winnipeg Photo was one of the most prolific publishers of picture postcards showing views of many Manitoba rural communities. *(WPL :McInnes.)*

Figure 8.3.15. Above: "*Railway Avenue, Elva, from the West.*" A picture postcard view of Elva, circa 1910, showing the Lake of the Woods Milling Co. elevator, built in 1879, in the foreground on the right, and various commercial structures, on the left. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

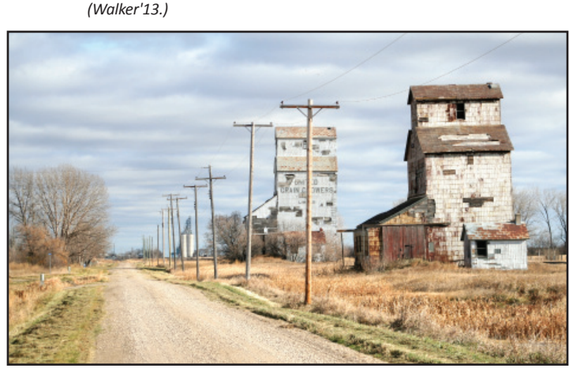

Figure 8.3.16. Above: Railway Avenue, Elva. The Lake of the Woods Milling Co. elevator, which closed in 1968, was recognized as Canada's oldest surviving standard plan elevator. Sadly, in April 2022, the elevator was accidentally destroyed by a grass fire. Note the modern concrete silo elevator in the distance in this 2004 image. *(EdLed.)*

8.4 FORMER WEST RESERVE

The Wheat Boom Era and the railway that made it possible, was as transformative for the Mennonite residents of the West Reserve as it was for most early settlers of the BTNHR. As noted earlier, during the Pioneer Period, the Mennonites were able to not only survive on the open prairie, but very soon a great many began to prosper, aided by their past experience farming the open steppe lands of their former Crimean colonies, and by the highly organized traditional farm village life, with its many religion-based support systems. However, with newly established railway connections to local and eastern markets and suppliers, and the increasing mechanization of farming activities, particularly in regard to wheat production, the social and economic advantages of orthodox Mennonite farm village life began to fade. The establishment, by the Province of Manitoba, of the "municipality" system of local government during the mid-1880s, followed in 1890 by a standardized mandatory English language public school curriculum, further contributed to the gradual dismantling of the traditional Mennonite farm village lifestyle and self-government. These "government-intrusions" would prompt many hundreds of Mennonites to leave Manitoba during the mid-1920s to establish new colonies in Central and South America. As the Wheat Boom Era and prosperous times grew in scale and effect, village life in the West Reserve began to noticeably change.

Village Traditions

As the amount of cropped acreage increased in the Mennonite West Reserve and personal finances improved, the initial log and grass-thatch structures were replaced with larger timber and frame-lumber buildings with wooden roofs. Barns, granaries, summerkitchens, chicken coops, privies, and frequently, meat-smokers, completed a typical village farmyard complex. During the Pioneer and early Wheat Boom years, adherence to the traditional "standardized" house-barn design, and even yard plan, was still largely adhered to, particularly in the more conservative western half of the West Reserve where the showing of wealth and individualism was frowned upon by religious authorities. Regarding village plan conformity, it was said, perhaps "tongue in cheek", that in some villages, if both side doors of every house-barn along the street were opened, one would be able to see through every open door though to the last one, with the houses lined up so precisely and all the doorways in the same location. However, increasingly during the 1890–1920 Wheat Boom Era, this conformity to traditional house-barn and villages plans, and even village administration, began to wane. The Isaac Wiens farmyard, Figure 8.4.2., is a superb example of a traditional-style West Reserve house-barn at the height of their popularity, circa 1890.

Village Disintegration

Portable steam engines had been purchased and used to run threshers and flour mills in some villages as soon as the early 1880s. During the 1890s, when self-propelled "traction" steam tractors became more available and affordable, some Mennonite farmers partnered to purchase them and, like their Anglo neighbours, used them for breaking land and running threshers. When distillate and gas tractors, smaller and more maneuverable than steam tractors, began to be introduced after 1910, the narrow strip field system became a real hinderance. Tractors, especially the large steam tractors, need room to turn, and long narrow strips made it difficult. Landowners increasingly requested they be able to farm their own homestead properties.

Thus, with the growing adoption of farm tractors and larger field implements, the traditional strip-field-based landholding system began to fall apart and, soon after, so did many villages, especially in the eastern half of the West Reserve where the liberal-minded Bergthaler church dominated. Within the villages that survived, the traditional, linear, "Frisian" house-barn configuration was increasingly being replaced by a T-shaped plan with the front of the house facing the village street, or by houses no longer connected to the barn. Slowly, but surely, in many villages, as the involvement and influence of church authorities in daily village life began to wane, traditional farming methods and land holding patterns similarly began to change. Some families bought land outside the village and moved to individual farmsteads. In other cases, land reverted back to the original homesteader. Many villages disappeared entirely, but in some cases, residential village lots were purchased and retained to preserve the village setting, with farmers travelling back and forth to their fields. Soon, contemporary "plan-book" design residences and barns were being built in Mennonite farmyards both in the villages and on individual rural properties. Nevertheless, traditional Mennonite building elements continued to be incorporated into new construction for many decades after, including the cross-hatch barn and granary door designs, "clerestory" window patterns on the barns, and wooden shutters on the houses and schools. Figure 8.4.3.

- J.F. Galbraith, early Anglo settler, journalist, historian, and friend to many West Reserve pioneers, noted the following, in a booklet he published in 1900, entitled *The Mennonites in Manitoba.* "*The break-up of the villages here commenced in 1890, but there had already been action of that kind in Russia. When the communal system was at its best in the Manitoba reserve, the number of villages was 62. The number of complete villages now is 18, and there were four partly broken up, so that 40 have completely disappeared except for the trees that frequently mark the sites. The first village to break up was Schoendorf, and it was speedily followed by others. As the Mennonites did not hold the land in common, but each held in conformity with the Dominion Homestead Act, it follows that the villages were necessarily built on individual property. Many of the villages were extensive, with commodious houses, barns, and out-buildings, representing large expenditure of labour and considerable outlay of money, and it is of commendable credit to the Mennonites that the legal owners of the village lands, and consequently of the buildings, permitted the peaceable removal of the latter without let or hindrance. These buildings are now distributed over the reserve, on the original farms of their owners, except in many cases where new and substantial, and often handsome, modern buildings have been erected in their stead.*" *(Galbraith'90 :21.)*

West Reserve Railway Towns

West Reserve Mennonites were slow to become businessmen and salespersons. Church traditionalists frowned on the faithful becoming shopkeepers and money handlers. But, the CPR arrived in southern Manitoba in 1882 and, soon after, agricultural and domestic service industry businesses were being opened at several siding locations constructed by the CPR. These businesses were initially operated by Jewish and German entrepreneurs, but soon had Mennonite-run facilities as well. Rosenfeld, Altona and Gretna were established in 1883, Plum Coulee in 1884, and Winkler in 1892. With the arrival of the railway, markets in Winnipeg and beyond for agricultural produce were now accessible, and manufactured

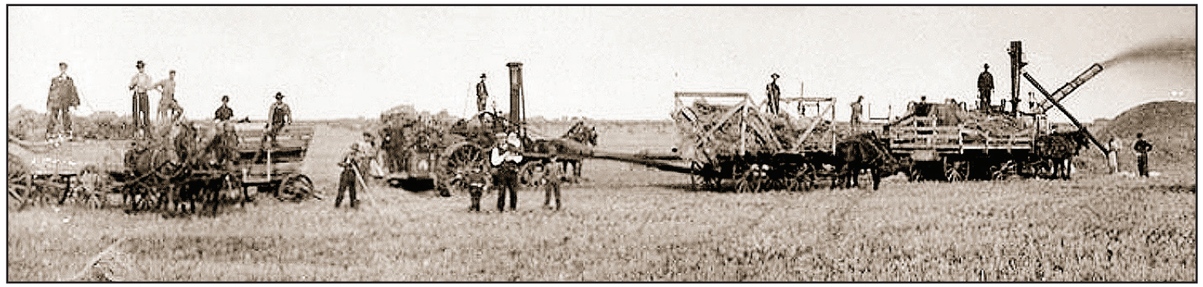

Figure 8.4.1. Above: Mennonite outfit north of Morden, 1905. Historian J.F. Galbraith noted in 1900, "*The Mennonites brought with them from Russia their own millwrights, blacksmiths, and carpenters, and these mechanics are perfectly competent in their respective lines. They, indeed, appear to be naturally inclined to machinery and manifested immediate appreciation of seeders, reapers, binders, etc. They have always been heavy purchasers of the latest improved farm machinery, including steam engines and threshing machines.*" *(Galbraith'00 :39.)*

Figure 8.4.2. Above: Traditional "Frisian" style house-barn. Photograph of the Isaac Wiens house-barn in the village of Rosebach, 1895. Note the planted shelterbelt reaching above the height of the buildings. Also visible near the barn, the manure-straw fuel bricks or "*mest-sodden*" drying in beehive-shaped piles. *(Rempel'82 :25.)*

Figure 8.4.3. Above: Hochfeld school. Note the shutters and similarity of design to Mennonite traditional style homes. *(HRB.)*

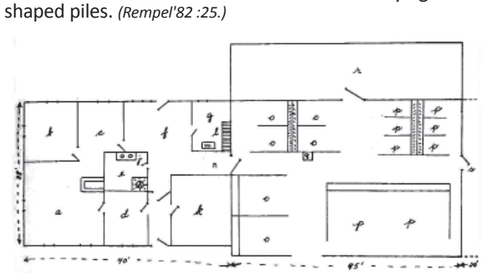

Figure 8.4.5. Above: Mennonite house-barn plan. A sketch plan drawn in 1949 and included in John Warkentin's 1960 doctorial thesis. *(Warkentin'60 :83.)*

Figure 8.4.4. Right: Village street plantings. Historian J.F. Galbraith of Morden noted in 1900, "*In summer, the Mennonite villages are gems of sylvan beauty, but their beauty cannot be recorded by the camera in a comprehensive way, as they are now in the midst of little forests, the trees of which were set out by the inhabitants in 1876 and following years.*" *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.4.6. Above. New farm buildings. A photo of a "transitional" style house-barn, circa 1890. Although still attached together via a connecting hallway or "gang", the house is turned 90 degrees to face the front of the farmyard, and the barn is missing several traditional elements, including the twin "*Owesied*" shed-roofed sections created by the extension of the rear portion of the barn roof. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.4.7. Above: New farm buildings. The Abram Kroeker farmyard in Hoffnungsfeld, circa 1906. Items of note include the barn separated from the house, the traditional style doors and windows on the barn, wooden shutters on the house, several types of wagons and buggies, a baby carriage and two bicycles. *(Rempel'82 :33.)*

Figure 8.4.8. Above: "*WINKLER MAN.*" Circa 1900. A general store built in 1892 and owned by Bernhard Loewen was the first retail business in Winkler. Other Mennonite-owned businesses followed and, before long, Winkler became a retail trade centre for a large area. *(Rempel'82 :37.)*

Figure 8.4.9. Above: Mennonite exodus. A photo showing West Reserve Mennonites departing the Altona railway station during the early 1920s, bound for new settlements in Mexico and Paraguay. *(HRB.)*

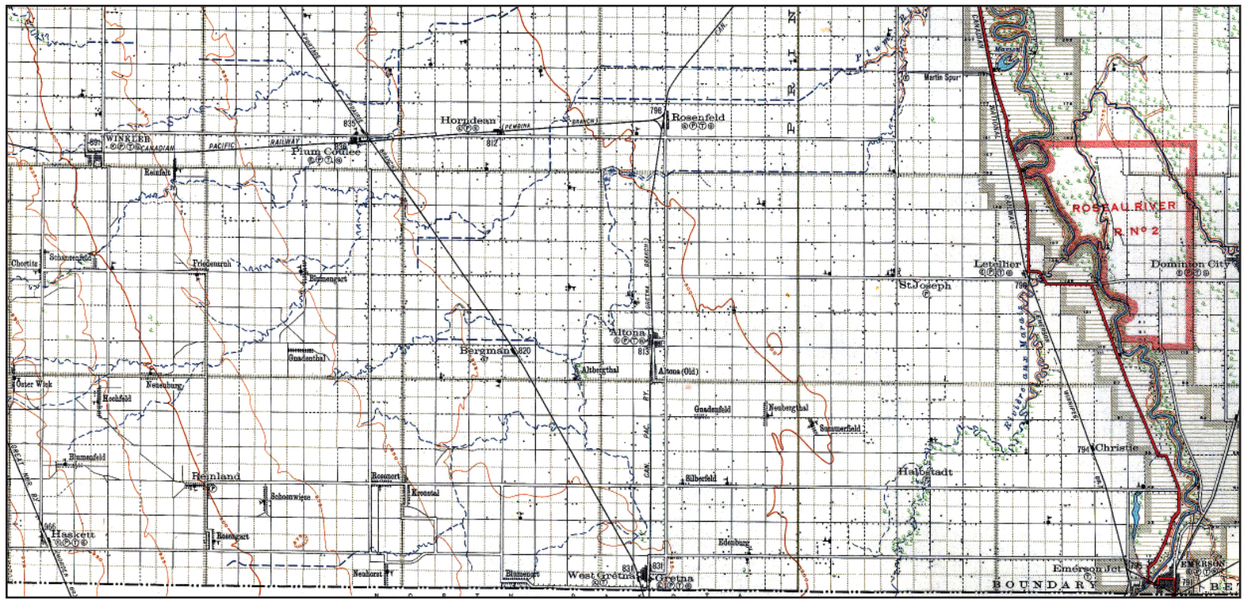

Figure 8.4.10. Above: Mennonite villages. Part of a 1917 Dominion sectional map showing the names and locations of more than two dozen West Reserve Mennonite villages in existence at the time. Also shown are the township and riverlot survey system boundaries, five different railway lines and railside towns, including Emerson, Gretna, Altona, Rosenfeld, Horndean, Winkler and Haskett. Interestingly, no provincial highways or provincial roads are noted. The provincial road network did not begin to be constructed until the late 1910s. Only municipal roads and the Pembina Trail (dark red) on the West side of the Red River are shown on this map. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.4.11. Above: Hamm Heritage House-barn. The village of Neubergthal retains many surviving house-barn structures and was declared a site of national historic significance in 1989. Built in 1901 for Bernhard and Helena Hamm, this now fully restored house-barn, was designated a protected municipal heritage site by the RM of Rhineland in 2002. The second storey bedrooms and verandah/balcony were non traditional, but popular, features of many later-built house-barn structures. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.4.12. Above: Gnadenthal. An aerial photograph of the village of Gnadenthal. Circa 2005. Note the long lot parcels extending back from the village street and the mature shelterbelt tree plantings, particularly along the main street. *(J. Lehr.)*

goods from factories far away could be brought, in short time, right into the nearby railway towns. Soon, these towns were all abundantly supplied with grain elevators for convenience in the marketing of grain, and with stores and all the usual business places for the sale of merchandise, implements, building material, and such other articles. The village of Plum Coulee had served as the primary trading centre of the region since its inception in 1884. In 1894, it had a population of 200 residents, a grain elevator, and several stores. When the village was incorporated in 1901, it had seven grain elevators, eight general stores, a bank and two hotels. Notably, Gretna became the location of the construction of the very first standard plan "hipped-roofed country grain elevator" on the Canadian prairies, built by the W.W. Ogilvie Milling Company in 1883. It was, unfortunately, demolished during the 1950s.

Overflow Settlements

For many years after initial settlement, Mennonite families and individuals continued to arrive from Russia. Some came to join family members and relatives who had arrived earlier, while others simply took advantage of the opportunity to start a new life in a new world among fellow Mennonites. Even during the first five years, there was considerable movement in and out of villages. Starting in the mid-1890s, West Reserve Mennonites began to move to newly-surveyed and available lands in the North West Territories, now Saskatchewan, as farm land became scarce in and around the West Reserve. J.F. Galbraith observed, "*About 1885, the Mennonite community began to show up as one of the wealthiest in the Province. The increase in population and wealth has been substantial notwithstanding the annual migration of a considerable number of the people to the new reserves of Rosthern and Hague, in the Territory of Assiniboia. The first migration was in 1891, when about twenty families departed to Rosthern. Every year since then, a C.P.R. train carrying 25 or 30 families and their belongings pulls out from the towns of Winkler and Plum Coulee for the new field of enterprise.*" *(Galbraith'90 :27.)*

Splendid Prosperity

- J.F. Galbraith commented favourably in his 1900 booklet on the West Reserve Mennonites, "*From the foregoing, a clear conception is presented to the mind, of the splendid prosperity reached by the Mennonites since that summer of 1875, when, strangers to the country and poor in worldly goods, they located the forlorn, treeless prairie of the reserve. The record is a glowing tribute to the fertility of the Manitoba soil, as well as to the thrift, industry, and enterprise of the men who cultivated it. The Mennonite reserve is now a great garden-farm. You can stand on a rising ground in August and where, 25 years ago, nothing was in sight but waving grass, the view now comprises many happy farm homes and miles and miles of yellow waving grain. Undoubtedly, the Mennonites are the best foreign colonizers that ever came to Canada. Drawing away from old ideas, they have to a large extent become Canadianized, and in the future, even more than in the past, they will figure in the progress of this country.*" *(Galbraith'90 :92.)*

The following sample letters are among replies to a general letter of inquiry mailed by J.F. Galbraith to a number of representative Mennonites in different parts of the Reserve and included in his 1900 publication.

- Nov. 28, 1900. *Dear Sir, - I came to Manitoba in 1876, when I was twenty years old. Brought nothing with me. Located at Osterwick, but now live on my own land, sec. 22-2-5. I have 353 acres of land without any debt, and I value my belongings at $10,000, including horses and cattle. I am married and have nine children. It is a good country for children, and for making money. I like the freedom in schools and religion. The climate suits me all right. It is nearly like Russia, but colder, and there is not so much sickness. We use our surplus money to help poorer men, and to buy land. Yours truly, Johann Heppner.*

- Nov. 30, 1900. *Schanzenfeld. Dear Sir, - In 1875, I came to Manitoba with my family. All I had was $75.00. I have no land now, as I sold it in 1897 to go into business in agricultural implements and farmers' supplies, and also a lumber yard. I consider myself now worth $10,000. I find the farmers generally prosperous, and they pay their bills promptly. Manitoba is a good country for people to come to. Yours truly, Jacob B. Dyck.*

The Manitoba Schools Act Crisis

The Manitoba School Question, as it is now known, began as a dispute over the funding of public and private schools in Manitoba, and grew to become a national crisis involving Protestant-Catholic animosities, minority rights, English-French relations, and constitutional guarantees. It would also lead to a mass exodus of Mennonites from the West Reserve to Mexico and Paraguay during the early 1920s.

Prior to the Red River Colony entering Confederation in 1870, education had been in the hands of the churches; Anglicans, Catholics and Presbyterians ran their own schools. The *Manitoba Public School Act* of 1871 protected denominational schools and created a dual public-private education system. As settlement from southern Ontario exploded, the pragmatically secular attitude to public education, combined with the chronic underfunding of schools in the newly-settled Anglo areas, resulted in the Manitoba Government passing a bill in 1890 creating a new Department of Education and a system of "national schools" teaching an approved standard curriculum in the English language. Private schools were still permitted, but parents who chose the send their children there would have to pay taxes to support the new public system, whether they sent their children there or not.

After much resistance and turmoil, several thousand West Reserve Mennonites moved to Mexico and the people not moving had to let their children attend English schools. Galbraith noted, in 1900: "*The reader will readily understand that State schools could not be accepted by the Old Mennonite church. The teaching of English was objected to as an influence likely to un-Germanise the people, and lead to their losing themselves in the general population. This feeling was so strong that, in 1891, only four public schools under the Manitoba law were in operation in the West Reserve. While the objection to State aided schools hasn't yet ceased, the sentiment has greatly weakened, and those opposed to them are largely outnumbered by those who recognize and advocate their advantages, as may be judged from the fact that there are now in the reserve 34 schools regularly organized under the Manitoba school law.*"

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8.5 OTHER ETHNIC GROUP SETTLEMENTS

During the settlement period in the BTNHR, someone travelling through the Region would not only encounter English being spoken, often with a strong British or Scottish accent, in the Anglo-settled areas, or Low German being spoken in the Mennonite-settled areas, but one would have also encountered French, Icelandic, Flemish, Gaelic and even German and Yiddish in everyday use in selected districts and communities. In most of these ethnic group-settlements, traditional "old-country" languages, religion, cultural activities and even clothing, were part of everyday life for decades.

French-Canadians in Manitoba

In 1870, when Manitoba became a province, there was an almost equal number of English- and French-speaking residents. *The Manitoba Act* included French Catholic-schooling and language rights along with the English Protestant school divisions and rights. However, as settlement began to boom during the later 1870s, the number of Anglos began to greatly outnumber the French. The departure of large numbers of French-speaking Métis for less-settled areas farther west only worsened the imbalance. To try to increase the French presence and preserve the hard-fought-for language rights, the Bishop of St. Boniface, Monseigneur Alexandre Taché, worked tirelessly to establish a large French Canadian enclave in southern Manitoba. He actively purchased Métis scrip, to resell to French settlers, and had representatives actively recruit potential settlers in Quebec and the US north-eastern seaboard, where many ex-Quebecers were working in the textile mills and factories. Monseigneur Taché wrote on January 23, 1880 to Monseigneur Lafleche, Bishop of Trois-Rivieres, "*Unless the Province of Quebec comes to our aid through strong and vigorous immigration, the field where you have worked so hard for so many years will cease to be the domain of the Franco family. I regret to say, we did not think enough of it in Lower Canada and, when we could fortify all the rights of the province of Quebec by the establishment of a sister province in Manitoba, we let the latter be populated with a hostile element.*" *(Rigaux'83.)*

Bishop Taché's efforts met with a fair amount of success, and many French-settled districts were soon being established, in the vicinity of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, in southeastern Manitoba, and several districts in the BTNHR. The immigration agents recruited more than just French-Canadians in the eastern US; and only half of those who immigrated through his efforts to Manitoba were French-speaking, the remainder being Irish, English and German. Nevertheless, a yearly average of about 500 people came from New England to Manitoba and the North West Territory between 1875 and 1885.

RM of Montcalm River-lot Settlements

Some of the earliest French-Canadian settlement areas in Manitoba were established in the current BTNHR. These included the communities of Letellier, St. Jean Baptiste, Gauthier, St. Pie, Rivière aux Marais and St. Joseph, all now located in the RM of Montcalm, and all located along or near the west bank of the Red River. Soon, fledgling riverside villages were being established with scheduled Red River steamboat service providing links with Winnipeg and the US. There were French settlements established east of the Red River at this time, as well. The vast majority of French families settling on the river-lot surveys along the Red River came before 1880, with the greatest number arriving in 1876 and 1877. When the CPR Pembina Branch Line was constructed south from Winnipeg in 1882, all of these original communities were bypassed, with the railway running several km. to the west to avoid the potential for flooding, and line closure, during the annual spring melt. It was not until some years later that these communities were provided with a railway link, and even then some, like Letellier, were physically moved several kilometers west to the new rail siding site. Some communities, such as St. Pie, simply slowly disintegrated as a village site. Others, such as St. Joseph, survived as a hamlet to the present day, despite never having had a railway connection. Figure 8.1.5.

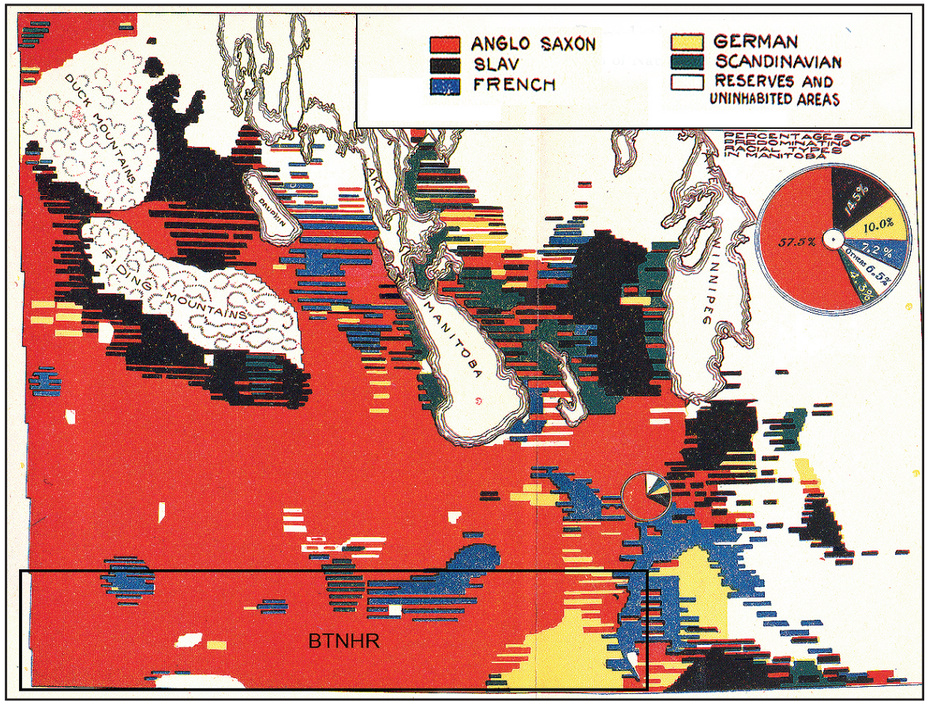
St. Léon - the "La Montagne" Mother Parish

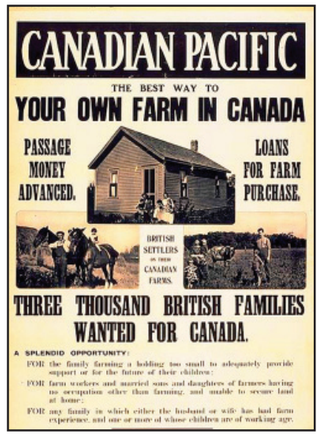
A second major French settlement enclave in the BTNHR was established in the Cypress Hills area in and around 5-9W and 6-9W and centering around present day St. Léon. In 1877, despite being directed to the river-lot areas along the Red and lower Assiniboine Rivers, a small group of newly arrived Francophone settlers learned that there was still good land available for homesteading west of the Manitoba Escarpment and decided to investigate. They were very pleased with what they saw in 5-9W, and immediately filed for homesteads in the district. Daniel Fraser of Ile Verte, Quebec settled on "*section 16, canton 5, line 9*", (section 16, township 5, range 9W). Joseph Charbonneau of Methuen, Mass., along with Olivier Lafrenière and his son Frederic, from Ste. Croix, Ont. chose their homesteads near a large pond, which they named "Lac Rond", located near where the Church of St. Léon stands today on 35-4-9W. They called the new settlement La Prairie Ronde. It was located 70 mi. from St. Jean Baptiste, the nearest French settlement, and 80 mi. from the stores and services in Emerson.

In July 1878, Olivier Lafrenière sent a letter to Bishop Taché begging him to send them a Roman Catholic priest. On April 22, 1879, Monseigneur Taché canonically established the parish and placed it under the name of St. Léon the Great, after the newly installed Pope Leo XIII. The parish encompassed the entire Pembina Mountain region, and was referred to as "La Montagne" by the settlers. Father Theobald Bitsche was sent to serve the new settlement, arriving in St. Léon on September 11, 1879. The following year saw the arrival of other groups of French-speaking pioneers in the area.

In the spring of 1880, a log presbytery and church was built on 14-5-9W at a cost of $365 and a great deal of volunteer labour. The second level was used as a place of worship and the ground floor served as a residence for the parish priest. Father Bitsche noted that, by the end of 1880, the parish included 27 homes and 300 inhabitants. About this time, Archbishop Taché arranged to have townships 5 and 6 in ranges 11W and 12W reserved for Catholic colonists. In 1881, the district population increased by more than 100, and the formation of a village south of Lac Rond began. Very quickly, the growing village was bustling with activity and settlers. Father Theobald's positive observation of the St. Léon settlement at this time is recorded in a letter published in the August 10, 1882 issue of *Le Manitoba.* He wrote, as translated, "*Saint-Léon is located near a small, almost round lake, about 120 acres in size. On three sides the ground slowly lowers towards the lake, and on the fourth, the ground is high enough and firm enough to allow the largest buildings to be raised. Everyone who visits Saint-Léon is struck by its really charming site. Saint-Léon is distinguished above all by the goodness of its waters, which are the best in the province. This village now has a Catholic church with a resident priest, a flour mill with large sizes, a sawmill, a shingle mill, two general stores, three hotels, two blacksmiths' workshops, and*

Figure 8.5.1. Right: Population Distribution of National Types. A map published in 1926 showing ethnic group settlement areas in Manitoba. Note the overwhelmingly Anglo Saxon settlement in southwestern Manitoba, shown in red; the yellow German (Mennonite) areas; French and Belgium areas in blue, and the Scandinavian (Icelandic) areas in green. The other prominent ethnic group settlement areas are those shown in black denoting "Slav" (Ukrainian and Polish) settlement areas. *(A of MB.)*





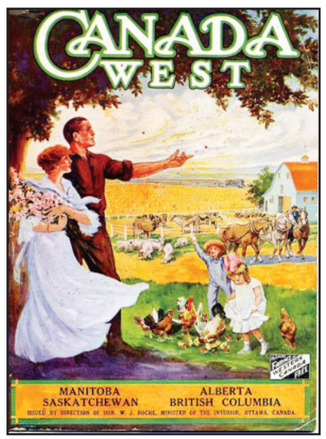


Figure 8.5.2. Above: Immigration posters. Eye catching advertisements beckoning settlers to the Canadian West, such as the above, were distributed across Europe from the 1880s to the 1920s. *(L&AC.)*

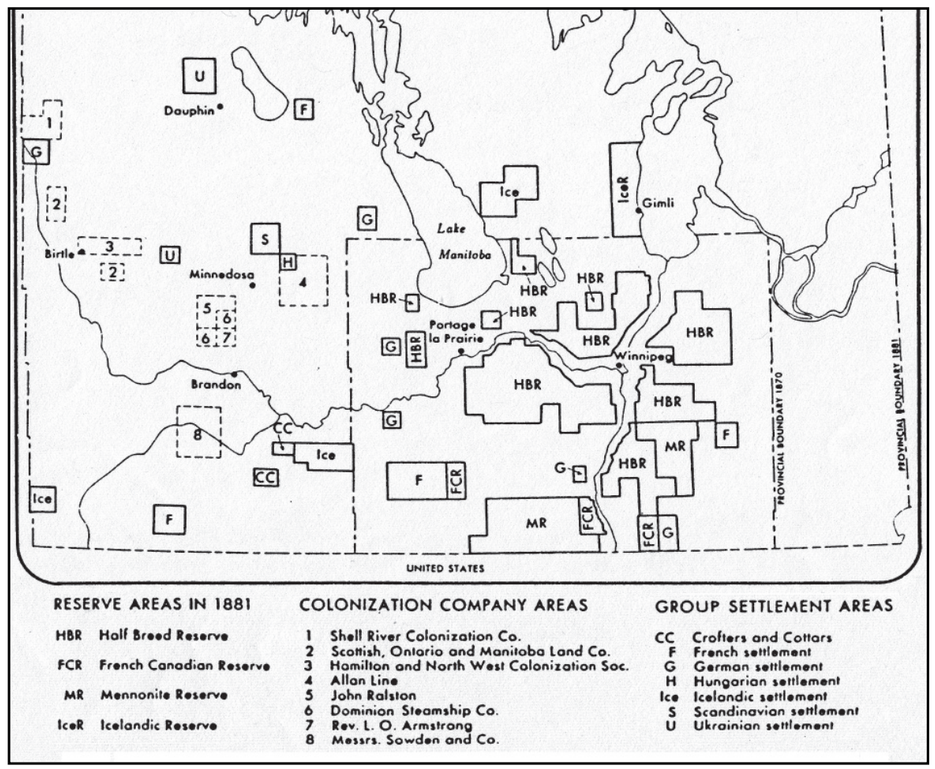


Figure 8.5.3. Right: Group Settlement in Manitoba. A circa 1900 map of southern Manitoba showing Settlement Reserves, Colonization Company Areas and Group Settlement Areas. Although mostly accurate, the map does not include the Ukrainian settled areas in the southeastern and Interlake regions nor the French settlement in the present Lauder area. Some Belgian areas are noted as French, such as the French settlement area shown in the Turtle Mountain area. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.5.4. Above: Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes. 6-9W. Original log parsonage and convent. Circa 1885. The railway initially bypassed the townsite, passing six mi. south at Cardinal, but the community successfully lobbied to have a spur line built to connect the community to the branch line railway network. *(Flickr.com)*

Figure 8.5.6. Above: St. Léon Roman Catholic boarding school. Photographed soon after its construction during the early 1920s. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.5.8. Above: St. Jean Roman Catholic church, Grande-Clairière. Although altered over the years, St. Jean's currently still exists. *(Grande Clairère'88 :12.)*

Figure 8.5.10. Above: St. Léon Roman Catholc church, 2018. *(G. Penner photo.)*

Figure 8.5.5. Above: Former St. Jean Baptiste French Roman Catholic convent. Constructed in 1897. Photo taken in 2005. This handsome heritage structure still survives, but is under-utilized and may soon be threatened. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.5.7. Above: St. Jean Baptiste Roman Catholic church. The settlement was originally known as "Grosse Pointe", and was later renamed "Mission de la Rivière aux Prunes" and, in 1872, Archbishop Taché officially named the parish, and the community, "Saint-Jean-Baptiste." The current church was constructed in 1927. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.5.9. Above: St. Alphonse. 34-5-12W. Circa 1992. Originally known as Dècosse, after the first postmaster, the district name was changed to St. Alphonse in 1886, after the local parish was officially established. By 1895, the parish included 1200 residents and four rural school districts. A village site began to develop on a picturesque site and, by 1905, included a church and presbytery, a large convent school, several stores and businesses, but the village never grew beyond hamlet size, having been bypassed by the railways. *(HRB.)*

two carts, 15 carpenters, several masons, shoemakers, etc., and more than 20 residential houses, and a population of 150 souls. Construction work continues in the summer and winter with a truly surprising activity. But it is not only the village of St. Léon that is making rapid progress, the surrounding countryside does not stay behind. Suffice it to say that 14 miles around St. Léon all the land is taken and that on almost every section there are buildings and resident inhabitants, to know the rapid development that this colony has taken. To secure the future of St. Léon, all that is missing is a railway to be able to export the products of the land." *(Langevin'10.)*

This very promising beginning to the community of St. Léon lasted less than a decade. Several misfortunes led to its decline, including a large fire that destroyed the mills and the mass removal of its residents to Somerset and its railway connection, as the village was side tracked when the regional branch line came through in 1890. After the demise of the original townsite, a new village site was established with the relocation of the church and the school to another picturesque hillside site northwest of Lac Rond, near a forested grove and two small lakes. Although it always was modest in population, St. Léon was the mother parish of no less than seven off-shoot parishes. From the initial St. Léon settlement district north of Manitou in 5-8W, French settlement grew and spread north and northeast to include the Pembina Mountain mission parishes of St. Alphonse, established in 1883, Notre Dame de Lourdes in 1891, Bruxelles in 1892, St. Claude in 1895, Mariapolis in 1903, Somerset in 1907, Haywood in 1909, Swan Lake in 1919 and St. Lupicin in 1920. St. Lupicin was settled primarily by settlers from France fleeing difficult post-war conditions that existed in northeastern France after the Great War. The St. Alphonse region also attracted many Roman Catholics from Belgium beginning in the later 1880s.

A fixture of many French communities was the central role played by the Roman Catholic church, which ran most of the schools, with nuns providing French language education and religious studies, with their wages provided by the local rate-payers. Many of the larger French communities had a convent, church and, for the resident priest, a manse, all prominently situated in the centre of town. Most operated as boarding schools, for students living too far away for a daily commute. As with many other cultural groups, the BTNHR's Francophone communities were distinguished by their religious architecture. French Roman Catholic churches are recognizable by a single central spire or matching front corner spires at the front of the church. Convents were visually dominant structures in the community and the vast majority were built in the Parisian "Second Empire" style, with its distinctive Mansard roof and square towers. St. Jean Baptiste, Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes, Bruxelles, St. Alphonse, St. Léon and Grande-Clairière all possessed large convent-schools during the Wheat Boom Era. Figure 8.5.5.

- Father Theobald Bitsche, priest at St. Léon, sent a letter in 1890, to Father Beaudry in St. Boniface, in which he provided an observation on the progress of some of the settlers in his parish. "*I am sending you the names of a few who have succeeded here. 1. Mr. Eusèbe Hubert, born at Farnham P.Q., has worked in the factory at Woonsocket R.I. He came to St. Léon in 1879, without good fortune. With the land he received from the government (homestead) and the improvements he made on it, he could realize $5000. He is very satisfied. 2. Mr. Edouard Labossière, born in St. Ours, worked at Manchang, Mass., with his children. He came to establish himself at St. Léon in 1878, owning between $700 and $800. Today, he owns with his six sons, 860 acres of land and complete equipment worth at least $10,000. All enchanted with the country. 3. Mr. Gèdèon Labossière, also native of St. Ours, worked also at Manchang, and established himself at St. Léon in 1879, with a capital of $1500. Today, this family owns five good farms amounting to 1010 acres. All, including buildings and necessary equipment, is worth over $15,000. All members of this family are congratulating themselves at having abandoned the United States, and would not want to return to the exhausting and confined life in the American factories. My parishioners altogether did not own more than $10.00 when they arrived in the country, and according to my opinion is not exaggerated, today one would not purchase their possessions for $200,000. The beginnings were wearisome; but those who were prudent and persevering succeeded beyond their expectation. I greet you cordially and thank you for the interest you have shown in the colonization of Manitoba. Your colleague in Jesus Christ, Theobald Bitsche.*" *(Rigaux'87 :11.)*

The Grande-Clairière Settlement

The first French-speaking residents of the present Grande-Clairiére district, were former Métis employees of Fort Grant, who chose to stay and live in the Lauder Sandhills district when the trading post closed in 1861. In addition to hunting in the surrounding areas, they established small mixed-farm operations. In the chaotic aftermath of the 1869–70 Red River Resistance, many Métis families fled the Red River region for the safer, still-unsettled, lands in the far west. A dozen or so families chose to join the "Fort Grant" Métis, increasing the local population to over 20 families. As the local Métis population slowly grew, the Oak Lake Roman Catholic Mission was established, and the residents' religious needs were attended to by visiting missionaries. In 1887, a newly arrived missionary, Father Jean Gair accepted a posting from his superiors to "collect settlers to establish a French colony in the western part of the province where land was still available for homesteading." In the spring of 1888, Father Gair, and a group of 12 families, (eight Métis, two French-Canadian and two from France) arrived in 6-24W where, as soon as time permitted, a chapel was constructed and the Parish of Saint Jean formally established. In 1889, many more families arrived, including many Walloon-speaking families from Belgium. The chapel doubled as a school-room during weekdays. In the autumn of 1889, Father Gair reported that the parish included 43 homes and 150 individuals. That winter, he was sent to France as an official federal immigration agent, to recruit more settlers, and when he returned to Manitoba in the spring, he was accompanied by 80 French and Belgium families, half of whom remained in Winnipeg and half continued on to establish farms at Grande-Clairière.

In 1890, the Grande-Clairière postal district was opened in J. Gaboriault's home on 12-6-25W, and the first small church built. It was enlarged the very next year and and could accommodate 300 worshipers. Most of the interior elements, the alter, religious statues and ornamentation were sent from supporters in France and Belgium. New colonists were still arriving in 1891 and, by 1892, the parish had 600 members. A new rectory was erected in 1893 and the old one converted into a proper school. However, many parish members desired a boarding school "where children from distant missions that had no educational facilities could be accommodated." In response, Father Gair returned to France, raised funds and returned with sisters from the Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions Order, eager to help establish a bilingual mission in Canada. The first convent was built in 1898 and was replaced in 1906 with a two-storey building. Students boarded from mission districts far to the west in the then North West Territory. By 1899, French settlement had spread well enough to the northeast that the settlers of the Deleau district established their own post office and parish church, Ste. Anne's Roman Catholic. A major event in the district was the purchase and installation of a 500 lb. bell, Father Gair's final project before retiring, in the bell tower of "Paroisse Saint-Jean" named after the patron saint.

Families began moving out of the Grande-Clairière area around 1904 to areas farther west "*where there are homesteads available and richer soil.*" The church was destroyed by a cyclone and rebuilt in 1907. The convent school was enlarged with the addition of a third level in 1914. In 1922, there were 30 students boarding at the convent school. In 1923, a bell tower, front entrance and sacristy were built, finally completing the church; however, that same year, the parish suffered a major blow when the convent was destroyed by fire and the decision made not to rebuild. A parish hall was built in 1928 and, as in other rural communities, became the social and cultural centre of the Grande-Clairière French community for decades to come. *(GCHC'88.)* .

Icelandic Settlement Districts

There were several notable Icelandic settlement enclaves established in the BTNHR during the pre-1900 settlement period. The largest of these was located in the Rural Municipality of Argyle centred around 6-14W, north of present day Baldur. Smaller Icelandic settlement areas were established north of Pierson in 6-29W and in the "One-Six" district along the US border south of Morden. As with other ethnic settlement districts, Icelandic names, language and cultural and religious traditions flourished in these districts for several generations.

New Iceland

Manitoba's first Icelandic settlement was established in October 1875 on the southwestern shores of Lake Winnipeg, centred in present day Gimli. The settlers were attracted to the possibility of earning a traditional living through fishing and raising livestock. Over the next few years, as other groups of Icelanders arrived, settlement spread along the lakeshore north of Gimli. The settlement of New Iceland, however, quickly suffered serious setbacks. One of the groups arriving in 1876 brought smallpox, which spread across New Iceland that winter taking a huge toll on the Icelandic as well as nearby Indigenous populations. The settlers were just beginning to get back on their feet, when the wet years of 1879-82 caused the lake levels to rise, flooding the natural meadows, crops, and vegetable gardens along the lakeshore. Adding to their difficulties, early attempts at fishing were largely unsuccessful, due to using wrong-sized fishing nets, coupled with growing personal disputes and religious factions within the settlement. In the autumn of 1879, increasing numbers of Icelanders were abandoning their homesteads and moving in groups to new settlement areas. By 1881, only 250 settlers remained in New Iceland. Some moved only a short distance west to the shores of Lake Manitoba, establishing the Lundar, Vogar and Reykjavik settlements. Others moved to North Dakota, establishing the Akra, Gardar and Hallson settlement districts. New settlers arriving from Iceland during this period increased the Icelandic presence in North Dakota, which at the time was attracting large numbers of Norwegian settlers. As fellow Lutherans, the two groups developed close ties.

The Grund and Bru Settlements

In 1880, Everett Parsonage, an Anglo pioneer of the Pilot Mound district, who had contacts with the Icelandic immigration agent at Gimli, advised his friend that there was much good land still available in the area north of Rock Lake. In August 1880, Sigurdur Kristofferson and Kristian Jonsson visited Mr. Parsonage who showed them a largely unsettled area in the rolling Tiger Hills country in the northern part of the newly created Argyle municipality. As soon as he could, Sigurdur filed for a homestead on 10-6-14W and, in the Icelandic tradition, bestowed the farm with a place-name, selecting *Grund*, Icelandic for "grassy plain." By the winter of 1881 eight more Icelandic families settled in the area, and the number grew to 17 by the next winter. After four years of growth, in 1884, the settlement boasted "*650 cultivated acres, 60 head of cattle, 62 oxen, 60 sheep, 9 work horses, and more.*" A general influx of Icelandic settlers into the district began in 1885. The centre of the community was the store and post office established at Sigurdur Kristofferson's home. On July 26, 1885, the *Frelsis* Lutheran Congregation was organized to serve the spiritual needs of the Grund community and a church was constructed in 1889 near Kristofferson's store and post office. In 1896, a community hall, *Skjaldbreid,* was built nearby and, for decades, was the scene of concerts, dances, plays, literary clubs, and various celebrations and events. A year or two after the hall was built, a racetrack was built near the hall and used for horse and buggy races, a popular form of entertainment at the time.

As the Icelandic settlement in Argyle municipality expanded eastward from Grund, a second post office became necessary. It was established at Jon Olafsson's home on 16-6-13W, and named *Bru*, the Icelandic word for bridge, in reference to a nearby bridge over Oak Creek. A cemetery for the Bru district was established in 1884 on 16-6-13W and, in 1885, Bru school district #368 was established and a schoolhouse built at another site on 16-6-13W. In 1909, after a decade of attending Frelsis church at Grund, the settlers in the eastern part of the Argyle Icelandic settlement built their own Lutheran church, located on SE21-6-13W in the centre of the Bru district. It was called *Frikirkju* Lutheran Church. As in the Grund district, the Bru settlers followed that up, shortly thereafter, with the construction of a nearby community hall.

When the Morris to Brandon branch of the Canadian Northern Railway was constructed through the Argyle municipality in 1890, it passed some six mi. (9.6 km.) south of Grund. A siding was built at 13-5-14 and a townsite surveyed. Sigurdur Kristopherson, who was a member of the original Icelandic delegation to Manitoba and by then living in the Grund settlement, is credited for choosing the name Baldur for the new station, after the Nordic god of "radiant innocence and summer sun" and the son of Odin, the supreme Norse God, and of Grigga, goddess of married love and of the hearth." The Argyle Icelandic settlement's third Lutheran church, an attractive white edifice, was constructed in Baldur in 1907 with a well-attended dedicatory service taking place on November 24, 1907. By 1910, a strong community had developed in the Argyle settlement, and in addition to Icelandic churches and community halls at Grund, Bru and Baldur, at least six "Icelandic" school districts were also established, including, Hecla #355, Bru #368, Hola #889, Frey #890, Mimir #891, and Thor #1430. A two-storey, four-classroom school was built in 1892 in the community of Baldur, but was named Simpson #667, as a Baldur school #588 was already in existence near Hnausa in the New Iceland Settlement. The provincial government convinced the community at Hnausa to change the name of their school from Baldur to Hnausa, thereby permitting the residents of Baldur to change the name of their school to Baldur #667. However, that did not end the problems with the school's name. When a high school was constructed in Baldur during the early 1900s, for a decade or more it had to be officially called Baldur Intermediate School to distinguish itself from a Baldur High School in Ontario. *(Hamm'79 :158.)*

The One-Six Settlement

A second, smaller, Icelandic community was established in the North Star district in 1-6W, in what became known as the One-Six district. The township was not opened for settlement until 1889, having originally been part of the Mennonite West Reserve, but which had remained unsettled. Figure. 7.9.6. "*The Icelandic people were a closely knit group and gathered once a month for their coffee parties, enjoyed their annual Christmas concert, plays, and singing old Icelandic songs. At whatever occasion, the sign-songs were their 'must'. The annual 'Sumardagurinn Fyrsti' was the highlight of the year. Most of these celebrations had dancing so they became some of the best dances in the neighbourhood. Each ethnic group, more or less, had their own special feasts or celebrations, but gradually integration took hold, and people of all nationalities joined in the activities of the community. The Icelanders in One-Six were famous for their baseball team."* The Lindal Church for a few years provided enjoyment for many. Its choirs were of the finest, and many came from a distance to hear them. *(One-Six :40.)*

The Laufas Settlement

The *Laufas* Icelandic settlement in the Pipestone area began in 1892 soon after the Canadian Northern Railway's branch line between Souris and Reston was constructed, initiating a mini land rush in the region as homesteads were still available in that area at the time. The news of a railway line being built through unsettled territory in the far west of Manitoba caught the eye of several Icelandic families residing in the Argyle settlement in the Baldur district, where land had become expensive to purchase or rent. Gudmundur Davidson was one of a small first group of individuals who arrived that year and he registered a homestead claim for 20-6-29W. By the end of 1893, 14 more Icelandic families had arrived and constructed homes, and "*many more had made homestead entries"*, but had not yet settled on the land. The settlers chose the name *Laufas* for their new settlement, Icelandic for "Leafy Ridge." A post office was established in 1893 in a settler's home on 22-6-29W and given the name "Sinclair." Settlers continued to arrive from existing Icelandic settlements in Manitoba and North Dakota where, by the 1890s, land was already becoming scarce. Some Laufas district settlers also arrived directly from Iceland, fleeing continuing difficult times in that country. One of these was the Thorgrimer Olafson family who arrived with his family in 1900, settling on 18-5-29W.

In 1899, the community established the *Johanneson* Lutheran congregation and a parish hall was built on 18-6-29W and used for church services, entertainment, and community events. An Icelandic cemetery was established on 20-6-29W. Because a new rail siding site, located six miles north of Sinclair PO, was given the name "Sinclair Station" in 1905, the rural post office district name was changed to "Crescent" to avoid growing confusion. Also in 1905, a school district was formed for the growing number of children in the Crescent postal district. It was given the name Diana SD #1355 and the schoolhouse was built on NE20-6-29W on a two-acre site donated by district pioneer Gudmundur Davidson. The first teachers were Icelanders from Gimli and North Dakota. The school was closed temporarily between 1944 and 1947, then permanently in June 1962. In 1966, the district was dissolved and its area became part of the Sinclair Consolidated School District and later the Fort La Bosse School Division.

As in other early ethnic settlement areas in the BTNHR, the residents of the Laufas Icelandic settlement built a thriving and culturally rich rural community, and the Icelandic language remained in everyday use for decades. Icelandic settlers continued to arrive and the Icelandic presence expanded into adjoining districts north, south and east of the original Laufas settlement in 6-29W. The vitality and cultural distinctiveness of the district began to dissolve during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Southwest Manitoba, including the Sinclair district, was amongst the hardest hit and, during the "Dirty Thirties", many settlers moved away, lost their farms due to foreclosure, or just abandoned them, as did many business owners who, unable to make a living, simply departed the region. Prosperous times did eventually return and not all left the district during the difficult years of the Great Depression/World War period. Descendants of many early Icelandic settlers who founded the Laufas settlement continue to live in the area. *(Pipestone'81 :135.)*

Figure 8.5.11. Above: Grund Icelandic Lutheran church. 2003. Constructed in 1889, Grund is the oldest Icelandic Lutheran Church in Canada and a protected provincial heritage site, and still in use for special services. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.5.12. Above: Former Bru Lutheran church. 2003. In 1997 the former Bru Church was relocated and was used until 2014 as a restaurant and banquet venue called Cafe Bru. It is now operated as a Bed & Breakfast. *(HRB.)*

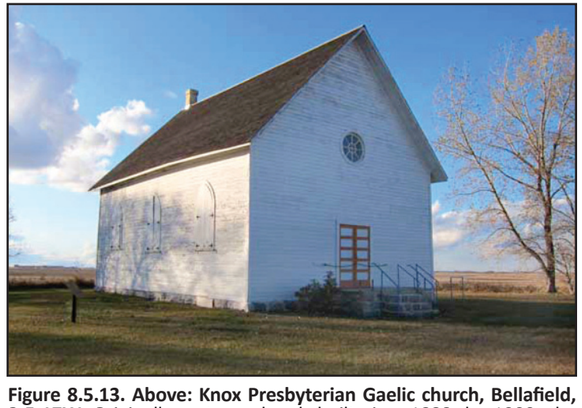


Figure 8.5.13. Above: Knox Presbyterian Gaelic church, Bellafield, 3-5-17W. Originally a stone church built circa 1888, by 1900, the walls began to deteriorate and, in 1906, a new structure was built upon the original foundation, using the floor and roof of the original stone church. It was designated a protected municipal heritage site in 1990. *(G. Goldsborough photo.)*

Belgian Settlement Districts

Manitoba contains a significant population of Belgian ancestry and, during the settlement period, several Belgian settlement districts were established in the BTNHR. Half of the population in Belgium, even today, is French speaking, with the other half Flemish speaking. Both groups are of the Roman Catholic faith. Thus, arriving Belgian immigrants naturally migrated to existing French settled areas both in the BTNHR and in Winnipeg where the majority of Belgians settled in St. Boniface. Thus, as in Europe, the two groups, Belgian and French, enjoyed a long and close association. The bulk of the early arrivals were from the Flanders region of Belgium and, for many decades to come, the Flemish language was commonly heard throughout the Cypress Hills region, along with French and Icelandic.

The earliest known group of Belgian settlers to arrive in the BTNHR was a party of 150 who, in 1888, settled in the area north of Swan Lake near St. Alphonse in 5-12W and, before long, Belgian settlement expanded north and northeast into 6-11W and 6-12W. Around 1900, a second major wave of Belgian immigrants made their way to the BTNHR. All immigration from Europe stopped with the outbreak of the Great War in 1914, and when it ended after four years, much of Belgium had been destroyed. Employment was difficult to obtain, and food was scarce and expensive, prompting many to join friends and relatives who earlier immigrated to Winnipeg and Belgian districts of the BTNHR. Belgian immigration to Manitoba continued well into the 1920s, and Belgian family surnames are still common in the region.

St. Alphonse Belgian Settlement

The first large group of Flemish-Belgian immigrants to settle in the BTNHR arrived in the St. Alphonse district in 1888, homesteading and purchasing land near and amongst the French Canadian settlers of that region, many of whom had arrived a full decade earlier. By the summer of 1892, there were a sufficient number of families in the district that Father Willems, pastor of Bruxelles at the time, began providing sermons in the Flemish language. Father Campeau, pastor at St. Alphonse, began to study the language and, in the autumn of 1894, read the gospel in Flemish for the first time for the new settlers. Many of the arriving Belgians, the bulk of whom were young men, obtained employment with local farmers, "grubbing" or land clearing. Many of the French Canadian settlers of the St. Alphonse area had toughed it out through the difficult pioneer years, experiencing frozen crops, long distances to the nearest stores and markets and stony, wooded land which was difficult and slow to be cleared. Many took the opportunity to sell out to the arriving Belgians and start fresh somewhere "out west", as mentioned in the following St. Alphonse community history passage, "*The Belgian settlers loved the St. Alphonse country very much. They owned large herds which wintered outside and sold well. They loved the Canadian winter because of the sunshine and dry weather! They were now far from the fogs and the humidity of Belgium! This land which was not flat like the greater part of Western Canada, but hilly with prairies and some wooded mountains that reminded them of beautiful sites in Luxembourg and other parts of Belgium. There were few taxes here compared to Belgium. They loved Father Campeau* (of St. Alphonse) *and spoke highly of him because he was so welcoming. They loved the French Canadians who had offered so much kindness and hospitality on their arrival here. However, if the Belgians were content, many French Canadians were less so, because of the long years of poor crops, frost and grain prices. Having obtained their land titles, several mortgaged their property to better their situation, but were not successful. There was much talk about 'L'Ouest' where the land was easier to work. Moreover, they could sell their property for cash to the Belgians and start again elsewhere.*" *(Rigaux'83 :21.)*

Belgian settlement in the St. Alphonse area increased substantially during the 1890s, expanding north and northeast from there. Before long, the community of Bruxelles became a second major centre of distinctly Flemish culture and language.

Dand Belgian Settlement

After the arrival of the first large group of Belgian settlers in 1888, individuals and small family groups continued to arrive annually; however, there were several distinct waves of immigration. A second major wave began around 1900. Belgium, at this time, offered few opportunities for work, and the scarcity of land in Belgium made Canada very attractive for those interested in farming. The second wave of settlers largely chose to take up land in what became the Dand district in 4-23W north of Deloraine.

St. Paul's Catholic Church was built in 1917 to serve the Catholic congregation, many of whom were Belgian Immigrants. The church played an important role in this distinct and somewhat remote community until closing in the early 1960s. In 1904, the Deloraine Times reported that, "*Remi Van De Ponseele arrived back from Belgium, bringing 150 Belgian settlers.*" It turns out that his trip was only part of a larger story. It is normal for immigrants to Manitoba to keep close ties to their homelands, and to influence friends and relatives to join them. Quite a few settlers made trips back to Belgium. They often brought back relatives. Many seemed to find a bride. "*Aime, the second son of Alidor Andries went to Belgium to visit his relatives in the winter of 1929-30; there he met his future wife, Jeannette Raes.*" And they brought other things, as well, including Belgian horses, which were an excellent breed of farm work horse and popular among farmers throughout the BTNHR. The Andries family also planted an large orchard and garden that included perennial spinach and celery from Belgium. In 1909, Mr. Andries imported purebred Belgian stallions and mares for breeding.

Turtle Mountain Belgian Settlement

Around 1900, the Andries family travelled from Brandon to the Deloraine district by ox cart where their first home was a sod house. After five years, they returned to their homeland hoping to attract more settlers and many followed them back to township 2-23W south of Deloraine, which had just been opened for settlement, having previously been a forest reserve. The first school opened in 1904 in Remi Van De Ponseele's house and, two years later, in 1906, Flossie School was built on NE27-1-23W. The site was located nine miles south of Deloraine on the northwest slopes of Turtle Mountain. Belgian settlement in the area grew sufficiently that, in 1917, the community was able to raise the necessary resources and volunteer labour to build a community church, St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church. The site they chose was high up on the mountain slope where it could be seen from a great distance, and in close proximity to a cemetery established around 1892. The church was a large wood frame structure, but was later veneered in brick, and pressed metal flashing was installed on the corners. Figure 8.5.3.

Congregation members came from as far as Goodlands, Mountainside, and the US border and consisted largely of Belgian settlers. As was the case with most rural churches, St. Paul's also functioned as a community centre for many years, and also hosted many social and cultural events, from pie and box socials, to picnics, dances and quilting bees. It was used as a theatre for Easter and Christmas concerts. Students from nearby Flossie school would come to the church for the entire week before Christmas to practise their concert on the stage. During the summer, the small nearby lake was used for swimming, and the clearing beside the church was the site of baseball games and other social gatherings. The priests lived in Deloraine and drove the six miles up the mountain every Sunday. For many years, groups of Roman Catholic nuns from Brandon came to the church for two weeks during the summer to teach the children catechism.

The church was able to survive until the early 1960s. In 1963, it was struck by lightning and severely damaged, leading to a decision to tear it down. A stone monument and plaque in the cemetery commemorates the church and the district's Belgian settlers. Life was not easy or prosperous for the early Belgian settlers living on the slopes of Turtle Mountain. Like all settlers in the BTNHR, they took what opportunities were available. After spending the summer growing crops and raising livestock, they cut firewood and ice in the winter to sell to local townspeople. Little by little, they began to prosper and, before long, built a thriving community that flourished for decades *(TM-SPHA, Vantage Points III.)*

Scottish "Crofter" Settlements

In 1887, the Scottish "Home Government", with the assistance of the Canadian government, sponsored the re-settlement of two groups of Scottish "Crofters" from the poor, overcrowded Highlands, to still-unoccupied lands in the Bellafield district west of Pelican Lake and in the Hilton district near Wawanesa. A third Crofter settlement, consisting of 45 families, was established near present day Wolseley, Sask. beginning in 1888.

- Mr. John MacAulay, a member of the first Lake group, later noted: "*The Pelican Lake group came from Stornoway on Lewis Island in the Outer Hebrides. The CPR owned some land north of Killarney. This was exchanged with the government for land farther west and the original railway land was sold to the Northwest Land Company. The Crofters were sent out to this district by the Imperial Colonization Board. The odd-numbered sections only were reserved for them in townships 4 and 5 in range 17 West. They arrived in Killarney on June 10, 1888 by railway. There were 25 families in that group. While the new settlers were passing the second night in tents, a rare June blizzard struck. After living in tents for about a week, each family was supplied with equipment, including a yoke of oxen, a wagon, a cow, a calf and a plow. The group then trekked 12 miles north and made camp out on the open prairie. Houses were built with rough lumber hauled from Killarney, with sods lining the exterior of the walls. Fortunately, for them, it was a mild winter.*" Mr. MacAulay also recalled that on one section of land alone, four families settled, one each on a quarter section, with a combined total of 40 children.

- A Nor'-West Farmer magazine article reporting on the initiative in 1888, included the following interesting observations and comments by an unidentified writer. "*I have, as a Scotchman, carefully studied this scheme and am very dubious of success in its present form. Personally, they are excellent people, but for one thing, we have no good land near a railroad to give them, and the men being unfamiliar with the sort of farming which alone can bring success here, many of them will fail to become self-supporting for years.*

They are all from the western Islands, some of the men having imperfect English and many of the women no English at all. Many of them had a very dim idea of the Land of Goshen to which they were being carried. Considering the hasty way they were got together with 48 hours notice, the selection was as good as possible, but who would send a man with a wife and about eight children to be started as a prairie farmer, with 60 Pounds in cash and very little go in himself. A good few have the notion the Government is bound to see them through until their crop of next year will maintain them. They had oxen at $25, harness, wagons, lumber, stoves, provisions at wholesale prices, and the hired help of a Highland carpenter to put up their houses.

They were a month too late in coming here, but still some few have made a fair first year's start. Nearly all have good stables and plenty of hay, but their potato crop is poor. The poorest sort have earned only a few dollars outside, and not always done very much at home. Their case for the coming winter will be a very serious one. With scanty clothing, next to no food and downhearted, it is pretty difficult to say what can be made of them. Even a man who is quite familiar with the work ahead of him, would not, if he could at all help it, take out a rather tender wife and little children to start on a naked prairie, especially with only $300 capital to start him. I see little prospect of immediate success following this way of bringing out families, where even the breadwinner is an awkward apprentice." *(NWF'88-10 :324.)*

Local history records provide a few other observations regarding the Crofter settlements in the BTNHR. As noted, the Crofter settlers received assistance from the Imperial Colonization Board in the form of land, equipment and seed, and they were expected to repay the board for these materials. During the first four years no payments were collected for the land. Then in the fifth year, $100 was to be collected as a scale of annual payments was to be drawn up. The first winter, a Mr. Cooney from Killarney visited the new settlers and tried to ensure that the settlers did not "send bad reports home." Later, an agent of the Imperial Colonization Board visited annually to demand payment. The Crofters sent two delegations to the Council to demand "redress" in the matter of their payments. Also of interest, local history notes that when the Crofters arrived at Killarney, about 90% of the women could not speak English, only Gaelic. There was a strong desire for keeping the old language alive and Gaelic could be heard in everyday use for decades. However, English was a necessity because Gaelic was not practical for business dealings. Stockdale School was built about 1891 in the heart of the Bellafield district. It was a one-room frame building built at a cost of $600.00. The children received lessons in English but spoke Gaelic outside of school hours. It was said that a number of English children attending the school learned to speak Gaelic fairly well. In 1888, the settlers built Knox Presbyterian Gaelic Church on 3-5-17W in what came to be known as the Bellafield district. The church currently still exists.

Other Minor Ethnic Communities

German, Norwegian and Jewish immigrants also had a strong presence in some areas. A notable number of Norwegians and Germans moved from North Dakota to township 1-6W, along with many Icelanders, when that district was opened for settlement in 1897. Howard Winkler, in an unpublished short history of the Morden district written in 1970, commented on the early Jewish presence in the BTNHR, "*In all the towns on the railroad serving the Mennonite area, Jewish merchants appeared. They had advantages over their competitors who spoke English only. They understood the Low German dialect and were able to converse with the Mennonites. They were also accustomed to the haggling over any purchase, a practise then still popular in Europe. The Jewish population slowly decreased over the years, but there was once a considerable community, as is attested by the size of the Jewish section of Morden's Hillside Cemetery. There was also a big reunion in 1931 attended by many former Jewish residents.*" *(Winkler'70.)*

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8.6 SCHOOL HOUSES, TEACHERS AND THE "THREE Rs"

Most farm parents didn't rate education as being particularly important during the settlement era. It was a common belief at the time that being able to read, write, and do simple arithmetic was all that was really necessary, as most boys would grow up to be farmers and a good many of the girls to be farmer's wives, and you didn't really need more than the "three Rs" to be a successful farmer.

While some of the first school houses in the BTNHR were built of sod or logs, many more were wood frame structures. Saw mills were quickly set up in new districts, where timber was available, so locally milled lumber could soetimes be obtained to erect school houses. Lumber construction was also a much quicker method of erecting a building. At first, rough benches and tables were used as desks, as after erecting a school house, community funds were scarce and everyone had to "make do" with what could be afforded at the time. Each pupil had their own slate and chalk, and a rag to clean off the slate, and that was all.

Over time, as economic conditions improved, blackboards were purchased for the classroom walls, and, by the turn of the century, the students began to use scribblers and pencils, and slates were discontinued. Older students were taught to use quill or "straight" pens that had to be dipped in ink after every few words. Later, "fountain pens" were introduced that, amazingly, held almost a full day's supply of ink. The first proper school desks in early BTNHR schools were usually "double-seaters", each accommodating two pupils side by side. Each desk had a hole in which an ink bottle was fitted, and it was not uncommon for some boys to dip the braided hair or "ringlets" of the girl in front of them into the ink well on their desk. Often, as a punishment, disruptive boys were made to sit with the girls.

The very early schools had no prescribed text books. Reading was done from any books available and often the Bible was used to teach reading. The "Victorian Reader" was the first official reader issued by the provincial Department of Education, which was followed by the "Manitoba Reader", the "Canadian Reader", and then the "Highroads to Reading" series. Often a pupil's progress was reported by the level of "reader" he or she had completed, rather than by exercise grades. Few children completed school to grade eight. Most quit attending by the age of 14, if not sooner. It was not uncommon for a child to achieve only the equivalent of grade four during the early decades. Those who wished a higher education went to the towns where they could usually acquire a Grade 9 certificate, or on to "the city" if they had their sights set on a profession. The early school curriculum placed great emphasis on writing, as the written word was the only means of communication before the days of radio, telephone, and television. Exercises to improve writing skills were undertaken on a daily basis. Also, all of the writing was in "longhand script" form, with "print" at the time being used only in commercial signs, and in the media such as newspapers and magazines.

The earliest schools, both rural and community, were almost all one-room buildings with a stove located in the centre of the classroom to provide warmth. It was often noted in local history accounts that, during cold winter days, this type of central heating usually meant that those students near the stove "cooked" while those near the outer walls "froze." The caretaker, who lit the fire each morning before class, was often the teacher or an older male student. Upon arriving, they might find the temperature in the room to be minus 35 degrees Fahrenheit, meaning that it would be noon before the students and teacher could shed all of their outdoor clothing. It also was commonplace, throughout the entire settlement era, that many children attended school only during the winter months when they were not needed on the farms. If they were not working in the fields, the children were needed to watch the cattle to keep them out of their fields of grain, as there were few fences during the early decades, and free ranging cattle was permitted and normal. Students who lived near the school were able to walk there. Those at any distance enlisted the help of horses to drive them. In the summer, the horse would pull a buggy and, in winter, a sleigh or cutter. Each family brought a bag of feed for their own horse, which was kept in a stable built in the school yard. The reliable old school-horse would always find its own way to school and back home. Teachers usually boarded with local families during the settlement years; however, beginning in the early 1920s, small one-bedroom "teacher's cottages" were often built in one corner of the schoolyard where the teacher would reside.

The operation of local school districts was overseen by a local board of trustees, usually three, plus a secretary-treasurer. They were elected by the residents of the school district at an annual school district meeting and were responsible for the general upkeep of the school and for hiring the teacher. Early school districts were given a grant of $250 per year by the province to help cover the teacher's salary. Twice a year, the provincial school inspector would visit each school and reported to the trustees on the condition of the building, progress of the pupils, and the capabilities of the teacher. Both teachers and pupils always breathed a big sigh of relief when the inspector's visit was over, as he always arrived unannounced. The annual Christmas concert and school picnic were a large part of every school year. Sport "field days" were also major events. The students of nearby schools all met together and started off the day with a parade, with each school proudly displaying its own banner and the children dressed in matching outfits. Later in the day, the competitions began with various events such as racing and jumping, and often softball games. *(Louise'79 :96.)*

Many of the earliest teachers in the BTNHR did not possess any formal education training, but rather were someone who had acquired a bit more education either in Ontario or back in the "Old Country." Most of the teachers were women, and this was one of very few occupations available to women at the time. Many women teachers became the brides of local bachelors in the district and, in doing so, had to resign their positions - as married women were not permitted to be teachers. It was believed one could not be a good wife and mother if she had a job outside the home, so it was not permitted until well into the 20th century. By the later 1880s, one could enroll in Manitoba teacher-training, or Normal School, as it was then called. A Grade 10 education would get you a "Third Class" certificate, Grade 11 a "Second Class", and Grade 12 a "First Class" teacher's certificate. In 1904 Normal School classes were offered in Pilot Mound during the summer months and, in 1906, the Manitou Normal School was built by the province and functioned as a regional teachers' training centre until the mid 1930's.

Attending a one-roomed school was almost universally fondly remembered by the children living in the BTNHR during the settlement period. Many former students later put to paper some of their most vivid memories. Among the earliest was provided by Fred Hagyard who recalled that, during the summer of 1879, he attended school near Nelsonville in a small shanty. The building was the home of a bachelor homesteader, and he offered its use to the school board for a small fee. Fred and all the other children vacated the premises at noon for an hour and again after four o'clock. *(MHS'53 :Hagyard.)*

- Mrs. V. McKay shared some of her school memories of attending Oaks school, near Killarney, beginning with a poem. "*In the Little Red School House, With my book and slate, In the Little Red School House, I was always late*." She added, "*I attended Oaks school district, which was organized and a school house built in 1886. It was an actual little red school house built in a beautiful location among the trees. The building was about 24'x18' with a 10' ceiling. There were desks for 16 students and 20 seats without desks. There was one blackboard, 10'x13', and two maps, one map of the world, and one of the Dominion of Canada. Those were wonderful school days. I remember especially the up and down, round-about valley*

Figure 8.6.1 Above: St. Léon French Catholic school. NE 14-5-9W. Circa 1888. Students and teacher pose for a photograph. Note the schoolhouse is a small log building with a single window. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.6.2. Above: Wood Lake SD No. 751. NE-8-2-19W. Circa 1900. Typical of many one-room country schools of frame lumber construction, Wood Lake school was a district landmark and community centre from 1893 to 1967**.** *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.6.3. Above: Public School, Ninga. 19-3-18W. Circa 1910. Recess at Ninga SD No. 845. This design of a two-room school was popular and was often erected in small towns in Manitoba around the turn of the century. The Ninga SD No. 845 functioned from 1887 to 1968**.** *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.6.4. Above: Darlingford consolidated school. Constructed of locally manufactured brick, this building was designed for eventual expansion with an identical wing to the left of the tower, but it was never required. Note the horse-drawn "school buses" that picked up children from the surrounding countryside after consolidation with the town school. The building currently functions as a district museum. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.6.5. Above: Morden public school. 1893. Granite fieldstone construction was popular in the BTNHR from 1890 to 1914 and many fieldstone schoolhouses were erected. The Morden fieldstone school was replaced with a large single-storey brick design in 1928. The old fieldstone school was demolished in 1954. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.6.6. Above: School gardens. Many schools had gardens, even in towns. The photo above shows Snowflake school students preparing their garden. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.6.7. Above: School Christmas concerts. Christmas concerts were a major part of every school year. This "cropped" Christmas tree was photographed in the new Swan Lake school in 1925. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.6.8. Above: Normal school. Circa 1910. Photo showing the Manitou public school, at left in the background, and the provincial Department of Education's "Normal School for Teachers' Training." During the 1920s, both buildings were replaced with modern structures. *(PMA - Manitou Coll.)*

Figure 8.6.9. Above: Melita public school. Unlike most other large town schools built during the 1890s and 1900s, the large two-storey former Melita Public School has survived and currently houses the Antler River Historical Museum. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.6.10. Above: Snowflake school museum. 2015. Interior of the Snowflake School Museum located on the summit of Star Mound. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.6.11. Above: Mowbray school. 14-1-8W. Largely unchanged since its closure during the mid-1960s, this photo of the interior of Mowbray school was taken in 2004. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.6.12. Above: *Victoria Lake SD No. 446 1885-1961.* NE12-1-18W. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.6.13. Above: Heritage cairns. Cairns marking former school and church locations are numerous in the BTNHR. *(Flickr.)*

Figure 8.6.14. Fairfield SD No. 418 cairn. *"Built 1887. Closed 1964. 77 Years of Learning. NE10-4-17W."* *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.6.15. Above: Marringhurst SD No. 231, 1882-1967. Inscription reads: "*Erected in honour of the pioneers who forded the Pembina River in 1879 and settled in this community of Marringhurst. The first log school was built in 1882. The present building was built in 1892, and served the community as school, church, and social centre until 1967."* *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.6.16. Above: Chicken Hill SD No. 581 1892-1962. SW11-1-7W. *(EdLed.)*

trail to the school that we travelled every day. True, at the time, we didn't have eight or ten scribblers, a beautiful bookbinder or pencils galore, but we did have a copy book and slate. When the slate was filled and the work corrected, it was simply wiped clean and you were ready to start again. Happy we were, too, in our play periods. Our school, nestled there among the trees and flowers with a playground out in front and across in the pasture a pond, all afforded a great deal of fun the year round. The school also became the religious and social centre of the district, with church services, literary meetings and even a singing class." *(Gosnell'68 :107.)*

- Lloyd James of the Killarney area, often had teachers boarding at his parents' house. "*We were quite fortunate, as we lived only about a quarter of a mile from the school. There was two houses built on section 33, one for our grandparents and one for our family, and both were fairly large houses. And the teacher used to board with us most of the time because we were so close to the school. Other students had to go a half mile, two miles, three miles, whatever the case was. But we were very fortunate in that way. I remember starting school, I think Miss Gemmell was my first teacher, and I remember being given a slate, a bottle of water and a slate pencil. And that was our first equipment for school. Practically everybody used a slate. The slate pencil made a screechy noise that sort of disturbed classes, sometimes, but on the whole, it didn't interfere with us too much.*

As we lived near the school, some of us had the school fires to light in the winter. The teacher also, when she lived with us, if we got a strapping at school, word of it got around, then we'd got another from our mother after school. I don't think the teacher ever told on us; I think it was likely my older sister. We were never allowed to call the teacher by the first name even at home, lest we get too familiar. There was always a certain decorum we had to have. Also, there was a school concert at Christmas every year when each child had to take part, regardless of their talent. The teacher always had responsibility for these concerts and when the big night arrived, the school was always packed. There was no other entertainment to keep people at home, and each wanted to see and hear their children perform. Adult plays, usually later in the winter, were also well attended and, of course, we thought they were superb. I guess we didn't have anything else to compare them to. I remember we played games at school, baseball, and we played scrub hockey on the little creek. We didn't have proper teams and we'd get a bent willow strip, and we used a little bit of horse manure for a puck and we played that. It was a lot of fun, anyway. There was skating on the river and swimming in the summer on the same river. However, we learned at an early age that life was not all fun and games. We had to rise early with the men and each had so many cows to milk, calves to feed, pigs and chickens to feed, separating the milk, all before going to school."

- Isabella Fargey's parents' homestead was in the La Rivière district. In a published memoir, she recalled some of her experiences attending a one-room country school. "*Through the years most children walked to school in the summer, often barefoot. In winter, they generally drove. Many's the farmer who gave rides with their buggy or wagon to school children in those days. One man even sent back by mail a book that had been forgotten in his wagon. Sometimes, the mosquitoes were bad, walking to school, especially if the road was grassy. This was a sign of a good crop, but was mighty uncomfortable. However, there were grasshoppers and dragonflies too and a variety of frogs and toads, even snakes. And if one had to pass bush, there were nuts and wild fruit and, in the swamps, cat-tails, and flowers all summer long. Class mates often visited each other and it was an event to be away from home all night. The games at school were Prisoner's Base, Hide-and-go-seek and baseball in the summer. In the winter, the girls played Jacks and everyone danced, and we snow-balled each other. I remember, the higher grades of students had to go to Manitou to write their exams."* *(Fargey'55.)*

- Linda Dalgliesh, who attended a school in the Margaret district, 5-18W, recalled, "*I can remember going to school in an open sleigh with it 30 below zero. When my dad used to take the team, he'd sit us in the bottom of the sleigh box and cover us up with a blanket and cover our heads up and take us to school. We even went to school when it was 54 below zero. Quite a bit different to what there is now with the school buses. I started to school when I was six years old; most of my brothers and sisters started when they were five years old, but I started when I was six. I can remember the second teacher that I had. She was a widow that came from Quebec. Well, the only time I got the strap, it was a ruler about a half-inch thick, was for having three spellings wrong. I also remember one time, the teacher used to play with us, and we were playing crack the whip and we cracked her off the end of the whip and she went flying. And that was the end of that, we were not allowed to play crack-the-whip after that. In those days, there wasn't single seats in school and the boy that was put with me was kind of a cantankerous fellow and he used to wiggle his desk. He didn't want to sit in that desk with me and always wiggled it. She'd nailed it down to the floor with a six-inch spike and he even pulled that out."* *(Westman Oral History Project, Voices of Yesteryear.)*

- Sidney Ransom, who clearly admired his childhood teachers, recalled in his memoirs, "*We, the people, owed a great deal to the school teacher. In almost every instance, the school teacher was a very dedicated sort of a person and it was almost always a lady. In fact, to be quite frank, back in those days, any men that taught school were regarded as sort of an oddball. But the ladies I really had to take my hat off to. They generally worked for a very low salary, almost next thing to nothing. They were not only dedicated teachers and the promoters of education, but they were also very dedicated community workers and if they felt that they should remain in the district over the weekend to help with community endeavours, well they very often did so. Of course, in many instances, they remained in the area. I married a school teacher and my brother married a school teacher and my cousin married a school teacher. So, I guess that, probably, the majority of them ended up marrying, well usually a farmer in the area, but not always, and you know, they eventually became the very best of citizens in the community and certainly people that deserved a great deal of respect.*

The teacher was always connected with various sorts of endeavours, such as the school picnics, dances, concerts and things of that nature. I think of the teachers who marched us and drilled us on field day and, how, for days before that, we'd be marched up and down the road till she had us almost to the point of perfection, and went to no end of extra work to do this sort of thing. And then, of course, the old Christmas Concert was something to behold. This required a great deal of work and effort and dedication on the part of the teacher. I think I'd be probably correct if I said that it almost drove many of them crazy, that month or six weeks before the Christmas concert. Usually, on our last practice just the day before the big night, well, that would be about one of the worst practices we had and the teacher would pretty near be beside herself worrying about what it was going to be like, because quite often the ratepayers and the public judged her by the kind of concert she put on or the way she marched and drilled us on field day. But then, come the big night, we generally performed to perfection and she and everybody else would be happy and relieved. But those concerts offered us a great opportunity, which I feel we don't have to the same extent today and that was the opportunity of children getting on the platform and appearing in public and learning a little bit about drama. It was just a wonderful effort." *(Sidney Ransom'79.)*

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8.7 CHURCHES - PRAYER, PASTORS AND CHURCH PICNICS

After the early pioneers had their cabins built, they soon got together to formulate plans for a community school and a church. For the first few years, before the first school houses or churches could be built, Bible reading was done at home and, when a minister visited, the settlers would gather for services in different homes. There were soon student ministers of different denominations, travelling through the district holding services in settlers' homes. When the schools were built, some services were held in them until the churches were built. In conjunction with church construction, district burial grounds would be established on nearby donated acreages. Prior to that, when a family member passed, loved ones were buried on their own farm and the burial service was held in the home. Ladies Aid societies were formed early on to raise funds for the churches by making and selling quilts and carpets, and organizing events such as church picnics, lawn socials, and fowl suppers. After the churches were erected, they worked to keep the church in good repair and clean, and also to help pay the pastor's salary. Space does not permit even a brief discussion regarding religious doctrine for the many different faiths that were represented in the BTNHR during the settlement years. However, following are a few enlightening personal recollections of the early days of religious ministries and church attendance in the BTNHR, as recalled by individuals who lived it.

- **Donald McKay,** who grew up during the early days of Pilot Mound, in his memoirs recalled his family's association with multiple churches during the late 1890s. "*In our town there were five churches — Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Catholic. My father being Presbyterian, while my mother was Baptist. My mother mentioned that anyone who came to town claiming to be Baptist, was welcome to stay in our home until they were ready to locate here or move on. My mother played the organ in the church from when she was quite a little girl. We attended the Presbyterian Church in the morning. The buggies were driven to a little landing so that the ladies would not have to step down so far and to keep from stepping in the mud. I can still see the older couples coming into the church, so quiet and sedate, dressed in black broadcloth suits and satin dresses — every family to its own pew and a quiet wait of ten to fifteen minutes before the service began. The ushers knew who sat in each pew and they must never put the wrong person in another family's pew.The services were very dignified and sincere, but to a boy, the music was terribly slow and mournful. The baptismal font was in the front of the church with special sliding doors which were opened on baptismal days. This consisted of total submersion during the service.*

Sunday school came every Sunday, rain or shine, and shoes, blouse and face had to be clean and there on time. In the evening, for a change and a treat, my mother would allow us to choose whatever church we wished to attend, as a family. We usually chose the Methodist Church as the people were so friendly and the music was so bright and swingy. It was an evening of pure pleasure to hear the congregation singing, the special items from the choir, and usually a duet or two by young folks. We always went to the Anglican church for Harvest Festival and marvelled at the fruit, grains, and vegetables down the pews, on the altar, and throughout the building. However, their prayer books and Hymn books had us confused. The Methodist church service was always nice to attend and, during the week, we looked forward to Literary Society meetings on Thursday nights. This was undenominational and was the height of good fellowship and entertainment. My mother also used to attend Prayer Meeting in the Presbyterian church on Tuesday evenings and was a friendly social gathering of women once a week." *(Gosnell'68 :384.)*

- **Russell Wyman's** father was the Methodist Minister in the community of Cypress River for a few years during the early 1900s. In a later published autobiography he related the following, "*My mother used to take me to church. We usually sat on the left side perhaps a little more than half way to the front. I am not sure that subjecting infants to long, quiet spells is a good thing to do. At any rate, I must have thought so at the time. Those were the days of long prayers and I am accused of interjecting a small, piping vice into the middle of one with, 'Say Amen! Daddy, say Amen'! This must have broken up even the serious congregation of those days.*" *(Wyman'88 :14.)*

- **Violet Lawson**, who grew up in the Rosebud district in township 1-11W, recalled, "*We went to church, school, and all social events in the school — the old one with its dark varnished tongue and groove walls and a little platform across the front and, above the teacher's head, the clock flanked by framed photos of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. I also remember, as a child, the biggest event of the summer was the Sunday School Picnic in McKitrick's grove. Every one who had ice-cream freezers made a supply and tables were set up under the trees. There was even a swing! Few of our homes at that time had trees big enough to support a swing. Later, we acquired the present church. Dad was caretaker for years and many an hour I helped with the dusting and swatting the week's accumulation of flies before the congregation arrived. I remember on Mother's Day, when Mother and others with house plants, made little nose-gays of geraniums or whatever was at hand, and a couple of we older girls would hand them out to the arriving crowds in the porch of the church.*" *(Gosnell'68 :289.)*

- **Dave Cuvelier**, whose parents were Belgian settlers in the Deloraine district recalled. "*In the summer, we went every Sunday, but in the winter we didn't go as often. I remember the whole family going with the horses up to the Turtle Mountain church. The cemetery is still there. The church was there. We lived about five miles away. I remember one trip when my father and mother went at Easter time with the democrat for confession and communion. We had to go a mile south and four miles west, and the wind was blowing hard straight from the west. Them two horses, they were just farm horses and because it was spring they were losing their winter hair. Facing the wind, all the hair blew our way and got in our eyes, in our noses, and stuck everywhere on our nice clean coats. And when we got to church our coats didn't look too good. Mother took a brush with her and tried to brush the hair off, but, oh, I guess there was too much, and it didn't work and when we went into the church we were still covered in horse hair. Gee, I remember, I just hated it. Horse hair flying in our faces the entire time! That's when I learned that I didn't care much for horses. After that, I became interested in machinery. I was interested in tractors. I was interested in anything that didn't involve horses. I even learned to drive a car when I was 13 years old.*" *(D. Cuvelier'88.)*

- **Lloyd Jones** of Killarney, recalled, "*When our church was first being organized, we had a lot of Scots people at the time. There was one old Scotsman who believed that there shouldn't be any musical instrument in the church; it should be done with a tuning fork and a presenter. And he was very opposed to an organ being brought in, as someone suggested. He said it would be over his dead body, if they brought one in. However, at a later date, an organ was brought in and there was no loss of life. Early on, people usually attended a service of any denomination. There was Baptists, and there was Methodists, and there was Presbyterians, and there was Anglicans, but mostly Presbyterians and Anglicans. We got along very well together, and it seemed as though they all believed in one God and the church was important. At first, church services were held wherever it was possible. But, the 'older people' soon wanted to attend their own denominational churches and local congregations soon began fund-raising to construct their own churches. I can remember all the neighbours going together, to build a church barn, with about 26 stalls in it, one for each family's team. Also, there used to be a fowl supper every year which nearly everybody attended. It was the highlight of the year, and you had all the cake and ice cream that you could eat. And there were quite a few other social events held in connection with the church, and just the meeting together every Sunday was looked forward to.*" *(Killarney Archives'81 :L. Jones.)*

Figure 8.7.1. Above: St. Luke's, Pembina Crossing, circa 1882. This log structure was first used as a HBC store and saloon before its purchase and use as one of the district's first churches. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.7.3. Above: Church and rectory. A Minister poses for a photograph in front of a church and rectory, both of modest size and simple construction and design. Note the 1887 "date stone" on the church. Note also that the church is painted, but not the rectory; the well-built picket fence with corner balustrades; and part of a stable-carriage house in the backyard at right. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.7.5. Above: Manitou Methodist church and rectory. General economic progress and population growth, during the 1890s resulted in progressively larger church buildings being built. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.7.6. Above: Winter funeral procession. Funeral processions and burials occurred regardless of the season or weather conditions. *(Brachet photo.)*

Figure 8.7.2. Above: Pembina Crossing church, Interior. A superb interior view of a pioneer church. Note the wood stove at the back of the room with stove pipes extending all the way to the front, to help provide full building heating. *(PMA.)*

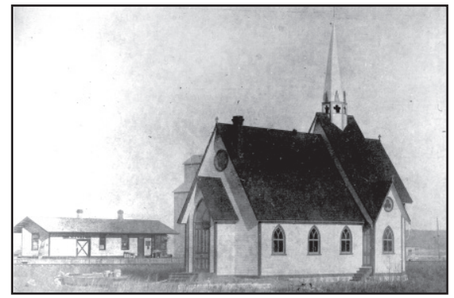

Figure 8.7.4. Above: Church of England, Ninette. Prior to 1895, most churches were of modest size and built of frame lumber construction, though, as this example shows, that did not always mean of plain design. Note the small rail station and also the almost obscured small grain elevator behind the church. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.7.7. Above: St. Paul's Anglican. Wawanesa. After 1900, many picturesque brick churches were built in towns across the BTNHR. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.7.8. Above: Baldur Methodist church. After 1900, many towns were able to build and support large, well-equipped, church buildings. Note the choir loft and pipe organ at the right, hardwood pews, and electric lighting, which, at the time, was powered by the town electric power plant. The large room at the left was used as a Sunday school classroom. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

Figure 8.7.9. Above: *"Presbyterian Church, Pierson."* Circa 1910. The interior walls of the BTNHR's Methodist, Presbyterian, Congregationist and Anglican churches were largely unadorned, in contrast to the often highly ornate interiors of most Roman Catholic churches. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

Figure 8.7.10. Above: 8.5.4. Circuit Preachers. St. James church, Miami, Man. August 1910. "*One of the well-known characters of the early 1880s was the Reverend H.J. Borthwick. He taught school at Old Darlingford and his mission field extended to Crystal City on the west, to Maida, North Dakota in the south and he also travelled some distance to the north. He also preached at the house of Jim Maloney on 14-2-8W. Schoolhouses were later used as churches on his circuit.*" *(MHS'53 :Reilley.)*

Figure 8.7.11. Above: Church picnics. A group photo taken at a Sunday School picnic at Rock Lake, which provided the local residents and visitors with several scenic and popular camping and picnic sites. Rock Lake was later the location of a "summer school camp" for teachers upgrading their skills and credentials. Private and rental cabins were also built along the lake shoreline. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.7.12. Above: Early wood frame churches. St. Paul's Anglican church in Clearwater was built in 1889, and has survived largely unaltered since its construction. It is believed to be one of the oldest Anglican churches still in regular use in Manitoba. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.7.13. Above: Former St. Paul's Presbyterian church. Constructed of local granite fieldstone in 1896, at 200 Railway Avenue South in Deloraine. This re-purposed church is today a protected heritage site. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.7.14. Above: St. Andrew's Presbyterian church, in Manitou. Constructed of brick and fieldstone, St. Andrew's is one of the BTNHR's best preserved wheat boom era churches. *(HRB.)*

- John MacKinnon's family were pioneers in the Pilot Mound district, where he grew up and lived for his entire life. He was a major contributor in the production of the Pilot Mound local history *Echoes of the Past,* published in 1968. One of his many colourful recollections recorded in it includes the following, slightly shortened, story of a memorable funeral procession.

"*In the winter of 1918–19, Mrs. Mary Campbell passed away. There the story would end, but this is history, and possibly for the younger generations, one should tell something about the funeral of a type that we see no more. When the word came that the funeral service would be held in Pilot Mound, with the internment in Wood Bay Cemetery, the neighbours gathered at the Cemetery to dig the grave. This was the first months of 1919, and it was a very cold spell. My father and I were batching at that time and, the evening before the funeral, my father told me that the next day we would have an early dinner. I was to dress real warm, that we would pick up our neighbour Charles Masson and drive slowly to town. He and Charles would go to the funeral service and arrange for a ride back to Wood Bay with someone else. I was to put the team in the livery barn, feed and water them and have them hitched up again before the funeral procession started. I had to travel ahead and break trail to the cemetery, five miles of which angled across country. That was the reason for using the heavy farm sleigh.*

So, the next day, we left before noon, picked Charles up and were on our way to town. That morning, the thermometer said 41 degrees below zero. I tied the reins onto the sleigh box and Charlie and I walked behind the sleigh practically all the way to town, this being the most comfortable way to travel on a cold day when you could not travel fast. I started out of town a short distance ahead of the procession and for three miles the road had been well travelled and we were able to move along fairly well. But, then we turned onto the cross country road which was drifted full of snow. When I would look back and see the pall-bearers sitting in an open sleigh, facing that bitter wind, I tried to speed up once in a while. For I realized quite well that these men were not young and that they would have had to stand around at the cemetery in the cold and then make the return trip to Pilot Mound, and after some of them had to drive father on to get home.

That trip to the cemetery took almost two hours, on a bitterly cold day, but there was one consolation, and that was that there had been funerals on lots of worse days. Years later, I realized why father wanted me to break trail so the procession could reach the cemetery with as little delay as possible. I found my birth certificate, and saw it for the first time, and it was marked 'No Doctor – Mrs. Mary Campbell, Midwife". That in itself is, maybe, not so important, but when one considers that I was one of those small creatures that weighted in at three and a half pounds, and also had other complications, I well realize that Mrs. Mary Campbell, must have been one of the best of Midwives. As a long time resident, my father knew well just how much Mary Campbell had done for her neighbours, his own family included, and he must have thought it appropriate, and his last chance to again give thanks, by having me break trail for her funeral procession." *(Gosnell'68 :448.)*

- Catherine Scott's father was an early missionary in the BTNHR. In her later years, she recalled some of the unique experiences and difficulties the family experienced during those years. "*Father and Mother came to Manitoba in 1881, where Father was sent to open up new missions. Father's first place of preaching was the old Nelson Mission, where he spent three years. Then he went to Snowflake to open up a mission there. That first year, he used to walk 30 miles and preach three times every Sunday. The second year he got a horse and buggy. The parsonage was a small log house made of poplar logs. It was so cold that first winter, that Father had to keep a roaring fire in the stove until midnight and get up at 5 A.M. and get the fire going again. He had a small log stable, which held a horse and a cow. He spent two years at Snowflake, and was then sent to Cypress Hills to start a church there. He was always sent to some settlement to open up a church, or at least to hold services, in church if there was one, or in schools or homes if there wasn't. Then, in 1893, he was sent to Killarney, where there was a church and a half-finished parsonage. I think Father was three years preaching at Killarney when he had to resign on account of health and some trouble with the powers over him. But he only had a year off, and then he was on call to fill in for someone sick, or lack of a minister for some church. A good half of his time he was away preaching. He kept splendid driving horses and they went all over southern Manitoba with him.*

I remember a cold winter night and my father, the minister, having to close up the service on account of a terrible smell that had many folks sneezing. The janitor and some of the men of the church went down to see what the trouble was but couldn't find anything wrong. Next day, they took the furnace apart and cleaned pipes. Well, crime will out, they say. What had happened was that, my youngest sister Reta had taken a box of snuff, that someone for a joke, had sent father. She had it in her coat pocket, and when pulling out her handkerchief, the box of snuff came, too, and fell open on the hot air register. She didn't know what to do, so quickly she brushed it all down the register and then went to her seat. When she got home, she later told Mother what she had done and didn't want Mother to tell Father. Mother promised to keep the secret, but on condition Reta would walk the straight and narrow path in future. We gals had many a good laugh over it. Another time, they, Theo and Reta, took some pepper tied up in the corner of a handkerchief and the idea was to put it on some certain person's collar. He had it loose, lying on the hymn book and, when getting up for the hymn, the pepper blew off and not where intended to go. I believe dear old Grampa McLean got most of it and he started to sneeze and couldn't stop, and had to go outside. We often wondered if father suspected what had happened, for later, when talking to someone he said, 'I like those girls, but they are awful devils.'

As we grew older, we kicked at Father filling in for other preachers and never getting paid. When he went by train east or west, he paid his own expenses. Once Rev. Saumby came out to get Father to take the church services at Morden for a month while the regular preacher was away sick. Father wasn't in when Mr. Saumby came and said what he wanted, so we girls put in a kick and told Mr. Saumby to please not ask Father, we were tired of him going away and never being paid. Mr. Saumby was very surprised and asked Mother if that was so. Mother told him yes, and how unfair we all thought it. Mr. Saumby did ask Father to fill in, but from then on, Father was paid. Father was very angry at us, and lectured us for saying anything, but I think he was glad of the pay. Father baptized many babies while in Killarney. Later, he married them, and later again baptized their children when they arrived. Father was always sent to open up new districts or to pull a church out of debt and get it going again. He always seemed to manage that, and he used to be away from home a lot." *(Killarney Archives :C. Scott.)*

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8.8 SPORT AND RECREATION

The business of making a living became somewhat easier during the Wheat Boom years, and the settlers of the BTNHR soon turned their attention to recreational pursuits, as noted in local history records.

"*People made their own good times and entertainment and, because there were fewer mechanical means of entertainment, people appreciated what their neighbours had to offer more. Home talent entertainment was considered the thing and halls, churches and theatres would be filled to overflowing to see and hear the local theatre group. Glee Clubs and church choirs could fill a hall any day of the week and local dances would be bound to be a big affair. At New Year's, the local population would turn sophisticated and arrange to have a special attraction, such as a harpsichordist come out to the dance. This would be preceded often by a big dinner at the hotel. I remember reading the menu of one such affair. The dinner started with oyster stew and after courses of duck, chicken, turkey, fish, beef, and venison, it finished up with pie, ice cream, cake, cheese and fruits. Of course, this cost $5.00 a plate. Admission to the dance was fifty cents.*" *(Gosnell'68 :387.)*

Afternoon "calling" or visiting had developed into a very fine art prior to 1914. When the ladies went calling, they arrived on the day that had been indicated on their card — the day that you would be "at home." This was no mere dropping in for a few minutes, but would be a full dress affair, usually between three and five o'clock. The ladies would be dressed in their best. In summer, it would be a nice white muslin dress, broad brimmed white straw hat covered with flowers or birds and, to complete the ensemble, a tightly bound white parasol. It was a delightful habit and, after an afternoon of talking, laughing, and tea drinking, the ladies took their departure, after leaving their card on a small silver or china tray sitting on the parlor table. That habit of visiting for the sheer pleasure of fellowship is almost a lost art. There was a distinct feeling of pleasure in the house for hours after these afternoon visits as this would be the main means of communication between women of those days. *(Gosnell'68 :388.)*

- Mrs. M. Garrett recalled: "*During the winter months, church groups were formed for the benefit of the young people. Most who could sing, and some who couldn't, joined the choir and enjoyed the practise and Wednesday night socials. The most looked forward to event was the annual Christmas concert, held first in churches and then in the schools. There were no evergreens in our district, so nicely shaped trees were found and the branches wrapped in green paper; the ornaments were homemade, also the stocking to hang on the tree. These were of red net and filled with candies, nuts, etc. Santa always came to give out the gifts from under the tree.*" *(Gosnell'68 :388.)*

People attended picnics from miles around. They came in buckboards, wagons, and later in democrats and buggies. The women brought baskets full of good food to feed the hungry mob. Here, they enjoyed visits with old friends that they had not seen for a year, and also become acquainted with newcomers to the district.

- Robert Mooney of Crystal City recalled, *"Entertainment was homemade. There was fishing and hunting, and game was plentiful. Much of this was done for food, as well as sport. There was also a great deal of visiting, dances, and house parties, and also the yearly picnic in summer. During the summer, there was baseball and football, with competition from surrounding districts. In winter, there were social evenings and literary society activities which usually ended in a concert program provided by local talent. Skating was also a popular winter pastime. Children learned to skate on ponds or on a nearby river.*" During the early years, there was a great deal of surface water in many areas of the BTNHR. J.A. Hill remembered that one year, "*The hill upon which Manitou now stands was almost an island.*" John Archer remembered that sometimes, when coming to visit, his aunt, Asenath Clark, used to skate the entire three miles from her house to the Archer home. An indoor combined skating and curling rink was built in 1892 in Crystal City. Cartwright's first indoor hockey rink was built in 1919. Most communities built rinks during the Wheat Boom years, even many of the smaller villages and hamlets. *(MHS'53 :R. Mooney.)*

The early settlers had sports with which to amuse themselves. Baseball and football were played prior to 1888. Before 1900, there was an open air rink in Crystal City. Tobogganing was very popular. About 1886 a large toboggan slide was built at Clearwater which was lighted at night by means of lanterns hung from trees. "*Kids big enough to run to grey-haired men and women, gathered there.*" During the very early days, tobogganing was the chief sport. In social life between 1890 and the Great War, the surprise party was a common form of entertainment. A group called upon a chosen family without warning. It would usually wind up with a dance. Everyone in the family was welcome. There would be singing, reciting, music and dancing, with all ages taking part. In those days, everyone made their own musical entertainment, until Edison's first cylinder record phonograph came in 1903.

During the same period, debates and spelling bees were also social occasions. Often the school teacher would start a spelling bee during a party. In 1899, the Royal Music Hall was built by Honourable Thomas Greenway. It seated about 200 people. Travelling troupes performed acts including singing and theatrical pieces and were an especially popular form of entertainment during the 1880s and early 1890s. *(MHS'53 :Wm Duncan.)*

Another popular winter pastime was to learn to play whatever musical instrument the family had in their possession. In winter, especially, there would be parties in the larger homes in the district. Around 1900, the school house became a bee hive of activity every Friday evening from October to March. District families were divided into committees who planned the Friday night social, taking care of the program, serving the lunch, which all the ladies brought as their admission fee, and cleaning up afterwards. The coffee was made at home in large pots or boilers and transported in a five gallon cream can. Sometimes, the social would take the form of a concert, sometimes a whist party, or games and contests, sometime humorous or serious debates relevant to the problems and issues of the times. Many times, it would be a dance with local talent providing the music. They danced everything from the Old Time waltz; Tye waltz; Quadrille waltz; French minuet; Schottische; Fox Trot; Strip the Willow — to all kinds of "squares and breakdowns." Once in a while, there would be a "Box Social." Girls and ladies would decorate a box real fancy, put in lunch for two and someone acting as auctioneer would sell the boxes to the men and so they got their partner for lunch. *(Louise'78 :75.)*

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Figure 8.8.1. Above: Men's minstrel singing group. 1886. Travelling Minstrel show, 1886. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.2. Above: Crystal City brass band. Circa 1895. Town bands were popular; many towns had bandstands. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.3. Above: Home pianos. Many homes had pianos. Home and community recitals were popular events. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.4. Above: "*Bathing Pool, Morden*." The BTNHR possesses many lakes and rivers to swim, boat and fish in. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

Figure 8.8.5. Above: "*Off For A Sail on the Laurel, Ninette.*" Both Rock and Pelican lakes were popular for fishing, camping and boating. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.6. Above: *"Breakfast at the Commodore's."* Lakefront cabins were built at many of the Region's lakes, such as the Hunt family cottage at Max Lake shown here. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.8.7. Above: Quilting bees. The ladies also frequently gathered in each other's homes for social activities, with quilting bees being among the most common. *(Brown'74 :92.)*

Figure 8.8.8. Above: Community baseball. Photo of Somerset baseball team 1909. Lacrosse was also popular at this time. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.9. Above: High school sports. 5-B girls basketball team, Boissevain, 1909. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.10. Above: Hunting. T. Wilson, coyote hunt, Boissevain. Circa 1890. *(A of MB.)*

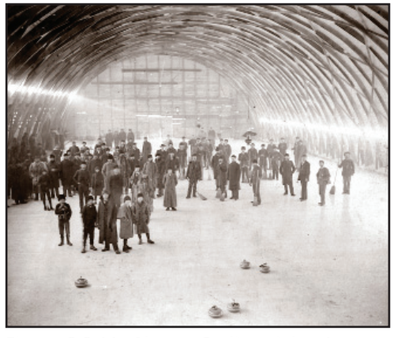

Figure 8.8.11. Above: Curling rinks. A scene at a Manitou Curling Club bonspiel around the turn of the century. Photographed by Manitou resident, H.C. Birnie. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.8.12. Above: "*Good Sport at Ninette.*" With the many lakes and rivers found in the BTNHR, fishing was a favourite summer recreational activity. *(PMA.)*

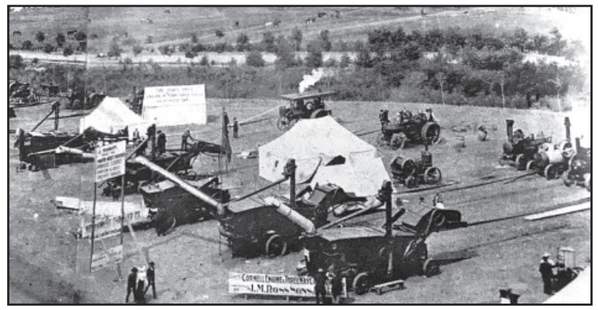

Figure 8.9.1. Above: Equipment demonstrations. A threshing equipment demonstration at the Brandon Agricultural Fair. Circa 1898. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.9.2. Above: Prize winning livestock. Circa 1900. John Graham, from the Carberry area poses with his prize-winning cattle at a Winnipeg Exhibition. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.9.3. Above: At the Killarney fair. A general view of the Killarney Agricultural Fairgrounds during exhibition weekend. Circa 1905. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.9.4. Above: The judging circle. Spectators surround a judge and, a half-dozen or so hitched buggies. Horse categories included "roadsters", "thoroughbreds" and "saddle horses." Note the cattle and horses in pens in the far distance and the parked buggies and the refreshment stand in the foreground. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.9.5. Above: Livestock Parade at Brandon Fair, 1898. Livestock entries, of many types and sizes, pose, along with their owners, for a photograph in front of the Brandon grandstand. *(NWF'98-08.)*

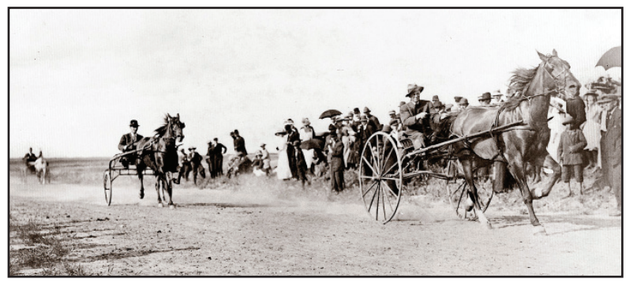

Figure 8.9.6. Above: Sulky races. An excellent action photo of sulky racing at the Boissevain Agricultural Fair, circa 1910. Note that all three of the drivers raced with hats on their heads, firmly placed, no doubt. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.9.7. Above: "*Race Track, Killarney, Man*." A horse racing event at the Killarney fairgrounds. Note the grandstand, judges' tower and several larger exhibition buildings in the background. *(PMA.)*

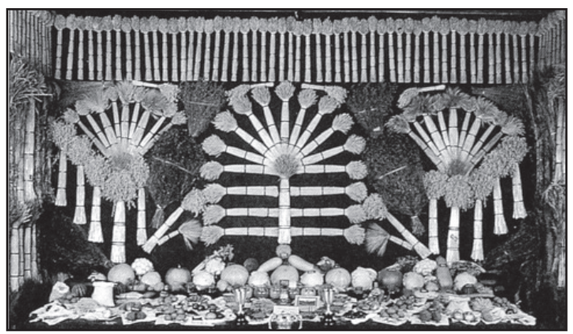

Figure 8.9.8. Above: Farm produce displays. A carefully prepared cereal crop and garden produce display at the 1917 Brandon Agricultural Fair. *(A of MB.)*

8.9 AGRICULTURAL SOCIETIES AND FAIRS

County fairs were especially loved events for the residents of the BTNHR, and were a major focus of the Region's many agricultural societies, established to promote sound farming practises and improve the quality of farm produce. One of the earliest agricultural fairs in Manitoba was held in Louise municipality in 1880, where a total of $130 in prizes was offered for exhibits. The main categories of exhibits involved classes of farm livestock, such as horses, swine, poultry, and cattle, but domestic categories were also included, such as baking, sewing, and handwork. Interestingly, all entries for the 1880 event, even in the domestic categories, were made in the name of the father or husband for the exhibitor. In 1883, the Mountain Agricultural Society was formed, with membership from Marringhurst, Clearwater, Pilot Mound, Archibald, Silver Springs, Crystal City, and other towns and districts, many of them no longer on the map.

By 1910, the fair was a main summer event in the lives of most BTNHR farm families. There were baseball tournaments, tug of wars, and foot races. In the Mountain Agricultural Society district, horse racing was added in 1912 and, by 1915, plowing matches, seed shows, and a popular horse show were main attractions. Grandstands were built in several BTNHR communities at this time, including Killarney and Boissevain. Horses were always popular at fairs and, during the early fairs, the big heavy work horses "stole the show" — the Clydesdale and Percheron that performed the heavy farm work.

The fairs were noisy places, with bawling cattle, baaing sheep, bleating goats, grunting pigs, and neighing and stomping horses. Inside the main exhibition building were booths where merchants displayed their wares, such as plumbing, heating, hardwares, and furniture, along with other items of interest to town and farm consumers.

In the early days, most of the handwork was decorative, and done to make bleak prairie homesteads beautiful and bearable. Women spent what leisure time they had, mainly during the winter months, crocheting tatting, knitting, embroidering and sewing. Pillowcases, tablecloths, serviettes, handkerchiefs, parlour scarves for the piano, centre pieces, tea towels, and even dishcloths were embroidered and lace-edged, to be displayed at the fair. Also on exhibit were hooked and braided mats, made out of worn-out stockings and underwear, and dyed skillfully. Quilting exhibits were always very popular, and people tended to spend a great deal of time admiring the skillful patterns and stitches at the quilting displays.

The food exhibits included jams and jellies, made from wild fruit such as plums, chokecherries, raspberries, strawberries, cranberries, and apples. The early fairs also had apple butter and apple cider categories. Also, baked goods exhibits included gingerbread, muffins, shortbread, doughnuts, buns, bread, cakes and cookies. Canning goods exhibits included pickles, carrots, beans, beets, tomatoes, cauliflower, and onions. The early pioneer women would also exhibit butter, cream, milk and eggs.

There were also seed grain exhibits, with prizes for the best hard spring wheat, durham wheat, utility wheat, six-row and two-row barley, oats, alfalfa, white and yellow sweet clover, brome grass, hay, grasses, and fodder crops. Vegetable exhibits grew from carrots and potatoes to many types of garden vegetables.

Most important, the agricultural fair provided a place for people to gather and visit. Everyone brought a picnic lunch, and women's groups brought food to sell the hordes of hungry people who annually showed up. The fair was a great place for general entertainment and homecoming. Many city families planned their vacations so they could come home and mingle with friends and family, to the background of the countless exhibits and food kiosks.

In later years, the Mountain Agricultural Fair district separated and organized their individual fairs in various local districts. Although much fewer in number today, the agricultural fair remained popular for many decades. Residents of nearby communities, and even Winnipeg would travel by train or road, to annually attend the various agricultural society fairs. The local hotels and boarding houses would be full of out-of-towners for the fair weekend, and such events provided a significant boost to the local economy. *(Louise'79 :136.)*

James Johnstone settled in the Aberdeen district in 1908, coming from Greenock, Scotland and soon went into partnership with neighbor O.D. Garbutt raising purebred Shorthorn cattle and Clydesdale horses. "*He especially enjoyed the fairs and was very experienced in dressing horses, so when the six-horse teams came into the show ring, you could be sure Jim would be one of the drivers.*" *(Gosnell'68 :251.)*

Agricultural Fair Livestock classes.

The following list of Livestock prize classes for the 1898 Portage la Prairie and Brandon Agricultural fairs show the most popular types and breeds of livestock raised in southern Manitoba and the BTNHR during the early years of the Wheat Boom Period. Winners in every category were published in local newspapers after every fair.

Horses - Prizes offered for various stallion, mare and filly categories in each of the following classes: Clydesdales, Percheron, Heavy Draught and Agricultural Horses, General Purpose Horses, Standard Bred Horses, Roadsters, Carriage Horses, Hackneys, Thoroughbreds, Saddle Horses, Ponies.

Cattle - Prizes offered for various bull, cow, and heifer categories, in each of the following classes: Shorthorns, Polled Angus, Galloways, Herefords, Devons, Holsteins, Jerseys and Guernseys, Ayrshires, Sweepstakes, Milch Cow, Pure Bred, Grade Cattle (dairy breeds), Fat Cattle, Any Breed and Range Cattle

Sheep - Prizes offered for various ram, lamb, ewe, and pair categories, in each of the following classes: Leicesters, Cotswolds, Lincolns, Shropshires, Oxford Downs, Southdowns, Rogers, Any Other Variety of Pure Bred Sheep except Merinos, Fat Sheep.

Swine - Prizes offered for various boar, sow, and litter categories in each of the following classes: Berkshires, Yorkshires, Chester Whites, Tamworths, Jersey Red or Duroc Jerseys, Any Other Pure Breed, Fat Pigs.

Chickens - Prizes offered for various categories of Andalusians, Brahmas, Cochins, Dorkings, Hamburgs, Houdans, Langshans, Leghorns, Minorcas, Polish, Plymouth Rocks, Wyandottes.
(NWF'98 :209.)

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8.10 ROADS AND TRANSPORTATION

During the 1890s and early 1900s, transportation was little different from the earlier Pioneer Period and was characterized by unimproved cross country trails and horse-drawn vehicles. By 1890, however, in addition to the major regional trails, a whole network of minor overland-trails had developed connecting the major railway connected towns with villages, rural districts and farmsteads across the length and breadth of the Boundary Trail region. The lack of proper bridges was a major concern for all during the early decades and as soon as municipal government districts were established and taxes collected, bridges and approaches to bridges became high priority early municipal projects.

The first bridges over the Pembina and Souris rivers were being built in 1874 by engineers of the Boundary Commission. These and other early wooden bridges of the pioneer period were frequently swept away by spring flood waters prompting the funding and construction of more robust timber, stone and metal bridges during the 1890s and early 1900s. Steel truss bridges for vehicular traffic were built at La Rivière and at Pembina Crossing, which made travelling much simpler and safer. Other early steel bridges were built at Swan Lake and the "Wilson Bridge" site located between Pilot Mound and Glenora.

When the BTNHR's first railway branch line pushed its way west across the Region, between 1882 and 1892, railway traffic bridges were built at all the major water crossings but these were strictly for train traffic and none were duel-purpose train-vehicular bridges. The railway bridges were all of wooden construction until the 1920s. *(Louise'74:101.)*

The first attempt to build raised roadbeds in the RM of Louise was made in June 1914 when it purchased a "Russell" elevating grader. The 1920s generally saw municipalities across the BTNHR struggle to develop the road system to better facilitate transportation. By-laws were passed permitting road diversions in the areas where the original road allowance would not permit travel by wagons. This period witnessed the construction of many bridges and, by the late 1920s, completion of Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) No.3 and the "Sunshine Highway" PTH No.17. *(Gosnell'68 :17.)*

Bridges

One of the urgent needs of the settlers living west of the Pembina River was for the construction of proper bridges over the Pembina River and the many creeks and coulies which had to be crossed while travelling the region's trail network. The early Rock Lake settlers built a bridge over the Pembina river around 1879 at 21-3-12W, in the Glenora district, that was 140 ft. long and 15 ft. wide. After the CPR reached Manitou, in the summer of 1883, the Council for the RM of Louise purchased a used pile-driver in Winnipeg with a 1800 pound hammer, for the sum of $800 and shipped it by rail to Manitou then overland to La Rivière in 3-8W and it succeeded in erecting an bridge before autumn. It was known as the "Iron Bridge" because of its iron railings. These two early bridges were great advancements for the settlers, no more week long journeys to Emerson or Nelsonville, no more unloading wagons at the Pembina, removing the wheels and using the box as a boat ferrying their loads over a bit at a time, then re-assembling everything before proceeding on to the next crossing. Other early Pembina River bridge sites were the "Demster bridge" at the east end of Rock Lake, the "Wilson bridge" in 3-12, the "Freedy" and "Creamery" bridges both located in 4-12, and the "Swan Lake bridge" was built east of that lake. All of these bridges were constructed with the pile driver purchased in 1883, by the Louise Municipal Council. Many of the smaller bridges in the BTNHR had their decks removed during the spring high water to prevent damage, as Mrs. V. McKay noted in her memoirs, "*Every year around Easter the bridge across Crystal Creek was taken out so that high water in the spring would not wash it away.*" *(Gosnell'68 :105.)*

Vehicles

During the 1890–1914 period, horse-drawn vehicles were the dominant form of transport. Automobiles began to be introduced into Manitoba and the BTNHR about 1910; however, the Wheat Boom Era was very much a "horse and buggy" era. Automobiles were still very much a novelty and would not come to dominate transportation for many decades to come. In terms of farm transportation, as the Pioneer Period was characterized by oxen and wagon, the Wheat Boom Era was characterized by the horse and buggy. Automobiles during this period did not operate well or at all during the winter months or on wet muddy roads. The buggy came first, then the democrat with two seats one behind the other. There was the surrey with a small seat in front for a small child. It also had two coal oil lamps, one on each side, and a fringe top. The "horseless carriage" began to appear as early as 1910. These were known as "touring cars" and were first made in the United States soon after the turn of the century. The "Sedan" appeared a few years later. *(Louise'4 :101.)*

Pathmasters & Statute Labour

The early municipal by-laws passed after a municipality was organized included the appointment of a "municipal pathmaster." Under the pathmaster system, each township was divided equally into four divisions of nine sections of land each. A pathmaster was appointed for each division and it was the duty of each pathmaster to see that the roads and trails were kept in passable condition. Each taxpayer was responsible for one day of statute labour for a certain amount of property assessment. In addition, in many municipalities every resident male over the age of 21 who was in good health was liable for one day of statute labour whether he was a landowner or not.

Early municipal records for Louise Municipality recorded that, "*Public works during the 1880-89 period consisted primarily of the maintenance work carried out by the pathmasters and the construction of numerous bridges across the various creeks and rivers. Twenty-four horse drawn road scrapers were purchased by the municipality in 1881, with two scrapers allotted to each township. The Louise Council headed into the new century with statute labour still a vital part of the municipal operation and the bridging of watercourses continued to be a great concern for Council. The schedule for statute labour consisted of one day for the first $200 of assessment. Another day was levied for those assessed between $200 and $500, plus one day for each additional $500 of assessment. Statute labour continued up to May 18, 1905 when a By-law was passed repealing the system and enacting a straight money tax.*"

The duties of pathmasters, circa 1900, included the following interesting responsibilities: "*That it shall be the duty of all pathmasters to act as noxious weeds inspectors and to cause to be destroyed within their districts, all noxious weeds before growing into seeds. That it shall be the duty of all the said pathmasters in their respective districts to remove or cause to be removed all obstructions to highways, roads, streets, or lanes when the same may be dangerous to life or property or in any way interfere with the rights of private property holders or the travelling public and to repair promptly all dangerous places on roads and bridges. That any person having horses, wagons, plows, harrows or scrapers in their possession and after being notified by the pathmaster that the same are required for work on the public roads, shall furnish and employ the same when and where directed by the pathmaster and shall be allowed for the services, as follows: for each team of horses with implement and driver, three days labor.*" *(Gosnell'68 :12.)*

Winter Transportation

Winter driving during the 1890–1914 period often involved the "bob-sleigh" or "cutter." Later, closed-in vans with a small wood-burning stove became common that would make the long cold drives considerably more bearable. When riding in an open cutter or sleigh, often a foot warmer was used, which was an oblong tin box covered with carpet that had a little drawer at one end which, before departing, you filled with red hot charcoal and helped keep your feet from freezing on long drives. Most people also owned a horsehide or buffalo robe to cover the knees, which also helped considerably.

To travel in cold weather in unheated vehicles, children especially had to be warmly dressed. Everyone had a heavy overcoat, probably homemade, and hand-knit toques, mitts and stockings. The yarn for these articles was spun from raw wool as the women were experts with the spinning wheels which were brought with them from "back home." The hand-knit stockings were worn over long underwear and the children, especially the girls, hated these outfits. They became very itchy on warm days and, at the first sign of spring, the underwear would be rolled up and the stockings rolled down. All children wore boots or moccasins with three or four pairs of heavy socks inside. *(Louise'79:85.)*

- Mrs. C.B. McKitrick, of 18-1-11 recalled, "*In winter time, straw was pressed in the sleigh box, the children bundled up warmly with heated stones around them and covered over with horse blankets and quilts and off they would go in the morning to have dinner and a visit with a neigbour.*" *(Gosnell'68 :296.)*

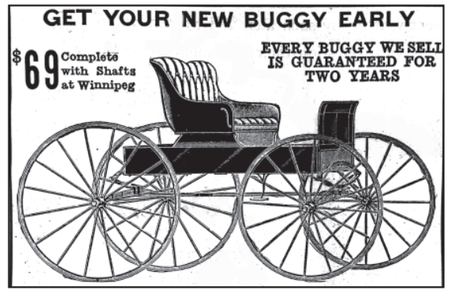

Figure 8.10.1. Above: Buggies. Buggies were smaller and lighter, and therefore faster, than farm wagons or Democrats and thus were popular with individuals who travelled frequently. *(GGG'16-03-08 :419.)*

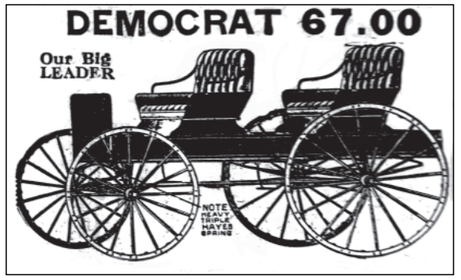

Figure 8.10.2. Above: Democrats. Besides buggies and democrats, other vehicle types included, broughams, cabriolets, shays, shayettes, phaetons, rockaways, hansoms, and a variety of wagons and, for winter, a variety of cutters, bobs and sleighs. *(GGG'16-03-08 :419.)*

Figure 8.10.3. Above: Cutters and sleighs. An 1897 advertisement offering sleighs, cutters, carriages wagons, and horse tackle, all, "*at very low prices, consistent with first-class material.*" *(NWF'97-12-28.)*

Figure: 8.10.4. Above: Farm sleighs. Circa 1885. Such sleighs could accommodate wagon boxes, hay racks or simple flat decks, depending on the need. *(NWF'97-11-22.)*

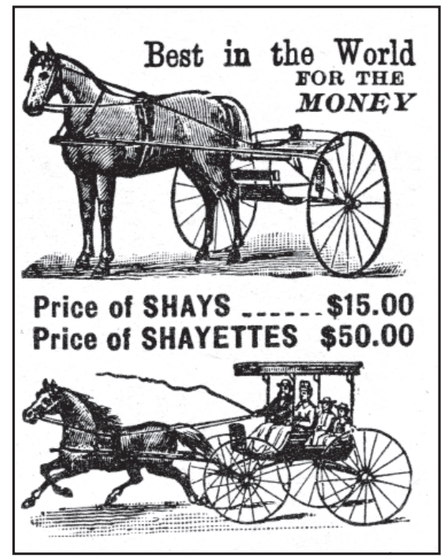

Figure 8.10.5. Above: Shays and Shayettes. The one-horse shay, also known as a sulky, was an open two-wheeled vehicle that was the American adaptation of the French chaise. Its chair-like body, seating the passengers on one seat above the axle, was hung by leather braces from a pair of square wooden springs attached to the shafts. A four-wheeled version, was sometimes called a "whisky" because its light weight enabled it to whisk about. *(Karolevitz'70 :32.)*

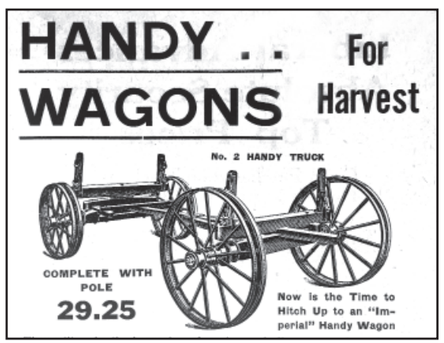

Figure 8.10.6. Above: Steel-wheeled wagons. Steel-wheeled farm wagons were robust and designed for hauling heavy loads. *(GGG'16-03-08 :420.)*

Figure 8.10.7. Above: Standard farm wagon. A farm wagon could be found on every farm, but few could afford both a wagon and a buggy prior to the wheat boom years. *(GGG'16-03-08 :420.)*

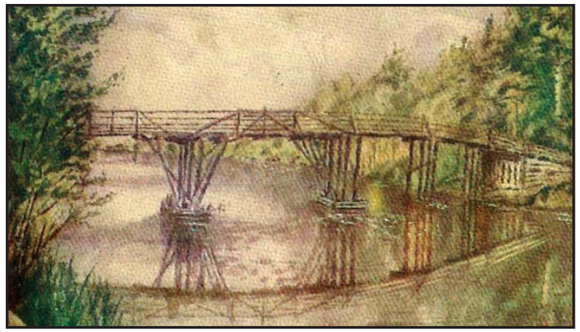

Figure 8.10.8. Above: Pembina Crossing bridge. 1880. Boundary Commission road crews built the first bridge on 27-9-2W near Pembina Crossing in 1874, but it was soon washed away. In 1879, recent homesteader, Peter Cram, built a flat-bottomed "skow", and operated a ferry at the site, charging 30 cents a person. In 1880, he replaced that with a pole and timber bridge, charging 30 cents for a double team and 25 cents for a single team. Another local settler, R.N. Lea, made the above painting of Cram's bridge in 1880. *(PMA - Vrooman'50 :15.)*

Figure 8.10.9. Above: Wilson's Bridge. Timber and steel truss bridges, such as the one pictured above built on 8-3-13W in the Marringhurst district, were among the first proper "engineer designed" bridges in the BTNHR, and were typical of bridges constructed during the 1890s. Metal truss bridges began to be built around 1900. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.10.10. Above: Sheppard's ferry. One of the first ferries on the Souris river was located on 21-6-19W and known as Sheppard's, later as Heaslip's ferry. During spring high water levels, one corner of the ferry would be let loose from the bank and the current carried the ferry across. In low water the ferry had to be pulled across hand over hand on a cable. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.10.11. Above: The "Red Bridge." This iron truss road bridge over the Pembina River, near La Rivière on 24-3-10W, was erected in 1903 and was known as the Red Bridge after the iron was painted. It remained in use until 1960. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.10.14. Above: Red River ferry. A steel cable ferry on the Red River, likely on River Lot #128 east of Letellier, circa 1914. *(A of MB.)*

Figure: 8.10.15. Above: "*Pembina Valley Drive near Manitou, Man.*" An early postcard photograph of the main road leading out of the Pembina River valley near La Rivière, now PTH #3. Note, what appears to be, a fresh covering of shale base material on the roadway bed. *(U of AB :Peels.)*

Figure 8.10.12. Above: Going to town with horse and wagon. There were no graded provincial or municipal roads in the BTNHR until the mid 1910s. Horse-drawn vehicles and dirt roads were still the norm throughout the wheat boom years. This superb photo, found in the national archives, and taken from the wagon seat, shows a team and wagon on a dirt trail heading towards Boissevain, visible in the distance. Note the condition of the ungraded road and the "low spot" just ahead. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.10.13. Above: Bridge not up to the job. Photograph of a steam engine accident on bridge south of Roseisle, 1908. Crystal City historian T.G. McKitrick, wrote in 1900, *"The fact that early bridges and culverts were unfit to carry the heavier machinery such as steam engines, that were now being brought in, is shown in the resolution passed, by the RM of Louise, in warning drivers that they would travel across bridges at their own risk."* *(Brown'74 :77.)*

Figure 8.10.16. Above: Road construction. A horse-powered, wheeled, "scraper" being used in road building near Carberry. Circa 1925. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.10.17. Above: Steel scrapers. Scrapers were useful and commonly found on BTNHR farms. *(Karolevitz'70 :26.)*

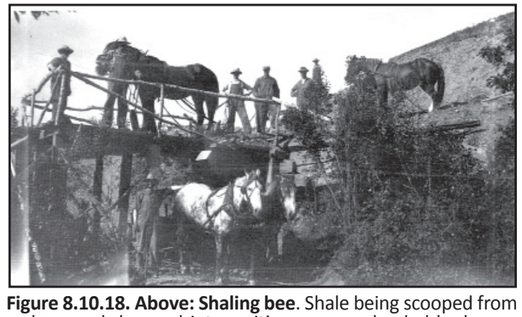

Figure 8.10.18. Above: Shaling bee. Shale being scooped from a slope and dropped into waiting wagons, hauled by horses and statute labour workers to cover area roads. *(MacAulay'00 :39.)*

Figure 8.10.19. Above: **"*Near Clearwater, Man. Can.*"** Cecil Biggar, of the Kaleida district recalled. "*There were no regular roads then, just prairie trails winding across the country. And how beautiful the country was! Birds chirping. Frogs coaking. Wild flowers and fruit trees everywhere. There was a scent in the air of the native land which could never be forgotten.*" *(U of AB :Peels.)*

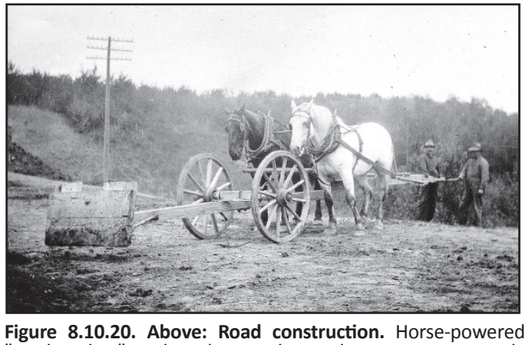

Figure 8.10.20. Above: Road construction. Horse-powered "road graders", such as the one shown above, were commonly used for trail improvement and road building throughout the statute labour years in the BTNHR. *(A of MB.)*

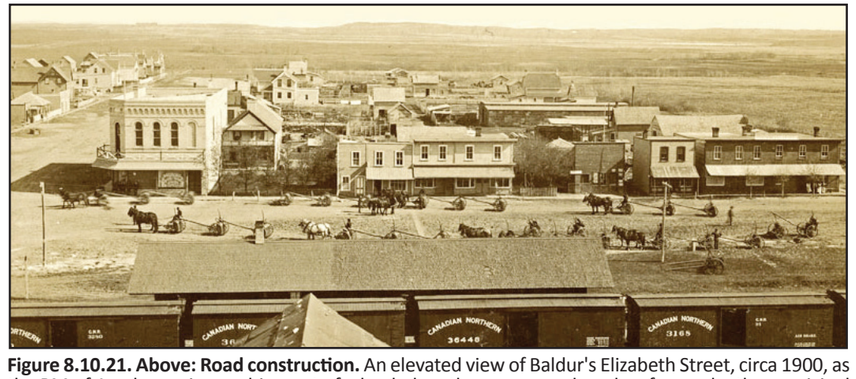

Figure 8.10.21. Above: Road construction. An elevated view of Baldur's Elizabeth Street, circa 1900, as the RM of Argyle receives a shipment of wheeled earth scrapers and graders for use by the municipal pathmasters on their assigned sections of the local trail and municipal road network. *(U of BDN.)*

- D.L. McBrien, who moved to the Crystal City district from Goderich, Ont. in 1902, recalled the difficulties and dangers of winter travel. "*Father hauled dozens of sleigh loads of long poplar poles for fuel, year after year. As winter progressed, the sleigh roads became higher and higher from successive layers of snow being packed on top. When thawing started, melting was more rapid on the sunny side of the ridges, and sleighs tended to repeatedly slide sideways off the track. Another common problem arose from the narrowness of the sleigh tracks and the two horses each becoming panicky from fear of being pushed off by the other.*" *(Gosnell'68 :28.)*

First Automobiles

- Mrs. L.J. Gardiner grew up on the Oaks district, in 3-12W near Pilot Mound, and later recalled fond memories about the first automobiles. When motor-powered horseless carriages appeared, beginning around 1910, she recalled, not all welcomed the new mode of transportation. They were loud and the engines frequently backfired, frightening people and animals alike."*Dan Stoddard came to this district in June of 1878, and took a homestead near the brow of the Pembina hills on 9-3-12W. He farmed and taught school for some time, then entered St. John's College in Winnipeg, and graduated in 1892 as an ordained Anglican Minister. He was stationed in Clearwater from 1904 to 1911. On May 10, 1910 he acquired for himself a chain drive, horseless carriage called an auto-buggy. This was among the first to be had in Clearwater and it scared the wits out of men, women, children and horses and sent the cattle scurrying over the pastures in their efforts to escape the unearthly racket of the mechanical monster. On hearing a strange commotion in the air a Crystal City citizen would exclaim, "If that isn't a freight train crossing the bridge, it must be Reverend Dan Stoddard in his horseless carriage.*" *(Gosnell'68 :94.)*

- *The Swan Lake Echo,* May 16, 1913 issue noted, *"Provincial Statute of Manitoba Cap. 28 Section 56 - Every person operating or driving a motor vehicle on the public highways shall, when approaching an intersecting highway, or curve or corner of a highway, within the limits of a city, town or village, or a cross road outside a city, town or village, when necessary slow down to a speed not exceeding six miles an hour, and give timely warning, with his bell, gong, horn or other device for signalling in such a manner as to give timely notice and warning of his approach, under penalty not exceeding $25.00 and costs of prosecution."*

- Elsie Taylor-Moir related, that when her parents were expecting their fourth child, her father went on horseback to summon Dr. Law who had a practise in Hannah N.D., just a few miles across the border. "*It so happened that on this day the Shilson Bros. were hauling out their grain with teams and wagons. When Dr. Law came along with his new automobile, the horses had never seen such a contraption before, took one look and headed for the wide open spaces taking the men and the fully loaded wagons with them.*" *(Gosnell'68 :28.)*

- Mrs. Fred Oke, of Darlingford, recalled that the first motor car in Morden, while driving down a country road, started a grass fire. This fire, in turn, ignited the car. *"A farmer who tried to warn the driver by shouting and pointing was ignored by the driver who thought that this was a demonstration of enthusiasm for the new machine."* *(MHS'53 :Oke.)*

As one might expect, the horseless carriage was first a city innovation, with lack of suitable roads and farmer reticence delaying introduction into rural areas. It was a period of transition, and it soon became evident the "pros" were more powerful than the "cons." Little by little the objections from the countryside began to fade. Farmers were generally mechanically inclined, and it was only natural for them to be curious about the new technology. Advertisements specifically directed to farmers soon appeared in agricultural magazines, as the farm population constituted a huge potential market. Special "high-wheelers" were designed for rural and farm use. In 1908, Henry Ford rolled out his mass-produced, affordable Model T, his *"motor car for the great multitudes",* and, by 1914, farmers as well as town folk were becoming rabid auto enthusiasts. They were inexpensive to buy and operate, and their narrow, hard tire wheels were adapted to the deep-rutted rural roads of the day. With the ever-increasing successes of the passenger car, the motor truck soon became a practical reality. However, early trucks were more expensive, and slower to be adopted by individual farm operators. *(Karolevitz'70 :105.)*

Good Roads Program

Roads during the wheat boom period were little more than country trails and, as automobile ownership increased, in 1913, the Provincial Government initiated a province-wide road building program offering to cover two thirds of the cost of road building with the municipalities financing one third. Soon, many municipal councils in the BTNHR were calling ratepayers meetings to determine if they were in favour of participating in the program. That year, the residents of Pipestone RM approved spending $100,000 of taxpayers money to commence building proper roads in the municipality. As the years went by, additional money was put into the good roads program, peaking in 1916 when a by-law was passed authorizing the building of 120 additional miles of road at an estimated cost of $300,000. The *Glenboro Gazette* reported on a meeting with government officials held in Glenboro in March 1919. "*Hon. G.A. Grierson, Minister of Public Works, and Mr. McGillvray, of the Good Roads Board, addressed a large meeting in the Odd-fellows Hall on Tuesday afternoon and thoroughly explained the ways and means of the Good Roads program of the Provincial Government. At the close of the meeting, a general discussion took place. The meeting was lively and enthusiastic, and generally speaking the audience was in sympathy with the movement.*" *(GGG'19-03-10 :1.)*

The poor state of the early roads and trails in the BTNHR were long a cause for local grievance, and reader submissions to newspapers, such as the following in the *Morden Monitor*, on July 2, 1896, were frequent and many, *"Attempts have been made to patch up the Thornhill road, but whether for lack of money or any other cause we venture to say it is a poor job. The road has been graded up towards the centre and a little – very little – gravel sprinkled on the middle of the road. In no place can two teams pass each other without one of them going off the gravel into the mud. It is a sheer waster of taxpayers money to call this road building, and after next fall it will be worse than ever."* *(MM'96-07-02 :4.)*

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Figure 8.10.22. Above: First garages. A banner and flag festooned early automobile photographed outside the Ford Garage in Somerset in 1914. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.10.23. Winnipeg Automobile Club visits Boissevain 1910. Automobile Clubs were popular during the early 1900s and summer trips to larger communities were frequent events. *(A of MB.)*

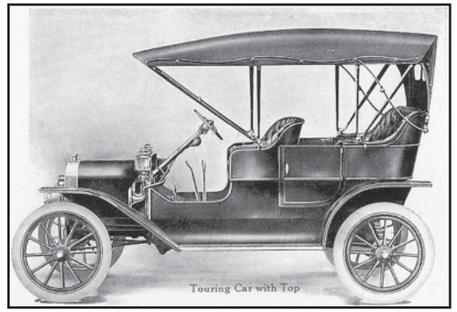

Figure 8.10.24. Above: 1909 Ford Model T touring car, with top up. The four cylinder, 20 horse power, five passenger vehicle sold for an affordable $900. Between 1908 and 1927, 15 million of the ubiquitous "Tin Lizzies" were manufactured. *(Flickr.)*

Figure 8.10.25. Above: Red River gumbo. Automobile use was only possible during dry summer weather, particularly on the "clay plain", which was almost impassable during periods of rain. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.10.26. Above: Farm bridges. Ida Handford grew up in the Snowflake district during the early 1900s, and took many photographs around her parents' farm, as well as her neighbours'. The following unidentified photo shows a family posing with the family car, shiny and clean. *(PMA - Handford Coll.)*

Figure 8.10.27. Above: Ungraded country road. View along an undeveloped 99 ft. road allowance with a simple dirt track. During wet periods, such roads were often impassable. *(Flickr.)*

Figure 8.10.28. Above: Russell Standard grader. During the 1910s, as the economy and tax revenues improved, municipal statute road programs were replaced by municipal owned and operated road building and maintenance equipment, paid for by taxation. *(Flickr.)*

Figure 8.10.29. Above: Good Roads projects. Ditches and raised roadbeds helped keep the new provincial highways dry and passable throughout the year. *(Flickr.)*

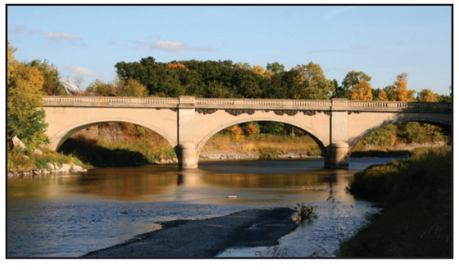

Figure 8.10.30. Above: Concrete bridges. Provincially funded, attractively designed, concrete arch bridges began to be constructed throughout the BTNHR during the later 1910s. This one was at the Souris River crossing of PTH #10 highway is still used for local traffic. Photo 2007. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.10.31. Above: Concrete bridges. An excellent example of an above-deck bowstring bridge. Most of the BTNHR's concrete arch bridges were later decommissioned and abandoned because of their narrow width, but a few remain. Sadly the, above, Long River bridge near Clearwater was demolished in 2018. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.10.32. Above: Concrete bridges. Built in 1917, this below-deck concrete arch bridge, near Margaret, is now abandoned and deteriorating, as are many other similar concrete bridges built in the BTNHR during the wheat boom years. *(EdLed.)*

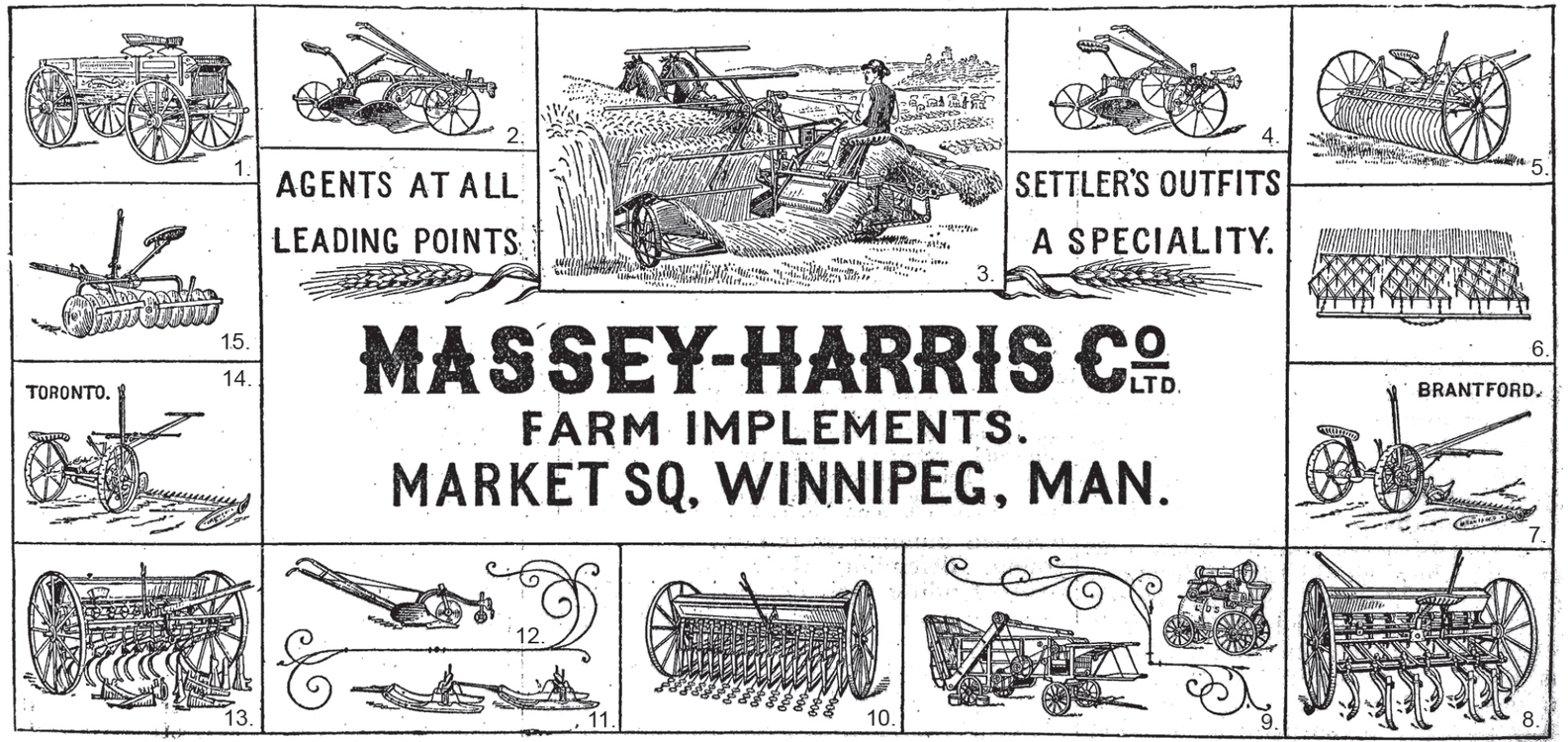

Figure 8.11.1. Above: Massey-Harris Farm Implements. Advertisement from a 1897 issue of the *Nor'-West Farmer* illustrating the range of horse-drawn farm equipment available and commonly used on grain farms in the BTNHR during the 1890s – all available for purchase from the local Massey-Harris dealership. Clockwise from top left: 1. farm wagon, 2. gang plow, 3. binder, 4. breaker plow, 5. hay rake, 6. spike-tooth harrows, 7. hay mower, 8. "hoed" seed-drill, 9. thresher and steam engine, 10. "shoe-press" seed drill, 11. sled runners, 12. breaker plow, 13. "hoe and shoe" seed drill, 14. hay mower, 15. disc-harrows. *(NWF'98 :551.)*

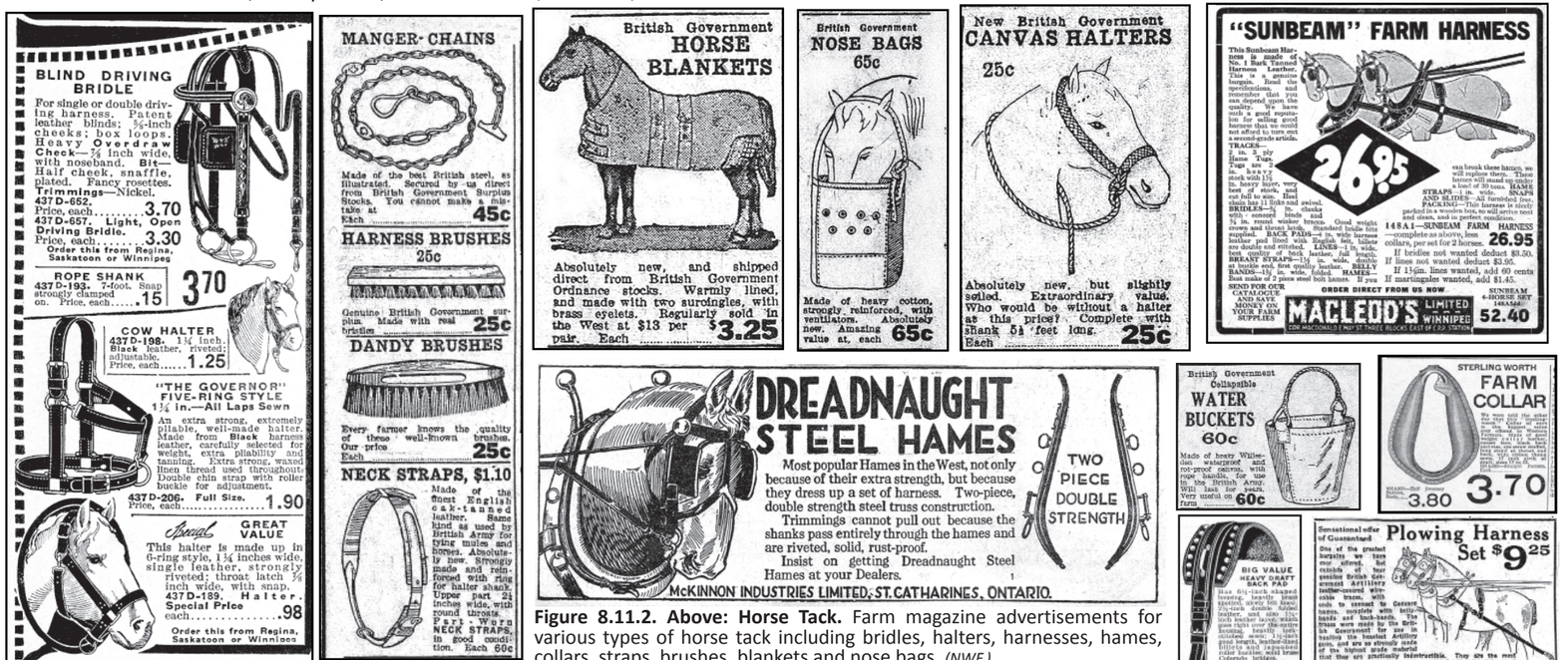

Figure 8.11.2. Above: Horse Tack. Farm magazine advertisements for various types of horse tack including bridles, halters, harnesses, hames, collars, straps, brushes, blankets and nose bags. *(NWF.)*

8.11 FIELD IMPLEMENTS AND HORSE TACK

Despite new innovations in mechanical farm power, horses continued to be used for field cultivation purposes, as well as for transportation and hauling throughout the wheat boom years. However, new machinery models were increasingly riding implements, except for breaker plows. Another exception was the massive large six to ten furrow plows designed to be drawn by the new massive steam traction engines. Figure 8.11.4. Even after the introduction, around 1916, of the small affordable gasoline tractor, the vast majority of field work in the BTNHR continued to be done by horses and a great many farmers resisted the transition from horses to tractors well into the 1920s and 1930s.

Tillage and harvest equipment generally increased in size and efficiency throughout the boom years, with only a few new innovations. The walking plow of the pioneer years gave way to the one and two furrow riding sulky plows pulled by four or more horses. Wooden homemade spike tooth harrows were replaced by manufactured and durable steel harrows. Hand broadcast seeding gave way to mechanical broadcasting and by the 1890s to "shoe" and "disk" seed drills, which placed the seed into the soil and at an uniform depth, resulting in significantly better germination. The early six-foot-wide reaping machines of the pioneer era soon gave way to seven, eight and ten foot binders that cut and mechanically tied the sheaves, first with wire and later with twine. These were all major improvements. With the adoption of the small farm tractors after 1916, new binder designs were increasingly designed specifically for tractors and, within a few years, were powered by the tractor's "power take-off" rather than the old-style ground contact drive wheel.

An advertisement for the Massey-Harris line of farm equipment, from the 1890s and shown at left, provided illustrations of the company's complete line of farm equipment. While not all farmers would have owned all this equipment, most farmers in the BTNHR would have owned a majority of these implements.

The *Nor'-West Farmer* magazine published, in 1920, an interesting submission from a reader that outlined the farm equipment that, he believed, would be required to operate a half section farm at the time. His advice included the following, "*A question of importance to those who entertain the idea of going on the land is the amount of capital required to make the start and the equipment required for the first year or two. What is needed will vary with the locality and also according to whether one is going on a raw farm or an improved place already under cultivation. However, the following list and prices will apply fairly accurately in most cases, for an improved half section farm: 6 horses - $1200; 1 wagon (complete) - $160; 1 set breeching harness - $80; 2 sets general purpose harness - $100; 1 gang plow (12 or 14 in. with extra shares) - $150; 6 section harrows or 4 section lever harrows - $45; 22-rim double disc drill - $265; 8-foot binder - $275; mower and rake - $160; hay and sheaf rack - $25; cultivator and packer - $400. Total for equipment: $2800.*"

The article also offered advice on purchasing horses."*The best value in horses can be got generally by buying good, clean, sound, young horses of 1300 to 1450 pounds weight, giving special attention to quality and action. One very important essential in a farm horse is a good free walk. Horses over 1450 weight, if of an equal quality, will cost considerably more than lighter horses, and their value on the farm in comparison with the other is doubtful. For feed or seed grain, to be safe, one should have at least enough oats to feed one gallon by weight to each horse, three feeds per day all through the heaviest working season, and half as much the rest of the time. - Reader.*" *(NWF'20-02-20 :231.)*

Another interesting farm magazine advertisement was placed by Macleod's in 1925, for their "Sunbeam" farm harness package, and included an informative list of horse tack which a typical team of work horses would have required, "*This Sunbeam Harness is made of No. 1 Bark Tanned Harness Leather. This is a genuine bargain. We have such a good reputation for selling good harness that we could not afford to turn out a second grade article. Traces. Two inch, three ply Hame Tugs. Tugs are two inch heavy stock with one and a half inch heavy layer. Heel chain has 11 links and swivel. Bridles. Three quarter inch cheeks with concord binds and three eighth inch round winker braces. Good weight crown and throat latch. Standard bridle bit supplied. Back Pads. Four inch wide harness leather pad lined with English felt, billets are double and stitched. Lines. One inch wide, best quality of back leather, full length. Breast Straps. One and a half inch wide, double at buckle end, first quality leather. Belly Bands. One and three quarter inch wide, folded. Hames. Best make of two piece steel bolt hames. These hames will stand up under a load of 30 tons. If you can break these hames, we will replace them. Hame Straps. One inch wide. Snaps and Slides. All furnished free. Packing. This harness is nicely packed in a wooden box, so will arrive neat and clean and in perfect condition.*" *(NWF'25-04 :3.)*

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8.12 BOOM YEARS FARM POWER

In spite of the growing efficiency and innovations in terms of farm implements and power sources, long hours of personal physical effort was the inescapable price to be paid to achieve success as a farmer in the BTNHR. It was so during the pioneer years, and it was also so during the wheat boom years. Many farms had hired hands to help with the farmwork. Thomas Turnbull, of Manitou, provided a good description of a typical day's work on his farm, as noted in a circa 1900 personal journal entry, "*January 15 - Got up at 5:30 and lit the fire in the kitchen stove, put on the kettle and porridge pot, got the coal oil lantern and went to the stable. Fed the horses and other stock, milked the cows, took the milk to the house and put it through the cream separator. After breakfast, I took the skim milk to the calves, and, as it was very cold, with the roads drifted, hitched Frank to the jumper and drove the children to school. Cleaned out the stables when I came back, pumped water for the stock, and fed them for noon. After dinner, I filled up a load of barley and left it at the mill to be crushed for feed, calling at the school for the children on my way home. Did the evening chores, milked the cows, had supper and spent an hour with the children before they went to bed. At eight o'clock, I went to the stable to bed the horses and took them a feed of boiled barley. When I came in, my wife was busy mending by the light of a coal oil lamp.*" *(MHS'56 :Turnbull.)*

Horses

During the 1890s, horses were the main source of power on the farm for field cultivation and transportation purposes. Horses were also still used for breaking and to power stump pullers, even after steam tractors "took over." Farmers took pride in a fine team of horses. Most of them were well cared for with special treatments like a little flax or eggs mixed in their oats. The appearance of their horses often revealed the kind of individual the owner was. The good horseman was very particular about his grooming. Manes were trimmed to perfection. Brass buckles and hames must be highly polished, coloured spread rings, fancy breechings, splashy scotch tops and in winter, gaily chiming bells were the pride and joy of every good horseman. Evenly matched teams was the aim of every good horseman, so a lot of horse trading took place, almost anywhere, even on the road while hauling wood or grain to town or at livery stables. Every horse had a name: Nellie, King, Queen, Prince, Lady and Pat were some of the more popular names. Farm boys used horses to race around the countryside, often on bareback. Throughout the wheat boom years, and continuing well into the 1930s, horses continued to be used to pull almost every agricultural implement, including stump pullers, as well as pulling cars stuck in mud holes and snowbanks. Even after the advent of the automobile, horse and sleigh was the only mode of winter transportation, so all farms kept at least one or two horses.

A familiar sight every spring was a man, often on a two-wheel cart, travelling from farm to farm, leading a stately stud horse for custom breeding. There were endless debates and opinions on the subject of good horse breeding. From a 1889 *Nor'-West Farmer* magazine, an article penned by Arthur Hawkins of Swan Lake, offering his perspective on the subject. "*My own experience and observation, extending over about 17 years in Manitoba and the Territories, during which I have handled all sorts of horses both in farm and road work, is that a low-set horse with clean flat limbs, close ribbed, wide chest and quarters, round barrel, and weighing from 1150 to 1250 lbs. will out work, and out travel any leggy horse you can put on the road for continuous work. This stamp of horse is equally at home in plow or wagon and with proper care can be called on for either fast or slow work, with an equal certainty of their reaching their stables ready and eager for their feed, and coming out next morning as fit as fleas. If heavier colts are wanted, use a low-set Clyde or Shire horse on them, avoiding too great a disparity in weight, and you will get about 100 lbs more weight with much the same build. If you want something more showy, such mare will always cross well with a blood or Cleveland Bay and produce a good rangy colt, short from the knee down and with lots of substance, active enough in mud or deep snow and able to hold their own either loaded or light.*

In most of the country districts of Manitoba, long hauls and bad roads are the rule, and very heavy horses are too clumsy in mud or deep snow to pay for their extra keep. I have yet to see land that a team of 1200 lb. horses cannot handle a 16-inch stubble plow in. On a short haul with good roads, of course, a heavy team will come out ahead - not very much, though, unless you use an exceptionally heavy wagon, as a team of that weight will haul as much as the wagon in ordinary use will carry." *(NWF'89 :87.)*

Windmills

Windmills were still one of the cheapest forms of energy that the early farmers had. Their fuel, the wind, was free. Frequently, the windmills were fastened to the top of a pump house beside the barn where they were used to pump water and crush grain for animal feed. The coming of two and three horsepower gas engines after 1910 brought an end to most of the large wooden farm windmills. However, windmills remained popular for pumping water because of its automated operation. Livestock water troughs could be rigged with a float so that, as the trough filled with water, the float would rise to a point where it triggered a series of chains and turn the tail flat to the wind, thereby stopping the wheel from spinning and stopping the pump. However, on calm days, the livestock still needed to be watered, so water had to be pumped by hand, which was hard work and took up a lot of time, prompting many farmers to purchase small gasoline "stationary engines" when they became available around 1905.

Henry Plett of Reinfeld was a wind-power user for almost three decades. He purchased his first wind-powered feed mill around 1889 and erected it on his village lot in the West Reserve. He initially had a 12 ft. windmill, but upgraded to a 16 ft. wide wheel in 1900. That one was entirely of metal construction, except for the huge 24" x 20" ft. wooden mast upon which it was attached. Plett stopped using wind power altogether after purchasing a gas powered Case tractor in 1918. *(Remple'82 :29.)*

Steam Traction Engines

While upright steam engines were fairly common in the BTNHR during the pioneer years, self-propelled "steam traction engines" did not appear in the Region until roughly 1900. While extremely powerful, they were too unwieldy for most field cultivation purposes, but were especially useful for threshing, wood-cutting, grinding, and hay-press operations. Often, a steam tractor and thresher would be purchased communally or as a consortium, and operated as a commercial activity doing custom harvesting and milling for farmers in the district. Threshing crews involved a dozen or more members to operate and many jobs were available during this period to help bring in the crops each autumn. Even after the gasoline tractor had been generally accepted, the steam tractor continued to be used for threshing work long after it had ceased to be a factor in plowing. Popular steam tractor makes included Rumely, Reeves, Nichol & Sheppard, Sawyer-Massey, American Abel, Gare-Scott, Port Huron and Case.

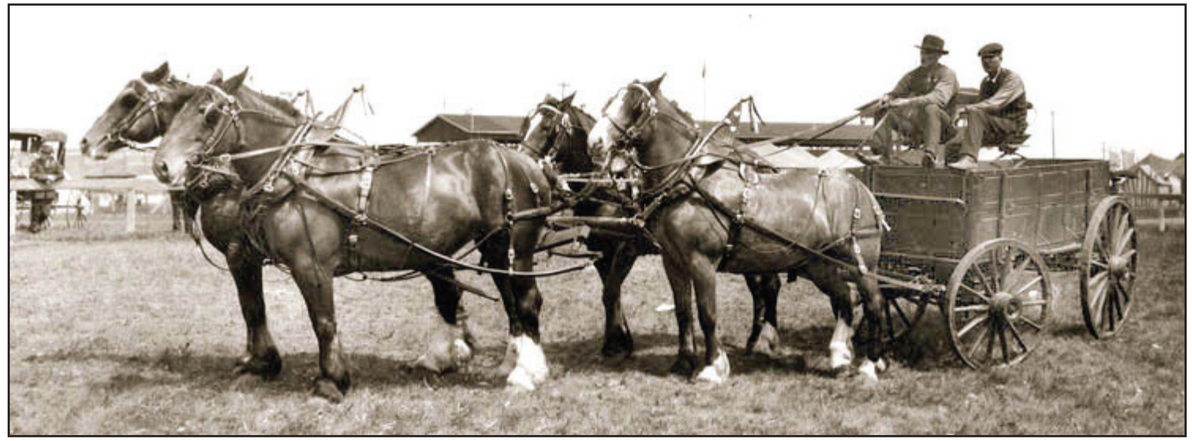


Figure 8.12.1. Above: Work horses. The four-horse team grand prize winner, poses for a photograph at the Brandon Agricultural Fair. Circa 1910. *(L&AC.)*

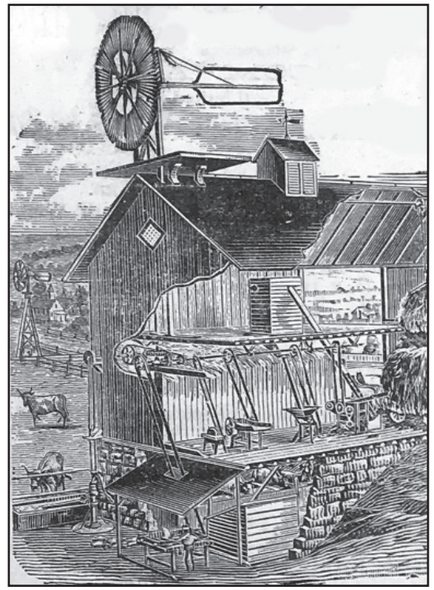


Figure 8.12.2. Right: Farm windmills. Advertisement illustration showing windmill, attached to a barn roof, powering equipment including a grain cleaner, feed grain crusher, straw chopper, grindstone and table saw. Note also, at left rear, another windmill by a corral, no doubt for pumping water for the farm animals, and the advertiser's way of suggesting that every progressive farmer should possess, not only one, but two windmills. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.12.4. Above: Metal windmills. Advertisement for "The Canadian Steel Airmotor" windmill manufactured in Toronto, Ont. which, according to the advertiser in 1898, "*For the farm is unrivalled. Adopted by the C.P. Railway and Imperial Government. Galvanized or painted. Power, strength and durability guranteed.*" *(NWF'98-07 :320.)*

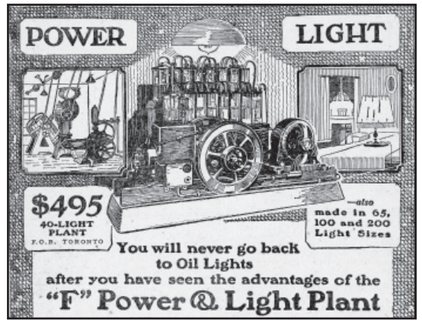
Figure 8.12.3. Below: Traction steamers. A picture postcard bearing a November 25, 1909 Dunrea, Man., postmark of a large Case steam tractor pulling an eight bottom plow. Despite their power, such tractors required a large turning radius and frequent fueling and were thus used more for powering threshers, crushers and mills than for field cultivation purposes. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.12.5. Above: Portable gasoline engines. Cutting firewood on the James Conner farm, on 22-1-9W, near Snowflake, using a wheeled gasoline stationary engine as a power source. The job was much easier and simplier than the horse-powered belt-drive mechanism used by his neighbour John Handford in earlier times, and shown in Figure 7.7.5. *(PMA :Handford Coll.)*

Figure 8.12.6. Above: Minneapolis Universal model 20-40 internal combustion tractor. Around 1905 large internal combustion tractors fueled by distillate, turpentine and gasoline began to be manufactured and were just becoming popular in the BTNHR when the Great War broke out in 1914. After the war, large distillate tractors, such as this example doing fall plowing near Hamiota, were slowly replaced by smaller and cheaper gas tractors as the main source of farm power for field cultivation. *(NFB.)*

Figure 8.12.7. Left: The Fordson farm tractor. A photograph of a "Fordson" tractor being demonstrated at an agricultural fair in 1916. Introduced in 1914 by Henry Ford, over the next two decades, this small affordable, farm tractor, became extremely popular in the US, Canada and England where production was moved in 1933. The cover advertisement on the March 1924 issue of *Farm Mechanics* magazine boasted, *"Over 75% of all tractors on American farms are Fordsons."* The same likely held true on Canadian farms. *(NFB.)*

Figure 8.12.8. Right: Electric Power Plants. The first electricity in most BTNHR homes was in the form of 32 volt "Delco" storage batteries. A small six horse power gas engine powering the generator. Electricity from the generator was stored in 16 glass-walled batteries wired together in series. Each battery provided two volts of electricity which together made up 32 volts. At first, only the well-to-do could afford home electric plants and many families waited for years before they could afford such a luxury. Once installed, however, most farm families no doubt wondered how they could have gotten along without electricity to power water pumps, butter churns, cream separators, washing machines, home and yard lighting, even radios. *(NWF'20-03-05.)*



Because of their great power, capable of pulling a six to eight bottom plow, steam tractors were often used for breaking land, but only where the local geography permitted. On wet or rough ground, oxen were still often used for breaking, and horsepower for general cultivation purposes. The large steam tractors required a large turning radius, the chain-drive steering wheel was difficult to turn, and they required frequent refueling. Thus, the new steam tractors were used for only occasional field work, and then, for breaking rather than simple fall plowing and spring seed bed preparation. They were also more expensive to purchase and operate than horses. Feeding straw, wood and coal into the firebox was labourious and the fire hazard was a constant worry, especially during harvest when sparks from a boiler stack could easily set a wheat field or stack ablaze. Additionally, it took some time for a fire to be started and steam pressure built up before the drive wheel could be engaged to power anything.

Gasoline Stationary Engines

The lifestyle of the settlers of the BNHR, and elsewhere, was greatly improved with the introduction of the internal combustion engine. Talented inventors and backshop tinkerers alike sought new designs and power systems to concentrate greater mechanical muscle in a more compact size and without having to utilize steam. During the later 19th century, experimentation with gasoline, kerosene, distillate, turpentine, gunpowder, pulverized coal and heavier paraffin fuels, was conducted in the US and Europe. The first US patent for a four-stroke gasoline engine was issued in 1877 but the engine was not widely adopted until a decade later when design improvements and variations solved initial problems. The first portable gasoline engine arrived in the BTNHR about 1905 and, from 1910 on, small two and three horsepower "stationary engines" became increasingly popular. They soon took over from windmills for pumping water and crushing grain. Gasoline was cheap, and the engine worked in all kinds of weather, was quick to start, and easy to operate and maintain.

As the design of gasoline engines became more refined and engine size became more compact, smaller stationary engines were finding more and more farm applications. Magazine advertising informed readers of new, more efficient, more profitable ways to get once-tedious jobs over with in a hurry, by running the cream separator, washing machine, or butter churn in the home and, in the farmyard, for pumping water, crushing grain, grinding and sawing firewood. *(Louise'4:122.)*

A German inventor, Rudolf Diesel, unveiled his first successful oil-burning engine in 1897 and promptly began manufacturing and selling the Diesel engine in the US and Canada. However, the inventor demanded strict adherence to his original design by licensees and needed improvements and variations were delayed. Consequently, because of its relatively large size and weight, the Diesel engine was used primarily as a stationary engine plant in factories and ships, with its application as an important farm power source coming much later.

The Farm Tractor - Motorized Horses

In 1889, a new farm vehicle, known as the "tractor", was created in South Dakota when a gas engine was installed in a steam traction chassis. It prompted others to build similar tractors, initiating a decade of refinements to the "motor horse." The Case Threshing Machine Company issued its first gasoline tractor in 1892. That same year John Froelich produced a two-cylinder engine which evolved into the popular Waterloo Boy and, ultimately, the John Deere line of engines and tractors. Charles Hart and Charles Parr built an oversized machine in 1901 and, two years later, built and sold 15 more. By 1906, there were eleven tractor companies in existance in the US, all eyeing a prospective market of tremendous size. Steam engines were still being produced, despite the rapid advances in gasoline engines, and many contests between steam and gasoline engines were held to prove the superior engine. A major turning point occurred in 1910 when an international farm power competition was staged in Winnipeg, pitting five gas-powered tractors against a similar number of steam traction giants. The gas engines captured both first and second places. News of the event circulated throughout agricultural circles and the results hastened the beginning of the end of the large steam leviathans. *(Karolevitz'70 :101.)*

Popular early tractor makes included, Fairbanks 15-30, Big Four, Rumely Oil Pull, Advanced Rumely, Emerson-Brandingham 12-20, Titan, Mogul, Massey-Harris and Case both with cross-mounted engines, Minneapolis-Twin City, Waterloo-Boy, Hart-Parr 18-36, John Deere model D, and the McCormick-Deering 15-30. These early internal-combustion engine powered tractors were still quite large with high steel wheels and crude steering systems which often caused sore muscles and shoulders for the operator when used for cultivating fields. *(Gosnell'69 :284.)*

- John Stewart who homesteaded on 35-1-12 in 1879, purchased his first gas tractor in 1909, which, he said, helped immensely in farming as it could be used for both plowing and powering pumps and crushers. It could also run on coal oil, or distillate, and proclaimed that all three fuels worked equally well. In 1910 Cecil and his father Andrew Biggar, of the Kaleida district, made a major purchase of equipment. This included a IHC 45 horsepower two cylinder tractor, the first big gas tractor in this part of the country. He also purchased a 36 x 45 Alltman Taylor Separator, two big Jumbo Breaking Plows, and an eight furrow Gang Plow which he used for about seven years at home and in custom work for neighbours. Cecil later recalled, "*How well I remember this outfit! At first, we bought gasoline in wooden barrels. I would go to Darlingford with a team of horses and a three deck box for five barrels of gas. The fumes from these barrels were very strong, so one did not smoke or light a match in case of fire or explosion.*" *(MHS'53 :Gorrell)*

A significant change occurred with introduction of the lighter, and faster small gas tractor just prior to the outbreak of the Great War. In 1914, the Ford Motor Company was among the first to introduce such a machine which was an instant hit with farmers in the US and Canada. These small grey tractors would become an common sight in the region over the next few years. The Fordson and similar small gasoline tractors were a "game changer" for farmers especially those featuring a four-furrow power lift plow. Later, the production of these tractors was taken over by the Ferguson Company in England and the tractor became known as the Ford-Ferguson and became a fixture of farms throughout England. *(Goode'70 :25.)*

Electric Power Plants

It wasn't long after the introduction of the stationary engine that they were being hooked up to electric generators to power lights and electric motors. Thomas Edison patented his design for an electric light bulb in 1879 and, during the 1880s and 1890s, many inventors experimented with electric generators, electric lighting and motors. During these years, the technology evolved quickly, and by 1910, wind and motor powered electric generators were being installed in towns and in individual homes to provide power for farm lighting and equipment.

Noted historian Howard Winkler, mentioned in his 1970 brief history of the Morden-Winkler area that Morden was one of the first very towns in Manitoba to be served by electricity. The plant was brought, reputedly from Germany, by Franz Schneider. It was steam-powered and generated electricity from dusk until 12:30 A.M. Initially, no meters were used. The plant was destroyed by fire early in the 20th Century. *(Winkler'70 :19.)*

The first hyrdo electric plant in Manitoba was built by the Brandon Electric Light Company in 1900, on the Little Saskatchewan River, 10 mi. west of Brandon. It replaced a steam-powered generating station built in Brandon in 1889 to supply residents with electricity. The company's hydro dam operated until 1924 when the city was connected to the provincial hydro electric network. Many districts were not connected to Hydro until the later 1940s due to the Great Depression, followed by World War II, which delayed completion.

The RM of Pipestone approved a proposal to build a municipal power plant in 1915. Land was purchased, a building erected, a plant purchased and installed and began providing electrical power in 1916. The cost was $14,000 and a debenture was issued in this amount. R.K. Robertson was hired to operate the plant at a salary of $55.00 a month and he remained in that position until 1929 when Hydro reached Reston. *(Pipestone.)*

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8.13 BRINGING IN THE HARVEST

Of all the seasons on the farm, it was the autumn harvest time that farm families most anticipated, with all its activity and excitement, along with endless hours of tiring, strenuous work for the men, women, and older children.

Reaping and Stooking

The first critical job of the harvest season was reaping and stooking. As soon as the fields of grain turned to golden yellow, it was time for the binders to go to work. They would have been prepared, knives sharpened, canvasses mended, and all moving parts greased. Six-foot binders could be drawn by three horses, but seven-foot binders required four horses. As the grain was cut, it was carried by a wide rotating canvas to a packer; then a mechanical knotter darted in and out and tied the bundle into a sheaf; it was then pushed onto the bundle carrier; and finally tripped by a foot pedal and dropped onto the ground. The earliest binders tied the sheaves with wire; however, within a few short years, binder twine was used — a very useful innovation for the farmers who found many other uses for it. Twine was the"duct tape" of its time. Extra help was required when the sheaves had to be stooked; that is about six or so sheaves were placed together in an upright position to make a "stook", so that the grain kernels could evenly and thoroughly dry before being threshed.

Threshers

Very few farmers owned their own threshing machines, even during the wheat boom years. Most often, better-off farmers, or partnerships, who had purchased a thresher and steam engine would get together a crew of men and offer their services to those without a thresher. Threshing machines, also known as "separators", were complex, belt-driven machines with many moving parts. During the 1880s, horsepower drove the belts; during the early 1890s, it was portable steam engines; during the later 1890s it was large self-propelled steam tractors, like the ubiquitous CASE steamer; after 1905, increasingly smaller and less expensive gasoline tractors provided power. Early types of threshers did not possess blowers and the straw, or chaff, exiting the back of the machine had to be "bucked away" with a pole, sometimes a horse on either end of it or with a young lad at either end. Blowers appeared by the early 1900s and blew the straw into large piles, which were used to fuel the steam tractor and for livestock bedding. The first threshers possessed a gravity-driven "low bagger" where the grain bags were filled on the ground and the driver lifted them onto the wagons. Later models had "high baggers" and the grain sacks were filled right on the wagon. When fully loaded, the wagon would be driven to the granary and the sacks transferred from the wagon into the granary. It was continuous hard work. With all the activity occurring at harvest time, there were always a few accidents, sometimes tragic, sometimes minor. One could expect runaway teams, toppled loads, and fires. On rare occasions, boilers would explode maiming or killing nearby workers. *(Brown'74 :69)*

Work Crews

Harvest crews during the wheat boom years ranged from 20 to 30 workers. A crew often included: an engineer; a fireman; a separator man; a man and team to draw fuel to the engine; a man and team to haul tanks of water; six to eight men, each with a good team of horses and a rack, along with an equal number of field pitchers, to draw the sheaves to the outfit; men with teams and wagon boxes to haul the grain away; and of course, the operations boss — usually the engineer. He had the biggest job of all – keeping everything and everyone working smoothly and efficiently, even the women of the house! What a job the women had, feeding large crews, three meals a day, for days on end.

The long work day usually started at 4 a.m., with the women up preparing breakfast. Meanwhile, the teamsters were out feeding and harnessing their horses; the fireman was getting the fire started and the steam up; the engineer and separator men were out to oil, grease and get the machine ready for work – then all came into the farmhouse for breakfast around 5 a.m. Threshing usually started at 6 a.m. Work stopped for lunch, but didn't stop again until it became dark. Supper would be eaten by lamplight around 8:00 p.m. After the night meal, the workmen retired to a bunkhouse, or caboose on wheels with bunk beds for the workers, which they called "their harvest home", each man providing his own bedding. This caboose was drawn into the farmyard where the threshing took place.

Connecting and adjusting the long drive belt from the steamer to the separator, and ensuring everything was properly aligned, involved a very skilled technique on the part of the engineer. The steam engine whistle could be heard from a great distance and everyone came to know the code meaning of the whistles, such as one long blast of the whistle meant to "go to work stations"; one short meant "stopping the machine" (and also warned the women that hungry men would be soon arriving); two short meant the separator was about to be powered up; three short let the water man know that water was low and another tank full was needed; and several short blasts were to let the grain men know that empty boxes were needed in the field.

The water man would do nothing else all day but fill the water wagon and bring it back to the field, for the water was quickly used up. The water would be obtained from a river or pothole and pumped through pipes into the wooden water tank by working a hand lever back and forth with a steady stroke. These water tank hand-pumps worked both ways, allowing water to be pumped into and out of the tank.

During the early years, straw was the most often used fuel; however, on occasion, wood was also used. Straw could only be fed in a bit at a time, so the fireman had to be constantly filing the firebox. The firebox door was usually left open to allow a draft through to burn the straw, creating a constant and serious fire hazard. Coal later replaced straw, bringing with it valuable practicality and conveniences. Fewer men were required to operate an engine that burned coal because it lasted longer and was easier to handle. The special "steam-coal" was simply shovelled in, and it burned safely and slowly. *(Hambley'1 :506.)*

- Frank Warren of Pilot Mound recounted a few of his fond memories of the large threshing gangs that annually invaded his father's farm: "*I can remember, as a kid, helping dad and mother during threshing. In those early days, there were 28 men on a steam threshing outfit. There were eight stook teams, two field pitchers, two spike pitchers, two or three on the grain team, one on the separator, and one on the engine. In those days it was a steam engine, so they drew the straw from the straw stack and dumped it around the front and forked it into the steam engine. You kept on drawing the straw around to the steam engine and burning it as you threshed. In fact, that was my job when I was a kid. I had one horse on a little old cart, and I'd drive it around to the blower stack. There's a fan that blows the straw that*

Figure 8.13.1. Above: Another good crop. A farmer inspects a wheat field that looks to be of excellent yield and ready for cutting. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.13.2. Above: Reaping. An early binder in operation on the wheat fields of southern Manitoba, circa 1900. Note the individual sheaves on the ground at centre right and the upright stooks at far right. *(McCord.)*

Figure 8.13.3. Above: Stooking. Two harvest workers with bundles of sheaves in hand, photographed, quite likely, after the job of stooking the field in the background was completed. *(McCord.)*

Figure 8.13.4. Above: Awaiting harvest. Photo of a field of stooks in the Morden district, circa 1895, awaiting pickup by the harvest teams. The cultivated strip in the foreground is a plowed fire-guard which surrounds and protects a nearby farmyard. The two stacks at the right, were no doubt made from stooks removed from the fire-guard area. Prairie fires were a serious harvest time danger until the 1920s. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.13.5. Bringing in the sheaves. Although sometimes stooks would be piled into stacks and either left in the field or moved into the farm yard for later threshing. Stacks were positioned so that the separator could be positioned between them, allowing sheaves to be pitched from the stack directly onto the feeder. However, most often, the stooks were left in the field and picked up by the field wagons that when full, were driven to the threshing site, and into position near the separator on a rotating basis. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.13.6. Above: J. Dixon threshing outfit. 1908. Typical harvest crew with 16 workers and likely the landowner in the buggy. With the larger steam tractors and threshers of the 1890s and early 1900s, grain harvesting became a very labour intensive job. It could also be very dangerous with many unshielded moving parts. Paying close attention to the drive belt was always a priority. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.13.7. Above: Threshing crew group photograph. A very interesting photograph taken in 1901, near Napinka, showing 12 members of a harvest crew. Note, in particular, the steam-tractor with the large drive-wheel, the row of hitched sheaf-wagons at the rear, the oil-soaked young man at the front left, the three individuals smoking pipes despite the fire hazard that would pose surrounded by dry straw, and also the clothing being worn, with virtually everyone wearing suspenders or overalls, and wide-brimed hats. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.13.8. Above: Harvest crew on the move. A superb circa 1910 photograph, showing a threshing gang "caravan" in transit from one farm threshing site to the next. "*The giant, smoke-belching steam traction machines with monstrous wheels and eerie whistles were gargantuan harbingers of a new mechanical era, ...and a wonderful time for small boys. To stand on a dusty roadside as a ground-shaking "Corliss Conqueror" lumbered by was an unsurpassed thrill for any youngster, and a good many adults.*" *(Karolevitz'70 :95; NFB photo.)*

Figure 8.13.9. Above: Threshing in the field. Photo of a threshing scene, circa 1910, showing a separator possessing a "high bagger" and "straw blower", and powered by a recently introduced internal-combustion gasoline tractor. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.13.10. Straw stacks. Large straw stacks were fixtures of every harvest scene, with the straw used as fuel for the steam engines or animal bedding. With the introduction of gasoline fueled tractors, its use was limited to the latter. *(L&AC.)*

comes out from the threshing machine, through a blower out to the stack, and dad would turn this down and fill the wagon up for me.

I remember also the stook teams coming in for noon hour dinner. They always blew the whistle on the steam engine for noon hour and mother used to tell me, she said, 'If you're ever out in the yard and you hear the whistle blow, don't try to come to the house; you climb on anything you can.' That was because there wasn't enough room for all the horses in the barn and the crews would all come rushing in a full gallop. Because the first ones that got to the yard got to stable the horses in the barn and the others had to tie them outside. I remember seeing them come in at a full gallop; some were riding horseback, some with the wagon. One time, they came in with the wagon and mother had a clothesline there. One guy, I knew him quite well, he came right through there and tore the clothesline all down. Yea, you had to be quite careful and you had to get out of their way because they were coming in to try to get a stall if they could." *(MHS'53 - Warren)*

Feeding the Threshing Gangs

Not only did the farmer pray for good weather until his grain was threshed, but the farmer's wife also, because she still must feed those gangs of hungry men even if it rained and work stopped, in addition to performing normal daily domestic duties. After a long day of work, the threshermens' appetites were enormous and the farm wife had to put in long hours in her kitchen preparing and making as many preparations as possibly beforehand. She would have baked bread, biscuits, cakes and pies as well as meat and vegetables. Breakfast began with a big bowl of porridge. This was followed by meat, eggs, fried potatoes, bread and jam, and cups of hot tea. Dinner and supper menus were similar with meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread, dessert and tea. Coffee did not become popular until the early decades of the twentieth century. The dining room table usually had to be enlarged with boards and a special oilcloth, kept for the purpose, was unrolled from its stick and spread over the entire table. Extra dishes would have been brought up from basement storage.

- Annie Gordon lived in the Manitou district as a child and later recalled the following harvest time experience during the early years. "*As few farmers owned threshing machines, they worked cooperatively. A gang would all help one neighbour until his entire crop was safely stored in the granary, then they would move on to the next neighbour. As it was not possible to predict how long the threshing gang might be at one farm, the farmers' wives had to be blessed with remarkable patience and strength. In one instance, because providing three meals a day in threshing season was hardly humanly possible for one pair of hands,* (my sister) *Sue went to help Mrs. Trick during a few day's threshing. Bread, buns and pies had been made in advance; however, the threshing gang consumed as much food at each meal as a small army. Three spells of heavy rains, with the gang sitting around the house rather than working in the fields, lengthened the three day job into three weeks. Sue returned very tired but with heartfelt sympathy for the farmers' wives.*" *(Gordon'50 :37.)*

Setting the Engine

When the threshing gang arrived at a farm, time was of the essence, especially if the weather was good. One of the first and most important jobs was to "set up" the equipment. Separators were powered by long, looped belts connected to a large flywheel located on the steamers. Some belts were 100 feet long, their heavy weight helping to keep the belt on the drive wheel. The belts were also often given a half twist to help keep them on the pulleys and ensure smooth operation. The alignment of the two pulleys and distance between them had to be exact, or the belt would come off, due to centrifugal force, and cause delays, damages or injuries. Engineers took great pride in properly setting up on the first attempt.

- Rev. George Hambley, a United Church Minister, recounted an interesting story related to him in 1954 by Roland Porter, of the Minnedosa district. The story was about a belt setting contest when two threshing crews happened to encounter each other while moving between farms in 1903. His narrative, in part, noted, "*Buchanan's engine was one of the big Sawyer-Masseys and was larger than the J.I. Case engine that Page was running, but in every other aspect the contest was very even. Rolly Porter gave the men their start and kept time. Each engineer was permitted to have one man help him get the big belt up on the flywheel. Sandy Buchanan believed it best to swing his engine in a half circle and come around facing the separator, and had a special method by which he lined up the top of the governors and the smokestack with the centre of the feeder on the separator in order to get the flywheel exactly in the correct position. Inching his engine up just far enough, Sandy pulled the clutch allowing the flywheel to come to a slow stop. With a quick movement, he stood on top of the great tractor wheel and deftly drew the belt on to the flywheel, but the wheel stopped, he had the belt only half on and when he hopped back to the throttle and let in the clutch both to back up the engine, and to also start the flywheel, he threw the belt, and had to let the engine forward again to get the big heavy rubber belt into place the second time. But then he got the belt on, backed the engine a little and the big cylinder of the separator began to turn. Rolly Porter looked at this watch carefully and called out 'Three and a half minutes!'.*

'Get her going', Rolly then shouted to Dave Page and with his engine just detached from the separator, Dave gave her full steam. Dave's method was to swing the engine round in a right angle, and then to back her up as in a Y or a V position until she was exactly in line with the pulley on the cylinder of the separator. He also knew of a quick way of putting on the belt, but it was also a very dangerous one. It meant that the engineer would throttle down until the wheel was barely moving, but not stopped and by just dropping the belt into right position, the big flywheel would pull the belt on itself, if properly aligned. Every engineer knew of this trick, but many a man has got his hand caught in the belt, and either pulled him round the wheel or broke his arm. But Dave knew the trick well and having the belt handed up to him by his friend, Athol, there was just as quick twist and the belt was on. Then, a quick as a cat, Dave was back behind the throttle and with a lever in each hand, he speeded up the flywheel and let in the clutch, taking the engine slowly back to tighten up the long belt and start the separator at the same time.

Rolly with watch in hand, shouted 'Two and three quarters, exactly!' 'Dave's won!' Three or four shouted at once, and the men all came into a group to discuss it. 'You wouldn't have beat me, if I hadn't thrown the belt,' Sandy said. 'You don't make good time, turning like that,' Dave said. 'You're damn right I do. It was throwing the belt that held me up. Next time I'll show you' Sandy fired back." *(Hambley'70 :137.)*

Gone are these long arduous days of hard manual labour. However, it was an exciting and adventurous time, mixed with humour and fun when a "harvest gang" got together. It was, however, a very complex way of getting the grain into granaries in comparison to the quick and efficient way the harvest is accomplished today with computer-aided combines and trucks.

Harvest Excursion Trains

Today, hardly anyone would have an idea what a Harvest Excursion Train was, but for almost four decades, the "Harvest Specials" were a commonplace annual autumn event in the BTNHR as in most other areas on the Canadian Prairies. While an almost long-forgotten aspect of BTNHR history, they were a colourful and important part of farm life in the Region and thus important to acknowledge and remember.

During the late 1880s and early 1890s, horse-powered grain threshing machines were fairly quickly being replaced with larger threshers powered by portable steam engines and, later, by self-propelled steam-tractors, which provided much greater capacity and speed. Also at this time, the acreages being seeded were growing quickly, with better and larger capacity tillage implements becoming available and affordable. This quickly led to a manpower shortage during the harvest season. A man could seed a half section of wheat by himself, but needed another ten men to help harvest it. Harvesting crops at the time was very time-sensitive. The grain had to be cut, stooked, threshed, and hauled to market before the frost, rain and snow, or a possible glut at the elevator and dropping prices. And most of it had to be done by hand.

The west desperately wanted labour and, early in 1891, government and railway officials began a coordinated advertising effort in eastern Canada and the British Isles seeking men looking for farm labour jobs on the Canadian wheat belt at a $1.50 a day pay. The first train arriving in Winnipeg apparently carried 1500 men and upwards of 5000 men responded to the call in 1891, the first year of what came to be known as the Harvest Excursion Specials. Another bumper crop occurred in 1895.

The men were offered special low-priced one cent a mile harvester tickets and, upon arrival in the west, agents directed the men onto regular branch line trains according to local needs as identified by district representatives. The annual Harvest Excursion grew to become a tremendous yearly movement of manpower and was referred to as the "annual tide." In its peak year in 1928, almost 75,000 Harvester tickets were issued.

The first organized Harvest Special, with 1500 men aboard, was said to have quickly turned into "a rollicking stag party", with drinking, gambling, music and horseplay. This became a tradition and a fixture of Harvest Excursion trains; however, by 1920, this had become so out of control that it was thereafter necessary to assign RCMP officers to accompany all harvest trains.

Harvester wages were considered to be attractive, hence the popularity of the program. In 1900 the going rate had risen to $2.00 per day; in 1911, it was $3.00; the bumper crop of 1915 saw salaries as high as $6.00 and even $8.00 a day. Throughout the 1920s, $5.00 per day was the normal rate.

The demand for harvest workers died almost as suddenly as it originally appeared. With the introduction of combined reaper-harvesters during the mid-1920s, pulled by horses or more commonly tractors, as few as three or four men were now required to harvest an entire crop. The need for human muscle on grain farms in the Boundary Trail Region and across the Prairies very quickly waned and, by 1929, the special low-fare Harvest Excursion trains were discontinued. A once ubiquitous part of rural and farm life across the Prairies quite suddenly and completely became a thing of the past. *(WpgTrib'66-04-30.)*

- George Sharpe's father was a two-time harvest train excursionist, "*In 1895, news spread to Eastern Canada of a bountiful harvest in Manitoba and that young men were needed to work in the grain fields. One young lad seeking adventure was my father, George Sharpe. He was 18 and tired of picking stones on his father's farm about 100 miles north of Toronto. He was eager to see what was beyond the hills of Durham. With a few belongings and his mother's parting words, 'God bless you son and get yourself a wee gleig o'lan,' he set out for Toronto to board the Harvest Excursion.*

The train wound its way through the dense forest of Northern Ontario and along the rocky shore of Lake Superior, eventually reaching the Prairies. The trip was a long tiresome one. The wooden benches were very uncomfortable for the hundreds of young men seeking employment, but George's ticket would take him to Portage la Prairie and boundless stretches of golden grain. Farmers crowded the station platform and they quickly inspected the new arrivals. After an offer was made and accepted, about $1.25 a day, my father soon found himself in a large field covered with heavy sheaves of wheat. He was shown how to build a stook and told how many he should build a day. As he worked in the terrific heat amid the flies and mosquitoes, he was more weary than he had even been picking stones in Ontario. When harvest was over, most of the men, including my father, went back east. Free land for homesteading was something in the past. By now, speculators owned thousands of acres.

It was 1897 when my father once again boarded the Harvest Special. This time, he transferred at Elm Creek to a local train that would take him to Carman. While back east, he had become a skilled carpenter – a trade which he followed until he purchased land in the Miami district in 1905 at the spiralling price of $30 an acre." *(Brown'74 :68)*

- *Morden Monitor,* August 27, 1897, "*The first train load of Ontario farm hands arrived in Morden on Saturday last. It resembled a lively excursion, and the men lustily cheered on every occasion, and seemed to thoroughly enjoy their outing. Some 25 of them were left off at Morden while several hundred were taken on further west.*" Also noted, "*Business is quiet and the town is well nigh deserted, showing the harvest to be in full swing.*"

- *Pilot Mound Sentinel,* "*The weather has been exceedingly fine for stacking and considerable progress has been made in gathering the grain, but the amount of work still to be performed is immense. Twice the number of men engaged could find employment for a long time to come. There will be very little fall ploughing done and threshing will be carried on far into the winter. Notwithstanding the favourable weather there are many large fields on both sides of the river covered by stooks and it will be quite late in the season before harvesting is completed.*" *(PMS'95-09-19 :4)*

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Figure 8.13.11. Above: "*Harvesters Arrive at C.P.R. Depot, Winnipeg Man.*" Picture postcard, circa 1895, showing hundreds of newly arrived harvest labourers at the CPR station in Winnipeg. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.13.12. Above and below: Labourers Wanted poster. Railway posters offering low fares to Winnipeg from Ontario aboard special Harvest Help Excursion trains. *(PMA - Miami Coll.)*

Figure 8.13.13. Above: Harvest special excursion. Labourers for the Manitoba harvest of 1895, from eastern Canada, filled twelve passenger cars of this photographed "Harvest Special" train. *(L&AC.)*

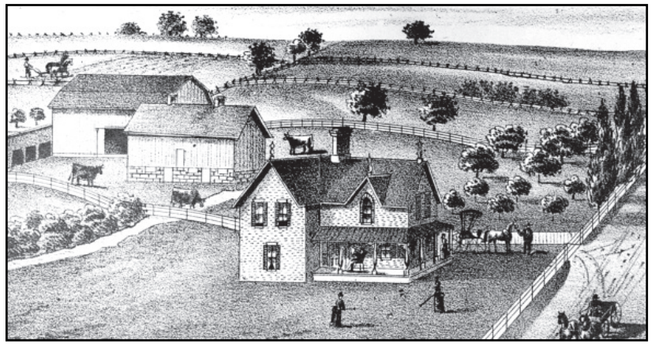

Figure 8.14.1. Above: Southern Ontario style farm buildings. The farmstead of William Allin on "Concession 2, Lot 27, Clarke Township", circa 1874, with a Gothic Revival style residence and two bank-barns with stone stable levels and board and batten siding on the loft level. Both building types were replicated in Manitoba by many settlers, during the wheat boom years in the BTNHR. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.2. Above: Southern Ontario style. The Gothic Revival style was very popular in Ontario during the 1870s and its appeal was carried west to the BTNHR as "cultural baggage." Many of these settlers later erected houses, like the one above, that were "just like those back home." *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.14.3. Above: Southern Ontario style. The above excellent, wood-frame, example of the Southern Ontario style residence, was built by the Jasper family in the Hartney district, circa 1890. Note the front box window and through eave dormer window. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.14.4. Above: Southern Ontario style. Fieldstone construction was common in Ontario and, for a time, also in the BTNHR, along with brick, resulting in a high local demand for masons. The above Boissevain area farm residence, erected in 1895, was built of locally sourced granite fieldstone. *(PMA :Guest Coll.)*

Figure 8.14.5. Above: New and old. A Deloraine area farmer, in his buggy, poses for a photo, together with his old, modest wood-frame farm house and its large new brick-sided replacement. The house design is a modified "Prairie Box" style with two shallow two-storey wings and a main level bow window. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.6. Above: Second Empire style. Mansard roofed homes were very popular during the early boom years. The Cleghorn family, of Baldur, built the above house around 1895. *(U of BDN.)*

Figure 8.14.7. Above: Second Empire style. The Arni Sveinsson family home, constructed, in 1892, on 23-6-14W in the Grund district, featured a highly ornate double verandah and upper storey windows. *(U of BDN.)*

Figure 8.14.8. Above: Prairie Box style. A row of newly built American Four Square, or "Prairie Box" style homes, on a residential street in Hartney, circa 1920. Note the house at the left is the only one without a front verandah. Note, in the yard to the right, the water tank and windmill, likely for pumping water, and the rooftop "widow's walk" cresting. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.14.9. Above: Prairie Box style. This attractive restored example, now an arts centre, was originally the manager's residence at the agricultural demonstration farm established in Killarney, around 1914. *(MHS :Penner.)*

Figure 8.14.10. Above: Queen Anne Revival style. This superb example of the Queen Anne Revival style, was constructed in 1894 of locally made brick, for David Stodders, a pioneer grain merchant in Morden. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.11. Above: Queen Anne Revival. Built in 1902 for Judge J.H. Black in Morden, this beautiful fieldstone home retains its original verandah. *(HRB.)*

8.14 THE WHEAT BOOM YEARS CONSTRUCTION BOOM

With improved transportation and a booming wheat economy, beginning in the early 1890s, a growing building boom began on farms and in towns across the Boundary Trail Region. On the farms, the small first and second generation farm houses and barns built of log and locally milled lumber, were increasingly being replaced with larger, up-to-date structures often of modern "plan book" designs, or quite frequently, what was popular and common "back home." And, whereas the earlier pioneer era structures were very basic simply designed structures, many of the new homes and barns erected during the wheat boom years were often large, ornate and of modern design — for those who could afford it. Along with new farmyard structures, many families undertook yard and garden improvements, with shelterbelts, orchards, lawns and flower beds being established or enlarged. The establishment of a Dominion Agricultural Research Station at Morden, in 1915, promoted and facilitated the widespread adoption of shelterbelt, orchard and garden plantings throughout the BTNHR. Apple orchards, in particular, were established on many farms, particularly along the east slope of the Manitoba Escarpment.

Large Modern Homes

While there were many shapes and sizes of homes built in the BTNHR during the wheat boom years, there were several notable styles that were particularly popular during different periods of time. The most common of these, for many decades, was the so-called "Southern Ontario" style residence. A slightly simplified version of the Gothic Revival residential style then popular in the US, it was very much in vogue in southern Ontario during the 1860s and 1870s. When financially able to, many of the Anglo-Ontario settlers in the BTNHR built similar styled homes. These new residences were often a public statement of having achieved success as farmers in their new home districts. The southern Ontario version of the Gothic Revival style exhibited several standard architectural features, including 1½ storey height, with a south-facing, rectangular or T-shaped plan, centrally located main entrance, steeply pitched "through-eave" dormers, main level box or bay window projections, bargeboards, and an open verandah along one or more sides of the building. Figure 8-14-1.

Another popular house style, especially during the early wheat boom years, was the Parisian-inspired "Second Empire" style, easily identified by its bellcast shaped Mansard roof. As already noted, the Second Empire style was adopted by the Roman Catholic church in Manitoba as the signature style for its many convents and boarding schools. It was also a very popular residential style, and many Mansard-roofed homes were built on farms and in towns across the BTNHR. This style also often included box windows, a verandah along one or more sides of the house, and detailed fretwork and railings. Figure 8-14-7.

After 1900, style preferences began to change, with "Queen Anne Revival" and the "American Four Square" or "Prairie Box" style, with its many variations, quickly grew in popularity. Queen Anne elements included wings, towers, bow windows, large verandahs and lots of decoration. The identifying elements of the Prairie Box style included, a four unit (room) square plan often with an non-centred front entrance, two-storey height, shallow-pitched clipped-pyramid-shaped roof often with dormers and cresting, ground floor front picture window, a front verandah with open rails and "Doric" or "Ionic" style vertical columns. Larger, three-bay, Prairie Box style houses were also popular, and often featured additional elements such as two-storey shallow or full-wing extensions and the ever popular box windows and front verandahs. Due to their larger size, three-bay Prairie Box style homes were more expensive and somewhat less frequently built. Many excellent examples of Prairie Box style houses survive in the BTNHR, as do many Southern Ontario, Second Empire and Queen Anne Revival examples. The BTNHR likely possesses the most surviving Second Empire style houses on the Prairies. The popularity of the style was quickly waning by the time settlement was firmly taking hold in regions west of Manitoba, and thus fewer examples were built in those areas. Morden, Manitou, Killarney and Boissevain are communities possessing noteworthy surviving examples of popular early house designs. A booklet *Morden's Mansions* provides a walking tour guide to some of the communities more notable heritage structures.

- Wellesley White and family of Thornhill, built a large new home in 1895 and, in 1919, erected a massive 50x80 ft. barn. According to a June, 1921 *Nor'West Farmer* article,"*The home has been gradually improved in the way of adding conveniences, such as water systems, bathroom and electric lights and, last year, a modern verandah or sun-room was built that is greatly appreciated. Large cement cisterns hold the water caught from the barn, as well as the house. An underground pipeline brings this water from the barn to the cisterns at the dwelling. Mr. White, takes great interest and delight in improving and building up his farm. One of his most satisfying achievements has been in establishing a extensive fruit plantation, a shelterbelt, lawn and flower gardens. On the south and west sides of his enlarged farmstead, several rows of spruce were planted. The main shelterbelt on the north was planted years ago and is fully 60 feet high. A magnificent lawn slopes to the east with a wide border of flowers, perennials and ornamental shrubbery.*" *(NWF'21-06-20 :5.)*

- Mr. and Mrs. Smith, *"...equipped their large brick house with a rain water cistern and a small tank just below the attic floor and these provided a limited amount of runnng water for wash basin and bath."* *(Gosnell'68 :285.)*

- George Mutch homesteaded 10-2-11 in 1880. "*His son John took over the farm in 1903, and he and his wife had a large brick three-storey house built in 1908, and with the large tin barn it was a landmark for many years."* *(Louise'70 :24.)*

Following the Great War, the economy in Europe and North America took some time to recover and retool, and it never returned to the levels of the pre-Great War wheat boom years, thus there was much less new general construction occurring. The homes and barns that were erected during the 1920s generally were smaller and mostly of wood frame construction. The years of building large impressive structures of stone, brick and timber in the BTNHR, had passed.

Barns

During the pioneer period, when most settlers possessed only a few head of cattle and one or two horses, large barns were not required, nor could they be afforded. However, as the wheat boom gained momentum, growing income prompted many farm families in the BTNHR to begin to expand their operations and replace their buildings. Often more land, new equipment or breeding stock were among the new investments; however, many chose to first construct new farmyard structures, including a larger barn and house, granaries, swine and poultry houses, and equipment storage. Barns were quite often replaced before the farm home, being more important in terms of income generation, and it was not unusual, during the mid-1890s, to see a massive barn paired with a tiny farmhouse on the same property. In some cases, where new buildings could not be afforded, the pioneer era barns and homes were simply enlarged as the family or amount of stock grew. And, where new barns were erected, the old ones were invariably retained for use as housing for swine or poultry, and the old small frame houses used for living quarters for hired farm labourers.

Most Anglo settlers in the BTNHR area hailed from the same few counties in Southern Ontario. Within these counties a distinctive type of barn, which came to be called the southern Ontario style bank-barn, prevailed. Its basic form included an east-west orientation with the multiple stable-level entrances all facing south. Stable walls were invariably made of stone masonry. The north side would have been built into the side of a hill, thus providing "ground level" access to the loft for hay wagons, equipment, feed, etc. The loft interior framework consisted of a heavy post-and-beam network, featuring "mortise and tenon" joinery. Each set of posts and beams running across the width of the building was referred to as a "bent." Barn sizes were frequently expressed in terms of the number of bents; large barns could have seven or eight bents, small barns typically consisted of four. Vertical board-and-batten siding sheathed the loft level of most Southern Ontario style barns.

As soon as they were financially able, many Anglo-Ontario settlers of the BTNHR began to erect Southern Ontario style barns of their own. If an appropriate hillside or slope was not present, an earthen ramp would be built to facilitate horse and wagon access to the loft. By 1900, many of the Southern Ontario style barns being constructed were massive structures which could be seen from a great distance, with those located near major trails and roads becoming well-known district landmarks.

Fieldstone was used in the BTNHR for building foundations well before it was used as a general construction material for homes and stores, and its use for foundations and basement walls continued until about 1910, after which stable walls began to be constructed of poured concrete, concrete block or even wood frame. It was also discovered that, after a period of some years, stone stable walls often began to crumble due to frost. Basements, more insulated by the ground, fared somwhat better.

After 1900, barn designs began to change yet again. This was prompted by the beginning of the decline in the importance of the horse, as well as a rise in lumber prices, especially for large beams. As mechanized devices began replacing horsepower, almost the whole barn could be devoted to cattle production which, by 1910, was becoming a viable part of the agricultural economy in the BTNHR. Innovations, such as the hay sling, had a major impact on barn designs. It provided an easier, more economical way of moving feed hay into the loft and led to the adoption of the now familiar gambrel or "hip roof" design, which provided large unobstructed loft interiors, ideally suited to mechanical hay sling operation. The gambrel style roof also provided a larger loft capacity, and with its all lumber construction, such barns were less expensive, easier and quicker to erect.

After the Great War, Southern Ontario style barns were rarely constructed. Many were increasingly used as cattle barns, but in recent decades, as outdoor polebarn shelters began to be adopted for winter housing, most of the large Southern Ontario style barns in the BTNHR became redundant. By the 1980s, many were rapidly deteriorating due to lack of maintenance. At this time, many were stripped of their wide wooden siding for use as decorative wall panelling in homes and businesses, which only hastened their demise. A few notable examples of Southern Ontario style barn have survived, and can still be seen on the landscape providing an important but fading tangible reminder of the close links the BTNHR has with Southern Ontario.

Figure 8.14.12. Above: Bradshaw farm, Morden district. Circa 1914. Note the large barn with windmill and half-length shed-roofed wing, modest-sized house within a shelter belt of trees all of identical height. *(L&AC.)*

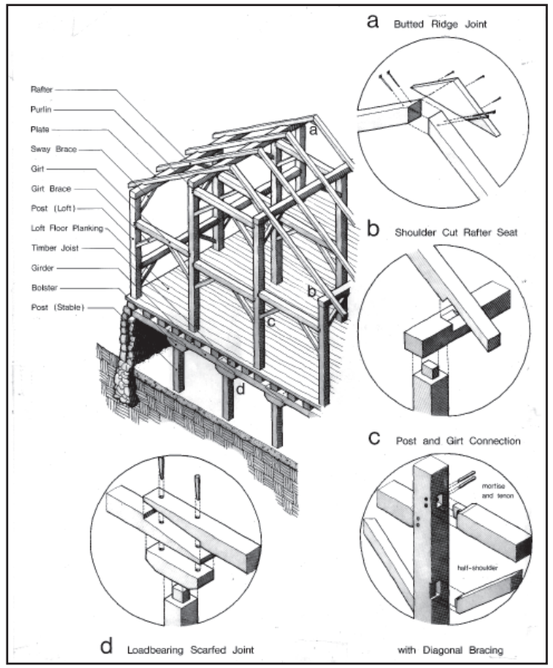

Figure 8.14.16. Above: Timber frame connections. Illustration showing terms and typical connections used in timber frame construction. *(HRB.)*

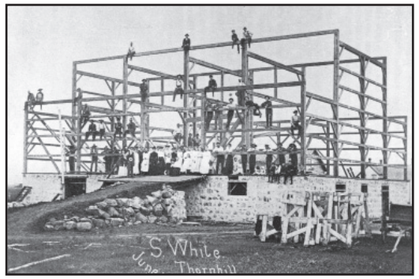

Figure 8.14.13. Above: Barn Raising. Southern Ontario style bank-barns were built on many BTNHR farms. This one, on the former Sam White farm near Thornhill, was nearing completion of the heavy internal bentwork system when photographed in 1906. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.14. Above: Barn raising. Finishing up the framing on a massive timber and fieldstone barn on the John Morrow farm, in 1910, on 3-3-7W. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.14.15. Above: Hay sling. Innovations such as the mechanical hay sling altered the way barns were designed and built. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.17. Above: New farm buildings. A posed farmyard photo-portrait, showing a new barn and granary, horses, cattle and the proud owner standing by — a new invention at the time — the automobile. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.14.18. Above: Hay sling. The hay sling removed the need for building ramps up to the loft level. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.19. Above. Massive barn on 32-5-6W, 1983. This huge Southern Ontario style barn, with deteriorating concrete walls, appears still square and solid. During the 1980s, weathered barn siding was in high demand for decorative use in homes and stores. *(HRB.)*

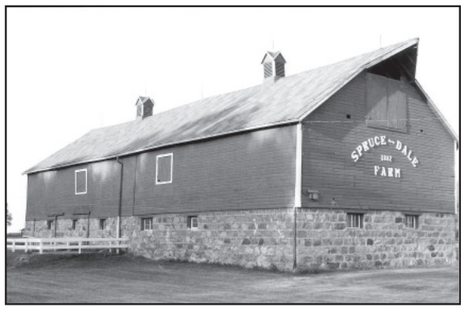

Figure 8.14.20. Above: W.M. Leatherdale Barn, 1983. Built in 1882, on 17-4-5W, near Morden, the ramp attached to this huge barn was removed when the barn was later enlarged and a hay sling installed. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.21. Above: A. Hamm barn, 31-2-5W, 1983. This rare surviving, smaller example, had its original vertical siding replaced with horizontal cove siding in later years, extending its usefullness. *(HRB.)*

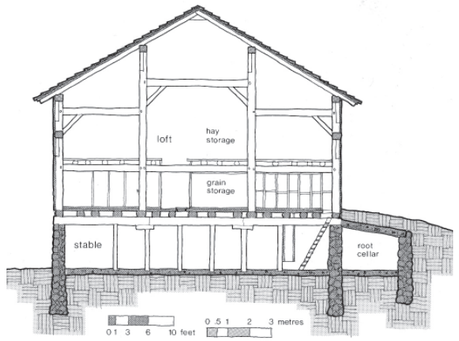

Figure 8.14.22. Above: Bank-barn. Section showing classic bankbarn design with ground level access to both the stable and loft levels. Earth ramps were built if no hillside was available. *(HRB.)*

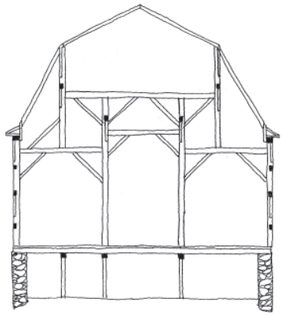

Figure 8.14.23. Above: Timber Bents. Section showing another common timber bent design. Some barns were 8 to ten bents in length, and occasionally, even longer. *(HRB.)*

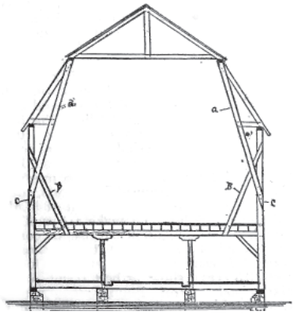

Figure 8.14.24. Above: Section showing, free span lumber truss rafter designs which became popular after 1900 with the adoption of the hay sling. *(NWF'98.)*

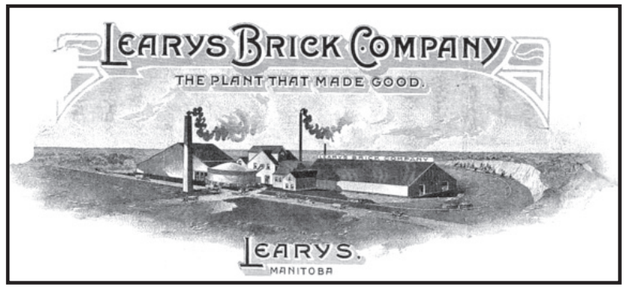

Figure 8.14.26. Above: Leary's Brickworks. Located west of Roseisle in the beautiful Roseisle Valley, the former Leary's Brickworks was the last functioning brick manufacturing plant in the BTNHR, and the source of brick for many the Region's red brick structures. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.25. Above and left: Local newspaper adverts and a letterhead illustration from three of many former brick making plants that operated in the BTNHR during the wheat boom years. *(HRB.)*

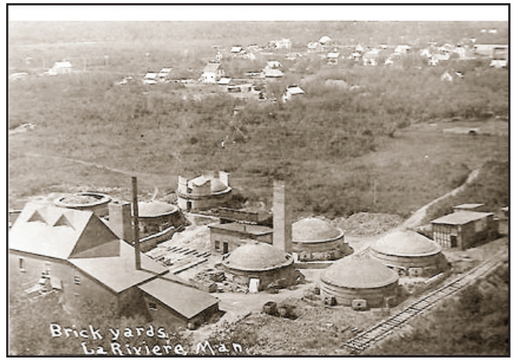

Figure 8.14.27. Above: "*Brick Yards La Rivière, Man.*" A postcard image of the La Rivière brickworks with the community in the distance. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.28. Above: Berry House, Reston. Built in the 1890s for local barber Harcourt Berry and his wife Mary. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.29. Above: 205 Clark Avenue, Killarney. This charming brick residence was owned for many years by local cattle buyer Alex Finnen and family. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.14.30. Above: Fairbanks house, Emerson. Built in 1879, and photographed during its restoration in 2006, it is the BTNHR's largest and best example of Italianate style residence. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.31. Above: Former Morden Post Office. Built in 1913, this landmark brick beauty on Stephen Street was designated a heritage site in 1988. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.32. Above: Emerson Town Hall, 1918. This protected provincial heritage site includes jail cells in the basement, town offices on the main level and a second storey auditorium. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.14.33. Above: Marringhurst, 1909. Built by Richard Wilson, in 1909 of Leary brick, and a major social landmark, it was recently restored and now functions as a museum and community venue. *(EdLed.)*

Brick Structures

With various shale deposits located in the region, it is only natural that a number of brick yards were established at sites possessing brick quality shale, especially with the long tradition of brick and stone construction by the region's largely Anglo-Ontario settlers. Brick yard operations were common enterprises in the region from about 1895 to 1920 with brick manufacturing plants at Darlingford, La Rivière, Somerset, Whitewater, Carman, Morden and others. Both solid brick and brick veneer over wood frame were equally commonplace and were used in the building of homes, schools, churches and businesses alike, though not for Mennonite house-barns, despite there being many brick house-barns "back home" in Crimea. Before 1910, yellow brick was more readily available than red brick, and the use of red brick at this time generally indicated a wealthy owner. Most brickyards in the BTNHR didn't operate for long, sustained demand and profitability being a problem with many operations. Beginning about 1910 large Winnipeg brickworks began undercutting the prices of the local brickworks, and with the outbreak of The Great War in 1914, a worsening labour shortage affected many local operations. One by one the brickmaking operations ceased operation.

Leary's Brick Company

The "Leary" brick yard was one of the more notable operations and the last to have surviving structures still on site. An informed description of operations at the Leary's Brick Company was included in the "*Pembina Country - Land of Promise*" local history. In part, it noted, "*The Leary Brick Plant and its adjoining bank of shale is located on SW13-6-8W at Leary's, in a valley formed along the Manitoba Escarpment, west of Roseisle. It was first developed in 1905 by George Leary with assistance and involvement of the Manitoba government under the name of the Dominion Pressed Brick Company. Mr. Leary acquired full ownership of the operation in 1910 and continued operating it as a profitable private enterprise until the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. The war increasingly affected world, national and local economies from agriculture to the building trades. By 1917, the lack of demand for building brick forced George Leary to close the plant, despite producing a high quality product. In 1947, George's son William renovated the machinery and buildings and reopened the plant, but only five years later he suddenly died and the plant was again closed.*

The open bank behind the brickyard buildings has always been the source of raw material for brickmaking. This loose shale, grey in colour, was brought in and stockpiled, then put through a crusher and carried by bucket elevators to screens — the coarser material returning to the crusher and fine material going to storage bins above the press, and then directed to the press where the bricks were formed and dry-pressed under great pressure.

The raw bricks were placed by hand onto loading carts and transferred directly to the domed down-draft kiln, capacity 80,000 bricks, and burned for 12-16 days with wood fires. These fires were initially very low to remove the moisture and carbon, and they are increased very gradually over a period of days, until the black smoke ceases to come from the big chimney. The last days of firing saw the temperature of the kiln brought up to 1,800 degrees Fahrenheit and held there to fuse the materials in the brick. As the bricks burn, they gradually turn from the raw colour of grey to pink and finally to red. Once burned, the kiln is sealed and allowed to cool slowly for about a two week period. The secret in making good brick from this shale is in understanding the burning process that is burning out all the carbon gradually before putting on heavy fires.

With every lot of bricks to be fired, the old kilns had to be torn down and new kilns constructed. Thus brickmaking required a great deal of hand labour, and was one of the reasons why the Leary brickyard was forced to close in later years. Also the use of wood for fuel was expensive and inconvenient. There were many buildings throughout the province built with Leary's Bricks." *(Brown' :87.)*

Masons

With stone and brick construction being commonplace throughout the British Isles and eastern North America, many of the settlers emigrating from these areas had experience as masons. By the later 1880s, as stone and brick began to be used more frequently for building foundations, footings and, by 1889, for entire structures, their talents quickly grew in demand. James Masson who settled on 36-3-11 in 1879 was a well-known mason. After filing for his homestead he spent the autumn and winter in Winnipeg working as a mason to earn cash money to help start up the homestead and before sending for his bride. After 1900 he spent more time as a mason than as a farmer and *"he erected most of the brick homes built in the Wood Bay district, even building a kiln on his farm to make lime used in his trade." (Louise'79:18.)*

Many people were employed as masons and its related businesses, supplying lime and sand for mortar, materials freighting, draying and stone suppliers. Skilled mason were in such demand that many masons from Britain and eastern Canada would travel to the prairies just for the summer construction season, and return home in the autumn.

Many beautiful brick structures were built throughout the BTNHR. Many have been lost but many also survive. Among the more notable are the former Morden and Carman Post Office bulldings, the Berry House in Reston, and Marringhurst near Glenora. These currently are all municipally protected heritage structures. The beautiful and imposing Emerson Town Hall is a protected provincial heritage site.

Marringhurst

The stately Marringhurst Heritage House, a Four Square style red-brick farm home located 15 km. northwest of Pilot Mound near Rock Lake, is the much-storied centrepiece of the Marringhurst District. It was built in 1909 for Richard "Dick" Wilson, one of the RM of Argyle's earliest homesteaders, and a highly respected and successful farmer, civic leader and political activist. The Wilson's vacated their 1879 log cabin, for their larger wood frame home, in 1890. By 1909, buoyed by their success in raising thoroughbred Percheron horses, polled Shorthorn cattle, Berkshire hogs and with almost 600 acres of cropland, the Wilsons were in a position to construct a dwelling befitting the image of a large, progressive and thriving Manitoba farm family. The red brick used in its construction was purchased from the Leary brickworks, shipped by train to Pilot Mound and then hauled the final 15 km. to the farm site by teams of horses and wagons. Each trip required descending and ascending the Pembina valley. By 1909 standards, the large six bedroom house was highly fashionable and featured, among other thoroughly modern amenities, central steam heating; full indoor plumbing with water tanks in the attic and a sewage system; a large summer kitchen, even a dumb waiter for bringing food items to the dining room and pantry from the cool room below. Aladdin chandeliers lit all the downstairs rooms and they sported high ceilings, gleaming hardwood floors and 30 large windows. In 1993, district residents established the Marringhurst Historical Society to try to save the landmark, receiving a major boost when then owners, Bill and Marie Barron, donated the house and yard for use as a district heritage site and community centre. The fully restored house/museum now includes an upgraded summer kitchen which allows it to serve as a catering facility. Now known as the Marringhurst Heritage House, this handsome structure is once again an active district landmark and social centre and has hosted anniversaries, weddings, family reunions, meetings and bus tours. It is but one of many equally storied heritage sites in the BTNHR. *(HRB.)*

Stone Masonary Structures

The potential of fieldstone as a primary construction material was being increasingly recognized by the late 1880s, as a newspaper article in the *Pilot Mound Sentinel* suggests. "*In this country where lumber is so high in price, timber suitable for building so scarce and bricks not to be had, farmers and others could profitably and conveniently use the round stones from the prairie in construction of dwellings, stables or other buildings. To become fashionable this manner of building only requires a beginning.*" The same article also offered a suggestion as to why, up to that time, fieldstone hadn't been widely used, stating that it was "*..owing to the unreasonable fuss that inexperienced masons make when called upon to build with his description of material, the high prices charged, and the remarkable slow progress made with the work.*"

Granite Boulder Stone

Fieldstone, or "boulder stone" construction in the BTNHR began about 1887 and, by the early 1890s, had become quite popular and remained so to the end of the wheat boom period. Brick construction also grew in popularity during this same period. A pair of interesting newspaper articles from the period, show that both Morden and Virden claimed the distinction of having the first major boulder stone structure to be built in Manitoba. The *Morden Monitor* pronounced, "*The building of the Commercial Bank at Morden by the almost entire use of boulder stone has drawn attention to the value of these stones for building material. This is the first building entirely erected by this material, we believe, in Manitoba. The boulder has been extensively used for foundations and basements in various parts of Manitoba, but its hardness has been against its further use. But this quality is now being proved to constitute its value. It is an admitted fact that the frame building is not suitable for this climate; the dry heat of our summer so warping and contracting the woodwork, as to render them unfit for occupation in winter. It really seems a dispensation of Divine Providence, that these stones lie around on the surface in sufficient quantities to build all the houses in town or country. The labour of handling them has been the great drawback in the past, but the Scotch mason has come to the rescue, and he finds it no more difficult to shape and mould the prairie boulder than the stone brought from the Highland glens of his native country. Stony farms have been discarded, but the probability is that an acre with plenty of stone upon it will be worth $100 in the near future, and farmers should gather them up together, as there is sure to be a demand created for them. The mason will journey to the ground where they are located in a heap and there work them into squares suitable for the building in the town, or a farm can hire a mason to shape them into squares to build a farm house which will laugh at the fiercest blizzard that blows.*"

This article, reprinted in the *Free Press*, elicited the following response in Virden's newspaper. "VIRDEN, Oct 5. – Buildings of Stone. *The people of this town have been somewhat amused at the statement of the 'Morden Monitor' published in the Free Press, that the Commercial bank, Morden, is the first building in Manitoba, wholly constructed of boulder stones. The first building in Virden constructed of boulder stones, the large store of Mr. J.S. Young, was erected in the summer of 1887. Previous to the erection of that building the value of boulder stones as building material had been fully demonstrated by numerous farm houses and stables erected throughout the country. Since 1889, there have been fourteen or fifteen stone buildings erected in this town, including the school house, the large stores of Mr. Scarth and Mr. Nick, the large blacksmith and machine shops of Messrs. Geen & McWilliams, the registry and county court offices, besides a number of very desirable private residences. We have found by experience, and we gladly give the Morden Monitor the benefit of it, that stone buildings are warm in winter, cool in summer, make a handsome and solid building, and are much cheaper than wooden buildings when the question of durability and fire insurance are considered.*" *(HRB.)*

Boissevain Sandstone

Among the BTNHR's geologic resources are near-surface seams of building quality sandstone that were discovered along two ravines located just south of Boissevain. During the 1890s and early 1900s, as the popularity of stone construction grew, the soft tan and brown-coloured sandstone began to be quarried and used in the construction of a growing number of buildings in and around the towns of Boissevain and Killarney. It was used in the building of homes, churches, schools, and commercial buildings alike. Although frequently used in the district, it appears little sandstone was shipped for use abroad. The inherent softness of Boissevain sandstone, meant it weathered more rapidly than limestone or fieldstone. It was, however, easy to shape and locally available so it became a quite popular building material. Sadly, a significant number of past landmark sandstone, such as "The Anchorage." Figure 8.14.35. have been lost, with many farm homes being abandoned during the Great Depression and later demolished. Nevertheless, many structures built of Boissevain sandstone still exist. These include, in Boissevain, St. Matthew's Anglican (1890) and St. Paul's Methodist (present United) Church (1893), the Welsh Block (1895), Joyce House (1903) and Elliot House (1895). In Killarney, these include, residences at 397 William Avenue, 70 Lake Avenue and 307 Park Street. As well, an undetermined number of sandstone residences survive in the surrounding rural districts.

- W. A. Latimer recalled, as a child growing up in Boissevain, following the construction of several sandstone structures in town, "*There were two different ravines there south of Boissevain where they quarried sandstone. The rock was so fractured that they could just drive a crowbar in between them and pry out big chunks, it was very easy to get out. Then they had to load it into wagons, and draw it to town with teams of horses. St. Matthew's Anglican Church was mostly built out of that sandstone, but they put some other stones in too. And a lot of the buildings in town were built of sandstone too, including the big Methodist Church. They got the sand for the mortar from Whitewater Lake, where there are sandbanks at a lot of different places, especially at the southeast shore - fine lovely white sand. It was shipped into Boissevain on railway flat cars. It was lovely stuff to work with because it was very fine and hardly needed to be sifted. You can tell what a good job they made because the plaster is still on there, in the church, and not broken by driving nails in it or putting hooks in it. And it was applied by a real expert plasterer. Stanley Bissett, that was his name, old Stanley Bissett. He was an old Scotchman and come out from Scotland. And before he come out here to Boissevain, he helped to plaster the parliament buildings in Ottawa. Then, about 1890, he came out here to Boissevain and he plastered this church and a lot of other buildings in the district too.*" *(W.A.Latimer'77-11- 29.)*

- Lloyd Smith, another early resident, also remembered the local sandstone quarry, "*Well, there seems to be a streak of sandstone about three miles long along these hills south of here. You just have to dig down, maybe 8 to 10 inches and you'll hit a seam of it. It's all in layers and easy to pry out and easy to work with. You could pretty well get about any size chunk you wanted. A lot of it was used in the old days. Yea, there was two or three quarries along there, one in our pasture on 13-3-20W, that's where the biggest amount come from, and then two more just west of it. Quite a few of the houses in town, like the Land Title's Office, that was built with stone off this place. Also, a lot of granite stone was just picked up around in the fields and used for building too, but granite was hard to work with.*" *(BTNHR.)*

Although attractive and popular, it was found that buildings of stone construction tended to be damp and hard to heat in the harsh prairie climate. The extreme temperature variations also often led to cracks forming in the walls. A fairly sudden end to the widespread use of fieldstone construction occurred after 1910.

Figure 8.14.34. Above: St. Paul's United Church. An integral part of the Boissevain skyline, St. Pauls church was built in 1893 of local sandstone. It features stained glass windows, gothic arches, and interior open scissor trusses, and is a protected provincial heritage site. *(HRB photo.)*

Figure 8.14.37. Left: Cartwright. Constructed of granite boulder stone in 1898 by Samuel Hossack, Christ Church Anglican is a protected heritage site and was restored in 2008. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.14.40. Above: 30 Park Street, Killarney. An eye-catching multi-coloured sandstone residence with limestone trim. 2008. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.14.43. Above: St. Mary's and St. Albans Anglican Church. This cherished heritage site was a built in 1892 near Kaleida. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.35. Above: The Anchorage. Built near Boissevain, on an elevated site in 1898, for Wm. Moore, a former Captain with the Allan Steamship Lines, this imposing sandstone structure, is only one of many, now lost, stone landmarks that once dotted the Region. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.38. Above: Joyce House house, 542 Broadway, Boissevain. One of the most beautiful sandstone houses in the Boissevain area. Built in 1903 for Thomas Joyce by James McLachlan. The stone allegedly came from a single giant boulder. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.41. Above: 529 Broadway, Boissevain. This restored two-story residence, is one of Boissevain's largest of several notable surviving sandstone residences. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.44. Left: Valleyfield district. 5-2-5W. A Four Square Prairie Box style granite fieldstone farmhouse with a two storey rear wing. The original wood shingles have long since been replaced by modern asphalt shingles. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 8.14.36. Above: The Terrace, Killarney. This unusual mansard-roofed duplex, built of granite, sandstone and limestone, by its owner, Samuel Hossack, is unique in the BTNHR. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.39. Above: Cypress River. Built in 1900 on 27-7-12W for the Edwin Young family, this heritage site house is still owned by the Young family. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.42. Above: Morden courthouse. Constructed in 1904 of granite fieldstone, a difficult material to shape into square blocks due to its hardness, the Courthouse is the finest example of granite fieldstone construction ever built in the BTNHR. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.45. Above: 577 Stephen Street, Morden. This attractive fieldstone structure was built in 1899, for Dr. B.J. McConnell, one of Morden's first physicians and an MLA from 1907-10. *(MHS :G. Penner.)*

Figure 8.14.46. Above: Cement Blocks. A Canadian Petrified Brick and Stone Co. Ltd. advertisement for the "Waterloo Automatic" block making machine, circa 1905. *(HRB.)*

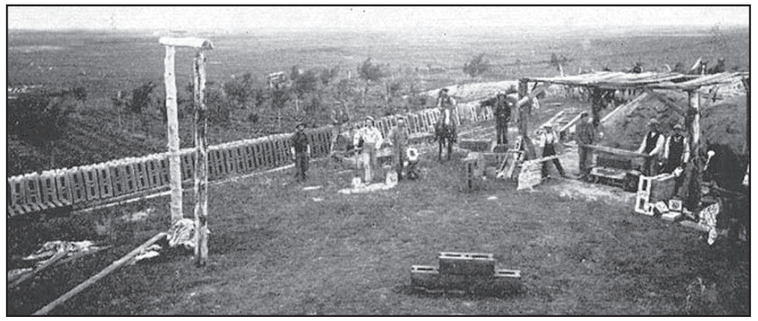

Figure 8.14.47. Above: On site manufacturing. Making blocks under an open-walled structure on a Darlingford area farmyard. Note the long line of blocks at left, the three sample blocks at front centre, and the piles of material at the far right behind the workers. The purpose of the twin-pole structure is unclear but appears to be connected to the activity. *(MPA.)*

Figure 8.14.48. Above: Concrete block classes. Manitoba Agricultural College students making concrete blocks. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.14.49. Above: Union Bank, Minto. Like many single-business commercial blocks, this example has living quarters above. *(Peels.)*

Figure 8.14.50. Above: Empire Hotel, Cartwright. Several hotels in the BTNHR were built of moulded concrete block construction. Unfortunately, none have survived. *(HRB.)*

Figure 8.14.51. Above: McKinney House. 31-2-20W. This moulded concrete block residence was constructed in 1904 by mason R.G. Currie and carpenter Ellis Maguire for local farmer William John McKinney and his wife Mary Ann. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.52. Above: Bergthaler Church Waisenamt, Altona. Built in 1916, this rare surviving commercial example is now a residence. *(MHS'18 :Penner.)*

Figure 8.14.53. Above: Seton Centre, 116 Main Street, Carberry. Constructed using blocks with an unusual floral design, this former harness shop now houses a museum and gallery dedicated to naturalist Ernest Thompson Seton. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.54. Above: Baptist Church, Emerson, 1905. This attractive building is likely the largest and most ornate of all surviving moulded block buildings in the BTNHR. *(MHS.)*

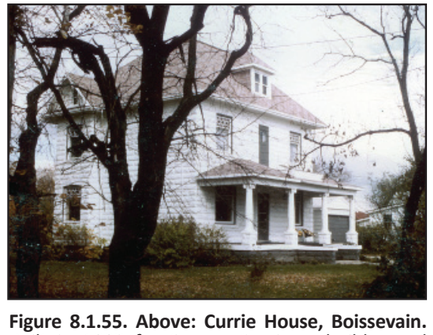

Figure 8.1.55. Above: Currie House, Boissevain. Built in 1902 for George Currie, a builder and insurance agent. Note the projecting two-storey bay and open verandah. 1974 photo. *(MHS.)*

Figure 8.14.56. Above: 129 Park Street, Emerson, 1905. This former church manse, recently restored, is one of several noteworthy heritage homes in Emerson. *(MHS'18 :Penner.)*

Moulded Concrete Block Structures

There was a period in the BTNHR, starting about 1905, when concrete first became available, to about 1920, when so-called "moulded concrete block" construction became quite popular in the BTNHR, as in other parts of the province. Different exterior-side patterns were possible, with the most popular being the "dressed cut stone" design, which gave buildings the appearance of being stone masonary, but at a fraction of the cost of the real thing. During its popularity, local contractors and itinerant builders would roam the countryside with portable block-making machines manufacturing the blocks on site and erecting buildings.

- W.A. Latimer was interviewed by Phyllis Hallett in 1977 in Killarney, during which he spoke of seeing concrete block construction projects as a youngster. "*George C. Currie used to farm southeast of Boissevain and his father-in-law, Sammy Oak, farmed near him, and they were great old Methodists. Mr. Currie was a very good carpenter. He built a lot of houses in the district and then, around 1905 or so, he started making these cement block houses. And, you know, they've stood up really well. This house right here next to us, that was one of them. Currie built that for himself and he built it there so he would be near his father-in-law. I think the blocks were made of just cement and sand and were sort of hollow. But however they built them, they made a good job. They've all stayed up well. There's another one over here in the southeast corner of the town. And on Uncle Fred's farm, that's another one that Currie built. And the McKinney farm out there south of town, that was built by Currie. And one out here on Teddy Brown's farm north of Ninga. Yea, he built quite a few of them and they were good houses.*" *(Killarney Archives'77 :Latimer.)*

Development of Portland Cement

Like its parent material, cement, the moulded concrete block was seen to offer a measure of economy for its users, while also promoting fire-resistancy, temperature moderation for hot and cold weather and permanency when compared to other masonry types or wood construction.

The principal type of hydraulic cement is "portland cement", which a finely ground, usually grey, manufactured mineral product. Cement by itself has limited application, but when mixed with water and sand, gravel, crushed stone or other aggregates, and allowed to dry, it forms concrete, a hard rock-like substance, and has grown to become the most widely used construction material in the world. Joseph Aspdin, an English mason, is generally credited with the invention of portland cement. In 1824 he obtained a patent for his product, which he named portland cement because it produced a concrete the colour of limestone quarried on the Isle of Portland. The name is used worldwide, with many manufacturers adding their own trade or brand names. Canadian production began in Hull, Québec, in 1889. Before that time portland cement was imported from England in wooden barrels. *(Canadian Encyclopedia.)*

The earliest known concrete or concrete-like block construction appears to have taken place in 1890 near Russell. At that time, E.A. Struthers, the manager of Dr. Barnardo's farm for orphans, constructed a concrete house in the Cherry Hill district. And, in 1893, Charles Arkholl Boulton built a large concrete block home, known as "The Manor" in nearby Russell. The push for a commercial block technology that was readily available to the builder came early in 1903 when Winnipeg stonemason-contractor Thomas Sharpe, while on a trip to Chicago, witnessed the new, "poured Process", and obtained the Canadian Patent rights for it. To showcase his products, Sharpe constructed the three-storey Afton Apartments at the southwest corner of Ellice Avenue and Carlton Street that year. A rival to Sharpe's efforts also came into existence during 1903. This was the Cement Building Block Company. This plant made hollow blocks which included an air space that helped moderate inside temperatures — at least in summer, winter was a different story. Their plant had five block machines with a capacity of 750 blocks per day. Each block was said to be equal in size to 42 ordinary bricks. By the spring of 1904, this firm began selling concrete block machines in addition to their pre-made products. Within a year or two, both firms were soon facing stiff competition from other block machine vendors, as well as block manufacturing. Each claimed to have a better product than the next company. With block machines of various makes on the market, small town builders and lumber yards followed suit and began to branch out into masonry construction and its popularity spread like wildfire. It is also worth noting that none of these different block making machines were of a standard measurement. There was a considerable variance in sizes and shapes, including solid block, hollow block and veneer block, as well as different front-face designs. Even different concrete colours were available.

Although the exact number is uncertain, there appears to be at least a dozen or more known surviving examples of moulded block construction in the BTNHR, including several designated as protected heritage sites. These include the Currie house and McKinney house in the Boissevain area, the Leatherdale house near Morden, the Gardiner Building in Carberry, and the former Bergthaler Waisenamt building in Altona.

The Waisenamt was a mutual aid institution introduced by Bergthaler Mennonites and was based on a centuries-old tradition established back in Prussia and Russia to administer estates and aid orphans and widows. Altona's Waisenamt functioned for decades and expanded into other financial services before its operations collapsed, like many other financial institutions, during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The building has accommodated various functions over the years and is one of only a few historic structures on Altona's Main Street. Emerson was once a hotbed of moulded concrete block construction, and many rose throughout the town between 1900 and 1910. The former Presbyterian Church Manse was constructed in 1905 by Emerson contractor David Wright using a block-making machine that he bought from a Sears catalogue. Wright erected several buildings in Emerson, including the Baptist Church and Casselman House. It is said that he stopped making block buildings when his mould broke after only one year of u se.

The popularity of moulded concrete block construction quickly faded after the Great War, as did brick and stone masonry construction. As with buildings made of stone, concrete block structures were found to be difficult to heat during the winter. Also, if the cement mixture used in the making of the blocks or as "chinking" between the blocks, was contaminated with mineral rich water, or improperly mixed or cured, structural issues sometimes became a problem. While the period of moulded concrete block construction lasted roughly only 20 years, it was the precursor of the "standardized" cinder or concrete block, introduced during the 1940s, and used for footings, basements and various types of agricultural and industrial structures, though it was rarely used in residential construction. *(HRB :Rostecki.)*

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8.15 PELICAN LAKE TUBERCULOSIS SANATORIUM - 1910

Although current generations likely have little idea of the nature and horror of tuberculosis, it was not so long ago that TB was a common and much dreaded disease. The mild early signs of tuberculosis include: low energy, loss of weight, and a persistent cough. In its advanced stages, TB can cause bleeding and ulceration of the lungs. A rarer form of the disease attacks the lymph nodes, bones and joints, various organs, and the adrenal glands and can lead to inflammation of the coverings of the brain and spinal cord meningitis. Sometimes referred to as "galloping consumption", TB was seen as the major disease to be combated during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The cause of tuberculosis was first identified as a bacterial infection in Germany in 1882 by Dr. Robert Koch, at a time when the disease was rampant in Europe and the Americas, with a death rate of one in seven people. In the US, Dr. Edward Trudeau continued Dr. Koch's work and, in the course of events, he himself developed tuberculosis. In an attempt to cure himself, Dr. Trudeau resorted to isolation in a cottage in the country, which was successful. His conclusion was that rest, fresh air, sunshine, and a better diet could cure the disease. In 1897, he developed the Adirondack Cottage Sanatorium at Saranac Lake, N.Y. which became a model for others. The first to follow his lead, in Canada, was the Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium (1897), and Muskoka Free Hospital for Consumptives (1902) at Gravenhurst, and the Toronto Free Hospital for Consumptives (1904). These, in turn, provided the model for the Sanatorium Board of Manitoba founded in 1904 through an Act of the Legislature. The prime mandate of the Board was to raise the capital to build and operate a sanatorium for the treatment of consumptives (tuberculosis patients). A site north of Winnipeg on the east shore of Lake Winnipeg was proposed and inspected, but the site on the north shore of Pelican Lake at Ninette in the present BTNHR was chosen as the site to build on. *(Trivett'84.)*

The Sanatorium Board of Manitoba operated several tuberculosis sanatoria in Manitoba from the early 1900s until the 1960s. For much of this period, effective medicines were not available to treat the disease. Instead, patients were isolated from the general public in sanatoriums and prescribed rest, exercise and proper nutrition. In May of 1910, after five years of fund raising and construction, the Pelican Lake Sanatorium, was opened with a capacity for sixty patients — a capacity which, of necessity, would quadruple in thirteen years. Renamed the "Manitoba Sanatorium", it soon became the province's largest and principal TB treatment centre. Funding for construction, in one way or another, was provided by all three levels of government. However, the financial costs to operate the Sanatorium were originally borne by municipalities from which its patients came, based on a levy system.

The first patient was admitted on 24 May 1910 with an official opening ceremony occurring a month later. During the Great War, from 1914–1918, the federal Department of Militia funded expansions to sanatoriums across Canada. Significant numbers of men enlisting were being diagnosed with tuberculosis through their medical examination and being sent for treatment. Soldiers injured in combat, including by gas attacks, were being sent for treatment in sanatoriums. The expansion of the facilities at Ninette were completed in June 1920 and, "*On Wednesday, June 22, 1920 a special train carried about two hundred of Winnipeg's leading citizens and philanthropists to the beautiful little lake-side town of Ninette, near which the sanatorium is located, there to join with the residents of Strathcona municipality for the occasion. Ninette is situated on the south shore of Pelican Lake at the west end. From the town a winding road, well shaded by willows and oaks leads around the end of the lake to the north shore, a mile and a half, to the sanatorium. There, sheltered from the north wind by high hills and overlooking the lake, stands the institution. Far be it for any prosaic newspaperman to attempt a description of the surroundings. The outlook would inspire the pen of a Dickens, a Whittier or a Longfellow.*

Entering the main building the first thing that strikes one is the absolute cleanliness of everything. The walls and ceilings are pure white, easy to cleanse. The floors are of hard wood, without a single carpet to catch and hold dirt. In fact, everything about the premises is so constructed as to lend itself to the maintenance of absolute cleanliness. The greater part of the main floor is occupied by a large cheerful lounging room which overlooks the lake. The south end of the room has large windows while at the north is a huge fire place capable of taking large logs. Off of this room, the verandas open. The second floor is taken up by doctor's and nurses' quarters and rooms for patients when the weather demands their housing. The dining room is situated in the basement of the main building and is large and well-lighted. It was here that the formal opening ceremonies were carried out.

The first, and probably the most appreciated part of the function, was the closing of the opening that a five hours train ride had left in the internal regions of the visitors. This was done in a manner that left nothing to be desired. The ladies of Strathcona and the members of the sanitarium staff had prepared a delectable repast to which hearty appetites, stimulated to the limit by the cool country breezes, after the debilitating heat of the city and a five hour train ride, did ample justice. Dr. Simpson made a few remarks, at the close of which he formally announced the opening of the institution. Short speeches were made by others who had been prominent in the establishment of the sanatorium and a hearty vote of thanks were extended the people of the municipality of Strathcona. There were those in the crowd who had been opposed to the Ninette site, but as the natural beauties of the surroundings unfolded, they expressed themselves as completely satisfied. The location is indeed ideal. The impression is made upon visitors that the surroundings were made just to fit the building." *(GGG'20-06-29 :48.)*

A medicinal treatment of TB was first developed in France in 1921 and later studies in the US and Britain during the 1940s and 1950s established its effectiveness. By the 1960s, TB patients were commonly treated by the administration of these drugs and the surgical removal of ulcerated lung tissue. In the 1970s, more antitubercular vaccines were developed, and the home treatment of TB by drug therapy made sanatoriums obsolete. The Manitoba Sanatorium at Ninette was closed in 1972. It subsequently provided living accommodations and training to intellectually disabled people. Only some of the buildings were used during this period and many of the others fell into disrepair and were demolished. The remaining buildings were used for a time as a Christian conference centre and retreat, but are currently vacant. *(Trivett'84.)*

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Figure 8.15.1. Above: Pelican Lake tuberculosis sanatorium. Circa 1914. The sprawling building complex making up of the Pelican Lake Sanatorium was designed by well-known Brandon architect W.H. Shillinglaw and built by Brandon contractor William Bell. It grew to become Manitoba's main TB treatment centre. Shillinglaw's plans included, an administration building, a women's pavilion, men's pavilion, nurses' residence, laundry, engine room, workshop and boiler room, gas plant, water reservoir, and ice house. He designed the buildings using the "Shingle Style" popular at the time and in keeping with the style used at sanatoriums being built in Ontario and the US. The intention was to create a comfortable cottage/resort atmosphere for people who would be spending a prolonged period away from home and family. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.15.2. Above: View northwest towards Ninette. The sanatorium site photographed from the east lip of the Pembina River valley, with Pelican Lake, the community of Ninette, and the west side of the valley visible in the middle distance and background. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.15.3. Above: Sleeping pavilions. The residential pavilions featured large breezeways and banks of windows to provide patients with as much sunshine and fresh air as possible. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.15.4. Above: Women's sleeping verandahs. An interior view of one of the centre's sleeping verandahs. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.15.5. Above: Sanatorium dining room. At its peak, staff provided daily meals for several hundred patients at a time. *(A of MB.)*

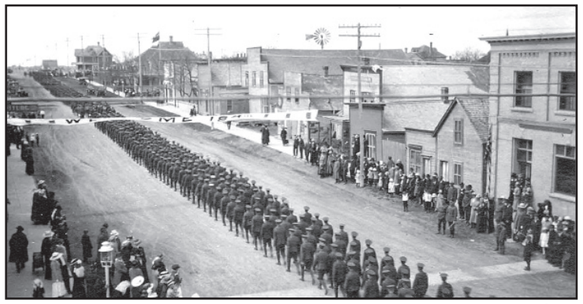

Figure 8.16.1. Above: Mustering the troops - Manitou. Soldiers from the 184th Battalion photographed on Manitou's Main Street during the mustering of the troops prior to embarking to Europe in 1916. *(PMA.)*

Figure 8.16.2. Above: Mustering the troops. The Boissevain contingent of the 222nd (Winnipeg) Battalion photographed at the town train station prior to boarding a special troop train, and the start of a long journey to the battlefields of Europe. Many of the men pictured here never returned home. *(A of MB.)*

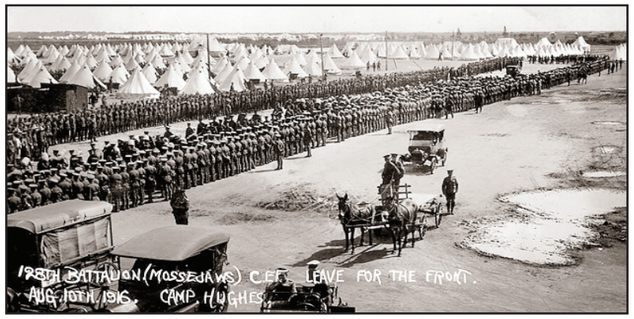

Figure 8.16.3. Above: 128th (Moose Jaw) Battalion. The Canadian Expeditionary Force's 128 Battalion assembled at Camp Hughes on August 10, 1916, near Carberry, as the troops prepare to "*Leave For The Front*." *(A of MB.)*

Figure 8.16.4. Above: "*No Man's Land at front of Canadian Corselette.*" The "War To End All Wars" quickly turned into a deadly stalemated war of attrition, in the water and blood soaked trenches of the western front. The expected short and glorious war for "King and Country" became anything but. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.16.5. Above: Pte Frank Willis of Manitou. Killed by Sniper while going over the top at Lens, leaving a wife and two infant children. *(PMA.)*

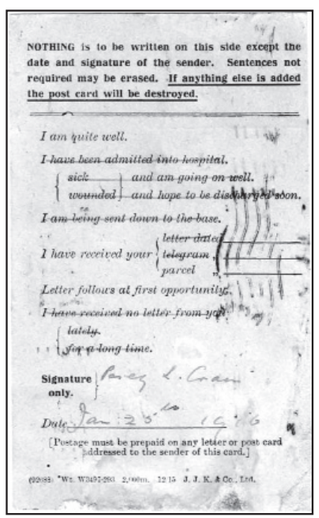

Figure 8.16.6. Above: Field Service Postcard. Prior to major operations, pre-censored postcards were all that was allowed as mail. This card simply reported "I have received your parcel. Letter to follow at first opportunity." and was signed and dated Jan 25, 1916. *(PMA - Connor Coll.)*

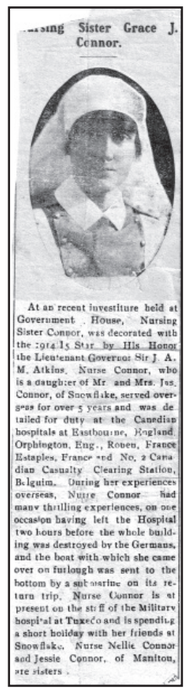

Figure 8.16.7. Right: Nursing Sister Grace Conner of Snowflake. Returned to Snowflake after five years of overseas service. *(PMA - Connor Coll.)*

8.16 THE GREAT WAR, 1914–18, THE WAR TO END ALL WARS

The Great War, which broke out in 1914 was extremely costly to the BTNHR region in terms of manpower and finances, affecting families and municipal governments alike. Municipal Councils were pressured to provide grants to various organizations, such as the Provincial Patriotic Society which provided comforts and assistance to the soldiers at the front. The grants were raised by instituting a 'patriotic levy' on the municipal tax bill, for the duration of the war. The RM of Louise levy raised $50 a month in 1914. In October 1915, the grant was increased to $200 per month, and in July 1916 to $500 per month. Municipal and organization grants were also made to the Red Cross Society and after the war, to the Belgium Relief Fund. The years from 1914 to 1920 were austere and difficult both for the soldiers and for residents of the BTNHR, as it was across the country. *(Gosnell'68 :17.)*

The Canadian's first major battle of the Great War was later seen as one of the most crucial battles in history. At Ypres, April 22, 1915, the Germans used poison gas for the first time in war. As 145 tonnes of chlorine gas drifted over the trenches, the Canadian troops held and stopped the German advance. The casualties here and at the later battle near St. Julien were enormous. Within 48 hours, one of every three Canadians was killed. Some of those who survived left records of the aftermath of these fearful days: "*The room was filled with dying and badly wounded men; trampled straw and dirty dressings lay about in pools of blood. The air, rank with the fumes of gas, was thick with the dust of plying plaster and broken brick, and stifling with the smoke from the burning thatch.*" In April 1917, the Canadians helped turn the tide of battle when they won a major victory at Vimy Ridge. This triumph, too, had its cost — more than ten thousand casualties in six days. The war continued for more than another year, but finally on November 11, 1918 the Armistice was signed and the Canadians took part in the triumphal entry into Mons, in Belgium. *(Geo. Gibson'16.)*

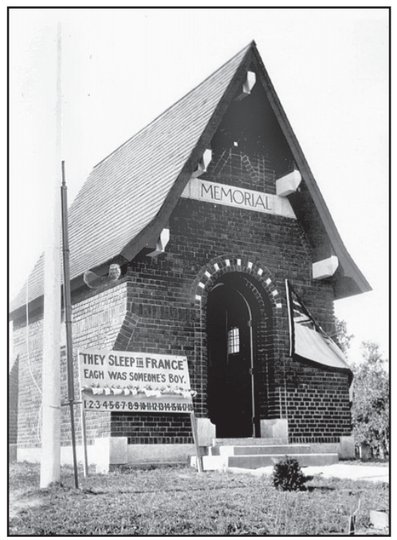

Figure 8.16.8. Above: "*They sleep in France — Each was Someone's Boy.*" The Darlingford Memorial, photographed during its official dedication on July 5, 1921, — perhaps the most notable of many Great War memorials erected in the BTNHR during the early 1920s, - is now a protected heritage site. *(PMA :Conner Coll.)*

- D.A. McKay of Crystal City, is among a few residents of the BTNHR who lived through the Great War years and recorded their thoughts and experiences during those days. "*I can remember as a boy the feeling of uneasiness during the years between 1912 and 1914. First, there was the great slaughter of the Armenians by the Turks, then the continued unrest in the Balkans and finally the outbreak of war on August 4th, 1914 between Germany and Great Britain and her Allies. At first, we felt that it was just a game and that the war would likely be over before our boys would get there. However, as winter after winter began to drop away and as all the young men of age were being called up, it gradually began to dawn on us that this was a terrible catastrophe. We had a lovable old man as station agent in our town, Mr. Hicks, and early in the morning we would sometimes see him coming down the street with a telegram in his hand, which had come in during the night. If he stopped at Mrs. Smith's or Mrs. Jones' door, we would run home in tears to tell our mother that Jimmy Smith or Tommy Jones must have been killed. Added to this was the U Boat sinking of the luxury liner Lusitania in which 1500 people were drowned. I feel that we were mature beyond our years, that we felt humble and forever grateful that we had escaped some of the great sorrow which was so prevalent during those years.*

After the outbreak of the Great War, horses were in great demand both for riding and for heavy draft work. Government men came out to the country to buy horses for the army and the prices went sky high. It was not unusual for a well matched team to bring six hundred dollars. When buying 'riders', the buyers liked to see them running. So, my brother Stuart got the job of riding them. He would usually go up a slight hill, about 3 or 4 yards and then run them real fast back to the buyers. There was a high page wire fence around the pasture where the horses were being kept, and one time when he raced this certain horse down the hill, it just kept going and jumped clean over the four foot fence. No one was more surprised then my brother when he landed – still on the horse's back on the far side of the fence. To which the farmer told the buyer that his horse was a jumper as well as a rider." *(Gosnell'68: 387.)*

- Mrs. M. Garrett, a Snowflake area historian, noted the following about WWI. "*Our young men of Snowflake, as elsewhere, answered the call of duty to their country during World War I. Many enlisted in the 184 Battalion. Four sons of Mr & Mrs George Lane enlisted. Son, Finlay, was killed in action at Vimy Ridge in 1917. All four received the Military medal. Reg Black was killed in action shortly after reaching the front. Mr. and Mrs. Frank Handford's son Lester went overseas with the first contingent when barely of age to enlist. He came through the war unwounded. When Armistice was signed his family believed their worries were over and were looking forward to having him home again. Then the dreaded telegram came. He had been killed in action in the last attack at Mons, where so many lost their lives needlessly. This last drive started seven hours before the* "cease fire" *came through and General Currie had not received the official word until after the* "break through."
(Gosnell'68 :501.)

Darlingford Memorial

Ferris Bolton was one of the first settlers in the Darlingford area, homesteading 33-2-7W in May, 1877. He wasted little time in becoming involved in the growth and development of the district, and held many municipal, school district and judicial positions. From 1917 to 1921, Bolton served as the Member of Parliament for Lisgar. Ferris and Elizabeth Bolton had five children, four boys and a girl. When the Great War broke out, all four sons enlisted. Three of the four sons, Bert, Harry and Elmer, were killed in action in 1917. Corporal Bert Bolton died at age 22 at Vimy Ridge; Corporal Harry died at age 20 at Lens and Private Elmer died at age 18 at Hill 70. The death of their three sons and other boys from Darlingford and district in the Great War so touched Ferris Bolton that he purchased and donated land on which to erect a war memorial in honour of those who died in battle and those who returned home forever changed. The memorial park site was intentionally located near the town school house so that students for generations to come would be reminded of the supreme sacrifice made by earlier students of that same school.

The park and building were designed by Prof. A. A. Stoughton, of the Manitoba University. The building is an excellent example of Gothic architecture and consists of a single room in which is housed a number of war trophies, pictures, and artifacts, and on the walls of which is a table bearing in large gold letters the names of 100 young men who went from the district to do their bit in the great struggle, 18 of whom laid down their lives in defence of home and country. The structure is currently a protected provincial heritage site for its architectural and cultural qualities. Throughout the 1920s, memorials and cenotaphs were erected in most of the BTNHR's larger communities. The Darlingford Memorial is among the most interesting and poignant. *(Kisiow'90.)*

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8.17. THE INFLUENZA PANDEMIC OF 1918–20

The Spanish Influenza had appeared on the battlefields of Europe towards the end of the war, and with thousands of soldiers on both sides too sick to fight, was likely one of the reasons for the armistice, and the ending of hostilities on November 11, 1918. Within weeks, thousands of soldiers returning home brought the flu with them. Since initial symptoms were mild, the soldiers were not isolated and they spread the disease as they travelled across the country. Although the Influenza Pandemic of 1918-20 is thought to have originated in China, and possibly even in the USA, it was called the "Spanish Flu" because it was first officially recognized as a disease in Spain. Wartime censorship kept news of the disease out of the newspapers in most other European countries.

History's most lethal flu to that time, it killed an estimated 20 to 100 million people worldwide. The exact toll is unknown. Out of Canada's population of eight million, 50,000 to 55,000 succumbed to the virus by the time it ran out of steam in 1920 — an enormous death toll in just a few months. In contrast, 60,000 Canadians died during the four years of the Great War. The United States was even harder hit. Between December 1918 and March 1919, 500,000 Americans died of the influenza, or from complications such as pneumonia. The Spanish flu virus was unusual in that it could develop from regular flu symptoms of headache, chills, cough, fever, and muscle ache, into a vicious illness that could kill within twenty-four hours. Oddly, the most vulnerable were 20 to 40 year olds, rather than the flu's usual victims, children and the elderly. The virus made its way even into the remotest communities. A number of villages in northern Quebec and Labrador were almost totally exterminated by the disease.

On Sept. 30, 1918, prior to the end of the war, a train carrying returning soldiers arrived in Winnipeg. Three of the soldiers were showing obvious symptoms of the flu and were taken to an isolated convalescent home. But it was in vain. On October 3, two of the soldiers died, and by October 12, cases of the flu were being reported within the general population. Within days, school and universities were closed and public meetings of over six people were banned. People serving the public were ordered to wear gauze masks in the hope of preventing the spread of the disease. By the end of February 1919, there had been 12,863 reported cases of the flu in Winnipeg alone, of which 824 had succumbed to it. During the winter of 1919, there were echoes of the Middle Ages in Brandon, as men with horses and carts made their way through the city collecting the bodies of whose who had died during the night, to await mass burial in the spring.

- Dr. A.E. McGavin was one of four doctors in Carman in the autumn of 1918 when the pandemic struck. In the rural areas of the BTNHR, some districts were hard hit while others fared quite well, with most of the afflicted recovering. The Carman area was one of the hard hit districts, and within weeks, three doctors were stricken with the flu, leaving him as the only active doctor for the town and surrounding district. His son Percy, later recalled those days. "*Dad worked almost around the clock trying to reach the sick and dying in the isolated farmhouses. In the fall, he drove the rounds by automobile, but during the winter he had to switch to horse and cutter. What perhaps differentiated dad from the other doctors was that he was meticulous about not becoming a carrier of the infection and, when he called upon a patient, would always wear a robe and a gauze mask. He also always carried a bottle of rubbing alcohol with him which he used to disinfect any equipment that came in contact with the patient before coming home. And he never did bring that epidemic home with him.*" *(WFP'20-10-2.)*

- Mrs. Harold Avrill of the Rock Lake district recalled her family's harrowing experience with the Spanish Influenza epidemic. "*The flu hit suddenly and the whole family caught it. Although I was somewhat sick, I was nowhere near as sick as the rest of the family. Father was able to sit up and offer some assistance. The others were all flat out in bed, not able to keep anything they ate down. We got no assistance from the town doctor. He refused to come. The only help that was received was from a bachelor neighbour who did not contract the flu. He went into town to get lemons for us. That was the apparent cure, hot lemon juice. The winter of 1918–19 was terrible, and digging graves through the heavy ice and snow was not possible. The bodies were stored in an empty silo until spring when there was one long funeral procession. The influenza ended as quickly as it began. My one brother who came close to death was never physically strong after that terrible winter of 1918–19.*" *(WFP'20-10-2)*

- *The Glenboro Gazette,* reported on March 20, 1919, "*The flu epidemic has absorbed a maximum proportion in Glenboro and district, and nearly 150 cases have developed since the first outbreak. The spread was very rapid at first, but is now on the decline and abating, although new cases are reported daily. Many of the first flu patients are recovering and convalescent. Very few severe cases have developed, and the malady is of a mild nature if proper care is taken. Only a few pneumonia cases are reported, and in some instances these are recovering. Dale Snyder is the only case reported critical at the time of going to press. His condition has been serious for several days. In some homes, nearly the entire household is down, but little suffering has occurred as all possible assistance has been rendered by neighbours and citizens in general. Nurses from Winnipeg and Brandon are relieving in the homes where the situation is most critical.*" *(GG'19-03-20 :1.)*

- Wilfred Bowler's Spanish Flu memory was published in the Kaleida area local history, "*In the fall of 1918, an epidemic of influenza struck the world and, of course, in our community, schools, churches, and all public gatherings and entertainments were closed. There were only two doctors, Dr. R.W. McCharles and Dr. Davidson for the huge area taking in Manitou, Darlingford, Snowflake, Mowbray and La Rivèrie. These devoted men worked day and night and the only rest they had was on the trips from home to home. The only method of travel was horse and buggy or in winter — cutters. The livery stable in Manitou kept horses ready day and night for the doctors and provided a driver. The hospitals of the day were small and inadequate to serve the demand.*" *(Kaleidoscope'86 :5.)*

- T.C. Boon, who lived in the Goodlands district, recalled: "*Orders came that we were restricted to our own municipalities, church services were cancelled, schools were closed, lodge meetings, dances and concerts were postponed indefinitely. The deaths of one of the Camerons of Waskada, and of our Jenny Poole shook the community considerably. I am told that 90 people died in Morden and I know that the Deloraine undertaker, who served a large territory, didn't see his bed for nights. I used a potent throat gargle three times a day and kept my hands washed with strong carbolic soap, especially before meals, which I made myself.*"

At the time of this writing, in 2021, the COVID-19 influenza pandemic is currently sweeping the world, with infection rates and deaths rapidly approaching that of the 1918–20 Pandemic. The mandatory wearing of masks, business closures, and home isolation is again a daily occurrence. But, as with the Spanish Influenza, community mobilization and individual precautions, and vaccines, are helping check the spread of the disease.

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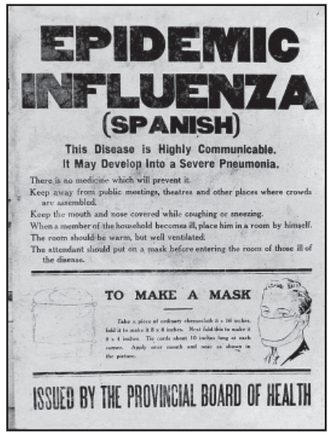


Figure 8.17.1. Above: Face Masks. Poster urging residents to make and wear a mask to help stem the pandemic. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.17.3. Above: Closures. Newspaper boy wearing a mask in front of a closed theatre. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.17.6. Above: Flu Victims. Many victims of the Spanish Flu could not be buried until the ground thawed in the spring. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 8.17.2. Above: Face Masks. A photo of farm workers wearing face masks during the Spanish Influenza. *(L&AC.)*

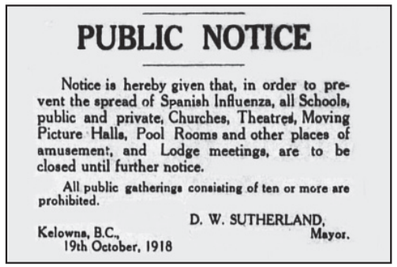


Figure 8.17.4. Above: Closures. A civic notice ordering the closure of businesses, schools and churches, "until further notice." *(flickr.com.)*

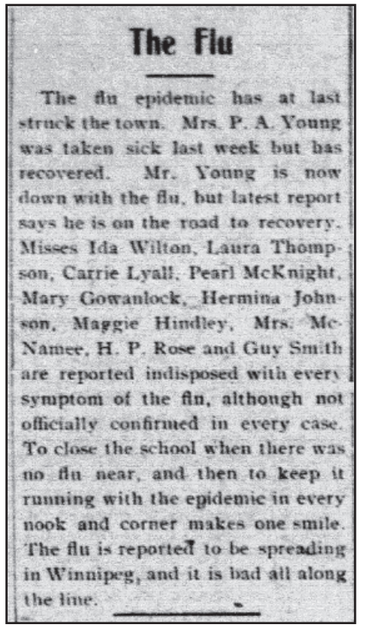


Figure 8.17.5. Above: "*It Is Bad All Along The Line.*" An article from the March 3, 1919 issue of *The Glenboro Gazette* newspaper. *(NewspaperArchives.com.)*

Figure 8.17.7. Above: Isolation Wards. In many cities in Canada, makeshift hospital wards were set up in warehouses, dance halls and sports arenas, such as the unidentified photo above. *(flickr.com.)*

Figure 8.17.8. Above: On Their Own. Some farm families in the BTNHR were without medical assistance of any type. Many children lost a mother or a father, sometimes both. *(L&AC.)*

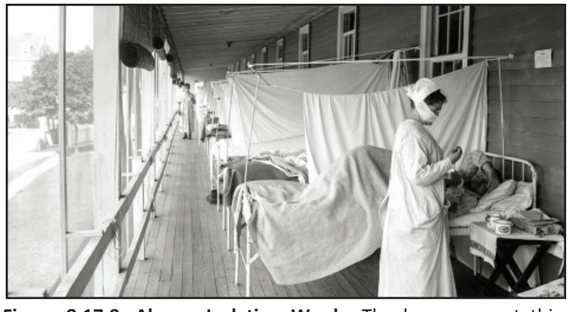


Figure 8.17.9. Above: Isolation Wards. The breezeway at this hospital was used to isolate patients. *(flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.1.1. Above: Thoroughly Modern Millie. The 1920s saw the rise of working girls. Previously, women had few career opportunities, save as domestics, dressmakers and, if they stayed unmarried, school teachers. The wheat boom years provided new opportunities for female employment in Winnipeg and in the larger towns as secretaries, sales clerks, waitresses, telephone operators, gasoline attendants, etc. *(Flickr.com.)*

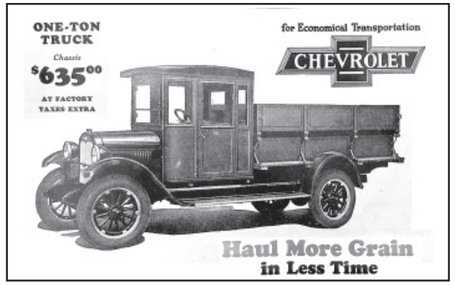


Figure 9.1.2. Above: Truck transport. During the 1920s, municipalities continued to improve and expand the local road networks. At the same time, automobiles and trucks became more reliable, more capable of travelling longer distances and, in the case of trucks, able to haul larger loads. Slowly, the "door-to-door" advantage of truck transport began to cut into the railway's freighting business profits. Trucks during the 1920s, such as the 1927 Chevrolet 1-ton above, were not yet suited to long-haul freighting. *(GGG'27-09-01.)*

Figure 9.1.3. Above: "*Take a Ride at Ed Clark's, Deloraine.*" Copy of a 1939 glass slide advertisement shown during movie nights at the Deloraine theatre. By 1939, the truck "transfer" business was rapidly growing in the BTNHR. *(Deloraine Museum.)*

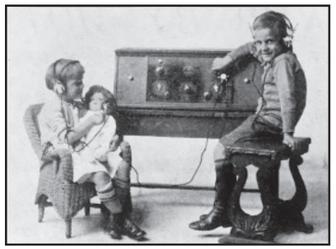
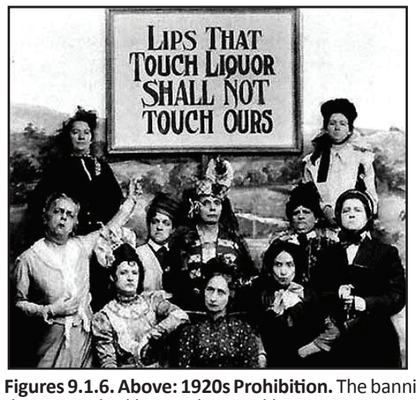


Figure 9.1.4. Above: Radio. During the early 1920s, the first radio stations went on the airs in Manitoba with news, grain, stock market and sports reports, programs of local musical talent and church music on Sundays. US stations could also be picked up, providing a large variety of programming. The price of radios actually fell during the depression and radios were popular items in farmhomes and an important connection to the outside world during those difficult years. Irene Innis recalled, "*I remember, my brother used to sit on the couch at home on Saturday night with a plate of supper on his lap and his earphones on his head and listen to hockey games. The women through the community, they listened to their soap plays.*" *(Innis'90; NWF'25.)*

Figure 9.1.5. Above: First pole erected in Belmont. 1936. Rural electrification continued through the 1920s. By 1928, 33 towns had been connected to the Manitoba Power Commission electrical network. Two years later, the number had risen to 44 communities and, by 1939, 140 communities had received electrical power. *(Manitoba Hydro.)*



Figures 9.1.6. Above: 1920s Prohibition. The banning of alcoholic beverages in the BTNHR had been advocated by temperance groups as early as the 1880s, as shown by this item published in the *Nor'-West Farmer* in 1888, "Reasons for Total Abstinence. *1. Intoxicating liquors are unnecessary as beverages; 2. They tend to weaken the mind; 3. They endanger the character and often ruin it; 4. They enlarge and multiply jails, poor-houses, hospitals and lunatic asylums; 5. The practice of total abstinence would help to fill our schools and places of worship; 6. Personal abstinence gives us much greater influence over drunkards; 7. It tends to fill the treasury of the Christian church, and to raise its spiritual character; 8. Temperance hastens the conversion of the world; 9. It undermines the throne of Satan; 10. It glorifies God.*" *(NWF'88-8 :216.)*

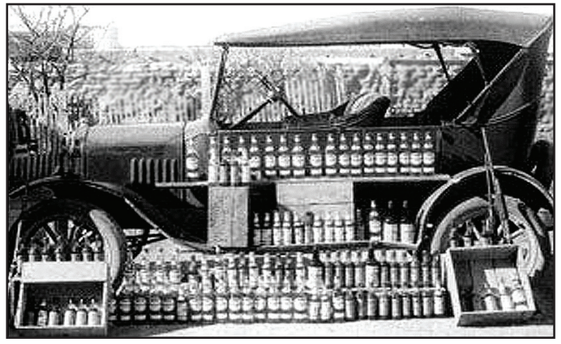


Figure 9.1.7. Above: Bootleggers. An impounded rum-runner's automobile, with over 100 bottles of contraband liquor, and several rifles, carefully laid out for a photograph. Between 1924 and 1933, the BTNHR, and the Turtle Mountain area especially, was a hotbed for whisky smuggling into the US. Policing the activity was difficult. From the pages of the *Winnipeg Tribune,* May 4, 1927: "*Police and customs officers seized 44 cars used for smuggling liquor across the international border.*" *(Flickr.com.)*

9.0 THE MODERN ERA 1920 to 2022 AD

Electrification, Mechanization and Computerization

The Modern Era, covering the past 100 years from approximately 1920 to the present time, was characterized by rapid technological development. This time frame merits a separate discussion. The following overview is meant only to introduce the major themes, primarily to serve as context to the earlier periods discussed. Space does not permit a fuller description as the primary focus of this publication is the 1870 to 1920 period of European agricultural settlement in the BTNHR.

9.1 YEARS OF RETRENCHMENT, 1920-50

The so-called "Roaring Twenties" were not really the swinging good times often portrayed in the cinema, and the phrase, more correctly, refers only to the last few years of the decade. Otherwise, the 1920s were a time of economic stagnation, even recession. The Great War had taken a toll on a whole generation of young men and many women, the sons and daughters of the pioneers, with many thousands dead, injured or traumatized. The world economy was slow to heal and rebuild and the early 1920s, in particular, were a time of low employment and low farm produce prices, as markets and producers adjusted to the slow re-opening of international trade. Although industrialists, such as Ford and Standard Oil, continued to profit, jobs were hard to find; many businesses were just hanging on. In 1922, standard wages for skilled labourers in the BTNHR dropped from a dollar to 85 cents an hour. However, rural electrification continued, and with a growing number of homes being connected to electric power, a variety of electric-powered appliances and devices began to be introduced. Radio, in particular, was transformative and helped connect remote farm households to the rest of the world.

Also during the early 1920s, many communities in the BTNHR erected memorial cenotaphs commemorating the sacrifice and service of those who participated in the Great War. The Darlingford memorial and park, erected in 1921, was particularly well-designed and is now a protected provincial heritage site. Figure 8.16.8. The concept of an International Peace Garden, straddling the Canada-US border, was also promoted during this time of reflection. A site on Turtle Mountain was eventually chosen for the project. The park was completed in 1932 and dedicated with a huge opening ceremony, in hopes that the Great War would indeed be "the war to end all wars." The park's spectacular natural setting, architecture and gardens have made the International Peace Garden a major tourist attraction and its popularity continues today.

The latter 1920s saw a boom in the moneylending business. Banks advertised easy loans, secured by collateral — preferably property. The banks were eagerly joined by other lending institutions, as well as lawyers and moneyed individuals, all looking for borrowers. Many farm owners saw this as an opportunity to obtain capital to buy new farm equipment or automobiles, or build new houses, barns and farm buildings. More than a few would live to regret these decisions.

Prohibition

A major event that occurred during the Great War years and its immediate aftermath was Prohibition, during which the sale and possession of alcoholic spirits were banned in Canada and the US. Alcohol abstinence had been advocated by temperance groups for decades. In Canada, prohibition lasted from 1916 to 1924. While support for prohibition in Manitoba was relatively short-lived, in the US it lasted from 1920 until 1933. For the nine years that liquor sales were strictly regulated, but legal, in Canada, but prohibited in the US, "rum-running" across the border became a significant problem for the border authorities and police on both sides of the international border. Turtle Mountain, with its dense forest cover, was a hotbed of liquor smuggling. Local entrepreneurs made good money by distilling their own "moonshine", or purchasing spirits legally, and selling it on the black market, with most of it destined for the gangster-controlled bars of Chicago and New York. The main road into the US was the so-called "Dunseith Trail" that connected Boissevain and Dunseith, N.D. though, at the time, it was little more than a bush trail. Legitimate cross border traffic often had booze hidden in loads of grain and baled hay. Serious smuggling was done using packhorses. The horses would be trained to follow a lead horse without the use of reins or halter and would reverse direction and run homeward at a signal from the rum-runner riding the lead horse if he were about to be intercepted by the authorities. Without the damning evidence, the guilt of the smuggler could not be proven. The most colourful and daring method of liquor smuggling was by automobile. Figure 9.1.7.

An automobile fully loaded with whisky could be worth as much as $10,000 — a risk well worth taking for some. Sedans with six cylinder motors, such as the Hudson "Super Six", were a favourite among the smugglers, as they had big, durable tires and a high clearance, perfect for gaining traction on muddy roads or slippery bush trails. Such rum-running vehicles, often referred to as "whisky-sixes", could also outrun most any RCMP vehicle. Local smuggling operations became so well organized that their successes became an embarrassment to the authorities. There were also stories of police and customs officers being involved in some of the operations. People did get caught; however, the punishment was often no more than six months of incarceration. The colourful and thrilling rum-running days in the BTNHR came to an abrupt end when the US lifted the prohibition on alcohol sales in 1933. *(TM-SPHA'09 :35.)*

Roads and Transportation Advances

Roads, or rather the lack of them, were a perennial issue for municipal councils in the BTNHR. The system of statute labour did not always work well and there were constant complaints that roads in one municipal ward were neglected in favour of those in another ward. The numerous lakes, streams, ponds and sloughs in the BTNHR were a big hindrance to road builders. It required engineering skill, labour and money to construct roads and bridges, especially in the hills and valleys of the central districts of the BTNHR. Despite the sputtering economy during the 1920s, the Manitoba government expanded the "Good Roads Program", which partnered with local municipalities to build all-season "Provincial Trunk Highway" (PTH) roads connecting major communities, as well as local "market roads" connecting individual farmyards with those highways. By-laws were passed permitting road diversions onto private property in the areas where the original road allowance would not allow travel due to swampy areas or steep slopes. This period also saw many bridges built and, towards the end of the 1920s, PTH #3 and PTH #10 were completed along with many miles of graded market roads. *(Gosnell'68 :18.)*

As the road network improved, trucks and automobiles began to replace horses for everyday transportation during the dry summer and autumn months. Winter travel still necessitated use of horse-drawn sleighs and cutters as roadway snow-plows were uncommon. The rapid adoption of a motor-vehicle based transportation economy prompted the growth of related new services such as gas stations, auto repair shops and dealerships; however, it also detrimentally affected business at the local blacksmith — once a common and critically important farm service. Similarly, commercial salesmen and everyday local travellers, who previously travelled by railway and horse-drawn buggy, could now use automobiles, making them much more flexibly mobile. Motor vehicles offered the convenience of door-to-door transport. This trend led to a slow, continuous decline in demand for hotel rooms as well as in rail passenger traffic. By the mid-1920s, stores in many communities began changing hands, even closing, due to a sustained slowdown in business. Many farmers, who mortgaged their farms and took advantage of low interest rates to build larger homes, barns and ancillary structures, found it increasingly difficult to keep up with payments. Farms began to fail and farmers were forced to sell off. As the twenties rolled on, times became difficult. Despite the tenuous economic times, recreational pursuits remained popular in the BTNHR; however, tennis, cricket, squash and lacrosse declined in popularity, as ice hockey, curling and baseball rapidly grew in popularity. During the 1920s, many communities in the BTNHR built indoor curling rinks and baseball parks. Baseball leagues and annual tournaments became extremely popular at this time.

Farm Power and Tillage Equipment, 1920-50

The adoption of small gas tractors, beginning in the 1920s, revolutionized crop production methods in the BTNHR as it did across the continent. The Ford Motor Company was among the first to manufacture small farm tractors during the Great War and, beginning in the late teens and early 1920s, many smaller gas, kerosene and distillate tractors began to be manufactured by US companies including International Harvester, John Deere and Allis-Chalmers. During the early 1930s, the production of the Fordson was taken over by the Ferguson Company in England and the tractor became known as the Ford-Ferguson tractor. Small steel-wheeled tractors of this type became commonplace across the BTNHR from the 1920s to the early 1950s. Virtually every farm owner purchased one, sooner or later. Other available makes included McCormick, Massey-Harris, Rumely, Twin-City, Farmall, Oliver, Minneapolis-Moline and J.I. Case, (which was late to enter the small gas-tractor market). Within a few years, the three-point hitch was introduced and was an instant hit with farmers. The 1920s saw the introduction of tracked caterpillar tractors. Figure 9.1.8. Though slow to be adopted by farmers, because of their immense power and maneuverability, caterpillar tractors were quickly adopted by municipalities for road building and by custom owner-operators for land clearing purposes. The Pembina Threshermen's Museum, near Morden, holds an annual Heritage Day fair, one of the highlights being a large parade of restored vintage tractors, including steamers, large distillate tractors, and early models of small gas tractors. Figure 9.1.18.

Despite the advantages and growing affordability of small gas tractors, many farmers in the BTNHR were hesitant to replace their work horses with tractors for field cultivation purposes. During the 1920s and 1930s, farm magazines frequently published articles on the subject of tractors versus work horses, offering detailed expense breakdowns and lengthy arguments pro and con. It was often claimed that the only way the tractor companies were finally able to win the horses versus tractor debate was for them to buy up all the implement manufacturers and stop producing lines of horse-drawn equipment. The debate was also prolonged by the fact that horse and sled were still the primary mode of winter transportation throughout the BTNHR. This meant that horses were still required on most farms, so keeping a few work horses for field cultivation use was not a huge extra expense. Once the provincial and municipal road networks began to grow and year-round motor vehicle transportation was increasingly possible, the number of work and road horses steadily declined. By the late 1940s, it became an increasingly rare sight to see horses working in the field or hitched to a buggy or wagon, anywhere in the BTNHR, other than for nostalgic reasons.

- Dave Cuvelier, a Belgian farmer from the Deloraine district provided an interesting description of the changes in farm tillage equipment during his lifetime. He noted, "*Cultivators were first introduced during the early 1920s, but the first types had the shanks too close together. With five inch shovels, you couldn't pull that cultivator through a stubble field, no matter how clean it was. Field disc implements were introduced around 1927. International had a good disc. In 1928, my father bought a new tractor and a 14 foot disc and we double disced our fields instead of using a plow, but they were not really very satisfactory either. The discs were too small and light and didn't go deep enough. Then, in 1937, we brought a used one-way disc with big 26 inch blades and it could do the work of any* (moldboard) *plow. A neighbour, Jim King, together with his brother, had a six foot disc-plow. It was designed for a tractor hitch, but they attached eight horses to pull it. They owned a cross-motor Case tractor, at the time, but they didn't believe in using the tractor for field work and used it for threshing and to crush their own grain for livestock feed — but that's all.*" *(Dave Cuvelier'88-12-11.)*

During the 1930s, use of the disc-plow or "one-way" (so named as you could not easily back up with it) and the tandem-disc became wider and improved with mounted wheels and improved lifters. During this time, cultivators of many shapes and sizes were introduced, leading to the "deep-tiller" style cultivator, which eventually completely replaced the moldboard plow for post-harvest tillage purposes. Despite drought conditions and crop diseases in western districts of the BTNHR during the 1930s, or likely because of it, Mennonite and Anglo farmers on the Red River flats began to diversify the types of crops grown, including vegetable crops, and row-crop equipment began to be purchased. *(One-Six :48.)*

In addition to new types of tillage equipment, harvesting equipment manufacturers began to introduce new lines of machinery specifically designed for the new farm power source — the small gas tractor. Among the first were smaller, lighter and less expensive threshing machines made of tin and steel, which quickly became popular as they required much smaller crews than the old steamer-powered threshers. Owning their own thresher, powered by their own tractor, allowed farmers to harvest when the crop was ready and not wait for the custom threshing crew to arrive. Binders, during the twenties, became wider and more efficient. In 1925, the tractor "power take off" (PTO) was introduced, allowing power from the motor to be transmitted to binder or mower without the need of keeping the tractor in motion. Soon, all new binders, designed for tractors, were powered by PTOs and heavy drive-wheels were eliminated from reaping and mowing equipment. Another major innovation during the 1920s was the "combined reaper-harvester" that, eventually, would completely transform traditional harvesting operations. The "combined harvester" first appeared on the Canadian Prairies during the early 1920s. As with most tillage equipment at the time, the first models were powered by one or

Figure 9.1.8. Above: Caterpillars. Introduced during the early 1920s, tracked "caterpillar" tractors were powerful and, with their two-handled clutch steering mechanism, quite maneuverable and were quick to replace oxen and steam tractors for land breaking and road construction purposes. The above image of municipally-owned road-building equipment working in the Pembina Crossing area, was photographed by local resident Ida Handford. *(PMA - Handford Coll.)*

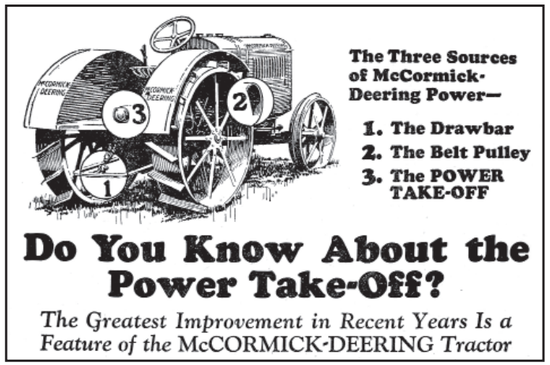


Figure 9.1.9. Above: 1920s Farm implements. A 1925 McCormick-Deering magazine advertisement, touting the new PTO feature, which transferred power, from the tractor to the implement being drawn, via a driveshaft.

Figure 9.1.10. Right: 1920s Farm implements. A 1925 advertisement — promoting John Deere disc plows. *(GGG'25-04.)*

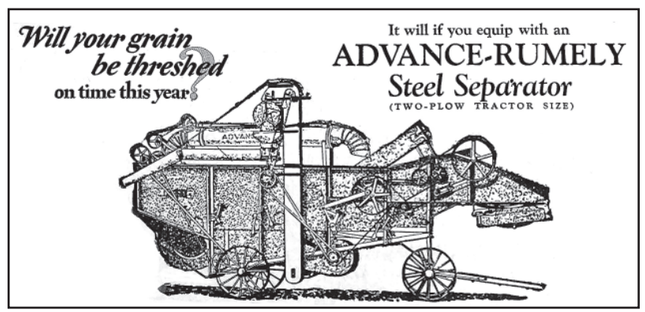
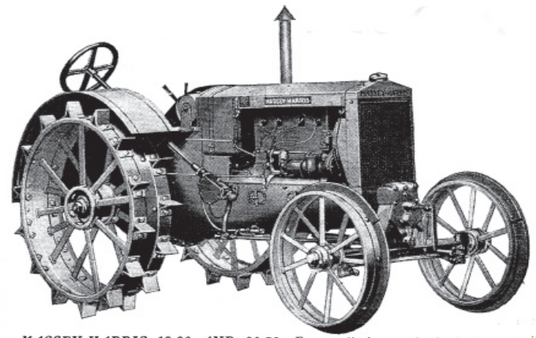
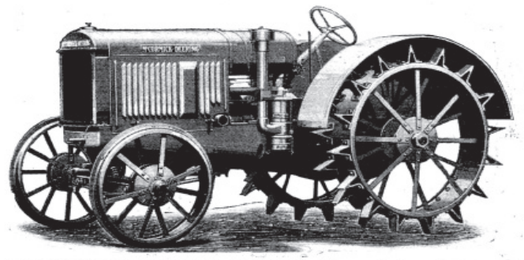


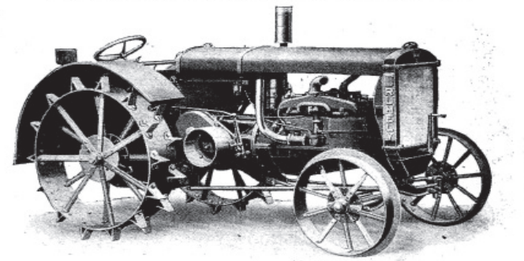
Figure 9.1.11. Above: 1920s Farm implements. A 1925 magazine advertisement promoting Advance-Rumely "two-plow tractor" size steel separators, which were lighter and less expensive than earlier models. *(GGG'25-07.)*



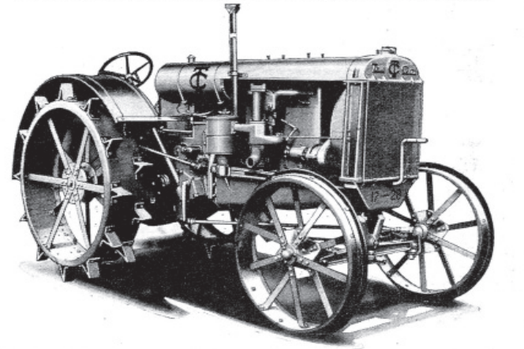
MASSEY-HARRIS 12-20 AND 20-30—Four cylinders; valve-in-head motor; three-plate clutch; gear pump and splash lubrication; two speedr forward, one reverse; high tension magneto; oil tight and dust-proof; Timken roller bearings.



McCORMICK-DEERING 10-20 AND 15-30—Four cylinders; ball bearing crankshaft; replaceable cylinders; adjustable drawbar; air and fuel cleaners; oil filter; circulating-splash type lubrication; single plate clutch; high tension magneto; three speeds forward, one reverse; 10-20 pulls two plows, 15-30 four plows.



RUMELY "SIX" GASOLINE TRACTOR—Six cylinders; L-head; full pressure lubrication; tubular radiator pump circulation cooling; disc type clutch; demountable belt pulley; gears run in oil bath, entirely closed from dust; air cleaner; oil filtration; six speeds forward, up to 4.75 m.p.h.; two reverse; foot brake on transmission.



TWIN CITY 17-28—Four cylinders; overhead valves; full pressure lubrication; two air cleaners; twin disc dry plate clutch; gears run in oil in dust proof case; brake enclosed in transmission; pump circulation cooling system; floating type drawbar; Timken roller bearings.

Figure 9.1.12. Above: 1931 tractors models. Tractor sales reflected economic conditions in 1920s rural Manitoba. Sales, which had been high during the last years of the Great War, dropped steadily during the postwar adjustment years, then rose rapidly as easy credit fueled sales. In 1921, 3671 new tractors were purchased in Manitoba; in 1924 it had dropped to only 465, but by 1928, had rebounded to 2209. *(NWF'31 :35.)*

Figure 9.1.13. Above: Cultivators. Titan 10-20 tractor pulling an eight foot cultivator. Cultivators were first introduced during the 1930s. Both spring-tooth and stiff-tooth cultivators were made for horses or tractors with hand or power lift. *(Brown'74 :9.)*

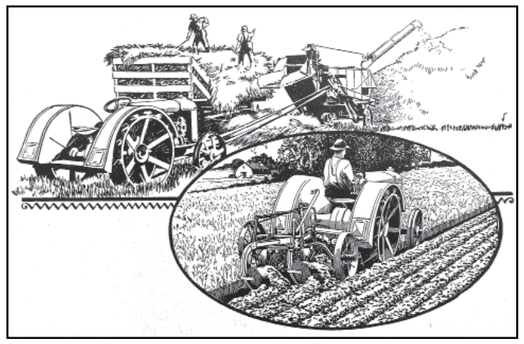


Figure 9.1.15. Above: Farm tractors. The new "two-plow" farm tractor, with engines ranging from 10 to 30 horsepower, slowly but surely grew in popularity for cultivation and harvesting purposes throughout the 1920s. *(GGG'25-04-4.)*

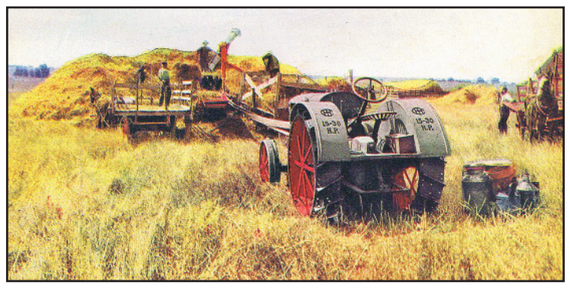


Figure 9.1.14. Above: Disc-harrows. It was during the early 1920s that the concept of summer fallowing fields began to be adopted by BTNHR farmers to help restore soil fertility that were being depleted from constant cropping. Cultivators and disc-harrows were commonly used for summer fallow work. Work horses were still popular despite the growing affordability of tractors during this period. *(NWF'26-08-26.)*

Figure 9.1.16. Above: Combined reaper-harvesters. The first combined reaper-harvester in the Red River valley was purchased in 1928 by Ed Vanstone of Rosebank, pictured above. Despite the growing popularity of combines, the use of binders, stooks and threshing machines on harvest fields continued until after World War II. *(U of BDN; Brown'74 :77.)*

Figure 9.1.17. Left: Farm tractors. Farm magazine illustration showing an International Harvester 15–30 HP tractor powering a threshing machine. Small steel-wheeled distillate and gasoline tractors became increasingly popular during the later 1920s. These small, affordable tractors were capable of powering the new lighter tin and steel threshing machines being manufactured specifically for two-plow size tractors. This efficient combination required small crews and continued to be popular well into the 1950s, despite the growing popularity and affordability of the combined-harvester. *(NWF'23-10-10; GGG'25-05-05.)*

Figure 9.1.18. Above: Pembina Threshermen's Museum. A photo of the parade of tractors and steam engines, a highlight of its annual "Reunion Days" weekend. The 54th anniversary event occurred on September 2–3, 2022. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.1.19. Above: On parade. Sixteen year old Ammika Reimer at the controls of the family's restored Case steamer during the 2022 parade, closing in on 100 hours and earning her steam-licence. *(EdLed.)*

two large metal traction drive-wheels; however, fairly soon, motor-driven models were being built and experimented with. After 1925, many used the new PTO innovation to power combines pulled by tractors.

The early types of combined reaper-threshers could cut a swath of 12 to 16 ft. in width, and cover an area of 25 to 40 acres a day; however, the necessity of having the crop stand until virtually the entire crop was ripe with dry hard kernels was a real drawback with the first combines. Too many unripe "green" kernels would cause the grain to heat and spoil while in storage so, at first, the possibility that the elevator agents would refuse combine-harvested grain was real. On the other hand, if the crop was left standing too long, the windy conditions of late autumn weather could easily cause the crop to "shell" and any kernels falling to the ground were lost income. To combat this, the inventors of the combine soon developed the "windrow harvester" or "swather" that laid down a uniform swath of cut stalks atop the stubble to allow it to properly dry before being picked up by a combine. The first swathers were quite crude, but improvements came quickly. Early adopters soon found that cutting the crop higher than a binder cut and going diagonal or across the seed drill rows helped to keep the swath above the ground. Many existing 10 foot binders were eventually converted into swathers. Self-propelled swathers were introduced in the early 1960s, soon completely replacing binders and early pull-type swathers. *(NWF'31-06-20 :22.)*

- George Swales purchased one of the first known reaper-threshers in the BTNHR. A 1926 Nor'-West Farmer magazine article reported on initial use, which was observed by many curious onlookers. The article read, in part: "*Last fall, we saw a McCormick-Deering combined harvester and thresher at work on the farm of George Swales, near Rosebank, Man. He was cutting a 200 acre field of Marquis wheat with a 12-foot cut harvester, cutting and threshing at the rate of over 120 bushels per hour and making an excellent job. The wheat was discharged from the thresher into a wagon grain tank running alongside the machine, attached to same by a simple hitch. As fast as one wagon box was filled it was detached and another run in position, and the full load was on the way to the elevator with less than five minutes delay. The quality of the threshing was equal to the best results with any separator. The wheat was dead ripe, and the kernels were as hard as if the crop had been left in the stook before threshing.*" Figure 9.1.16. *(NWF'31-06-20 :22.)*

As combined reaper-harvesters were slowly being adopted by the farmers of the BTNHR, the once-familiar straw stacks, spewed out by threshing machines and dotting the entire countryside, began to disappear. The traditional sights and sounds of harvest time were changing. The combined reaper-harvester required fewer workers than the traditional sheaf and separator method and constant improvements were made by manufacturers and farm mechanics. However, the Great Depression, during the 1930s, followed by World War II, during the 1940s, delayed widespread adoption. It was not until the early 1950s that threshing machines stopped being used in favour of combines; first pull-type, followed by self-propelled models. Despite efficiency improvements, the switch from threshers to combines created a growing weed problem, as weed seeds were now being widely scattered across the fields rather than being restricted to one small location with the stationary thresher method. This would lead, eventually, to the introduction of chemical herbicides to control weeds. The constant cropping also depleted the natural fertility of the Region's soils. Although it was found that resting the land by summer-fallowing helped rebuild soil moisture, it did not restore fertility and, eventually, chemical fertilizers were introduced to boost declining crop yields.

Crop Diseases, 1925-35

- Alice Hurt wrote a vivid account of her first experience seeing crop "rust", in an unpublished memoir preserved at the Pembina Manitou Archives. Rust, root-rot and other diseases began to infect crops in southern Manitoba during the mid-1920s and got progressively worse and widespread over the next five years. Alice wrote, "*I received a letter from a friend inviting me to spend my holidays with them on the farm. When I got off the bus at Boissevain, I saw at once something was wrong. I asked what was the matter; she replied with one word 'rust.' When we drove past a field where her husband was cutting a beautiful thick tall crop of wheat, and where he had cut looked as though a giant brush had swept across the field with red paint. The dust rising from this was so devastating the horses were coughing and tossing their heads, as they traversed the fields. Their driver's eyes were running, as he was coughing, too. It was the tragic result of a soft but heavy overnight rain shower. There was no breeze at all and the sun rose to a humid atmosphere which hung still and heavy all day. Three days later, the evidence of the damage was visible. Many farmers suffered the same heart-breaking experience and lost their whole crops. The scars of those bad rust years took a long time to heal. Some gave up grain growing and took to cattle or pigs, or both, instead.*" *(PMA :Hurt'55.)*

The Great Depression, 1929-39

The crop diseases of the late 1920s were harbingers of hard times to come. The golden age of the wheat economy in the BTNHR, the Canadian west and the entire western world ended suddenly on "Black Friday", October 29, 1929, when the US stock market crashed. The impact quickly spread across the western world and signaled the onset of the Great Depression — The Dirty Thirties! Tough Times! For the next 10 years, there were very difficult times for everyone, from stock-holders to store keepers to farmers. In western Canada, poor crops, low prices, and a general lack of paying work resulted in sustained economic decline. Farm families sold out or, unable to make a living, abandoned their land, or lost it to tax sale, and moved away. Businesses of all types began to close. Money became very scarce. Then, in 1932, it got even worse. Drought and locusts struck the entire Great Plains Region for several years in a row. Most of the farmers who chose to ride out the depression in the stricken areas were now forced into foreclosure. Mining and lumbering camps of the north became the only opportunities for young men to earn money.

The effects of the drought were most acutely felt in the southwest corner of the province; however, the economic difficulties affected all residents of southern Manitoba. In 1931, milk cows sold for a mere $30 a head. A phone call cost five cents, but even at that price, many people gave up the telephone. In 1935, the Region experienced good spring rains but, with high heat and humidity, the wheat crop again rusted and rotted. The next year, 1936, saw a very hot, dry summer, prompting the establishment of federal Drought Relief and Prairie Farm Rehabilitation (PFRA) programs, which cancelled debt for feed and wrote off many advances to the drought areas. The spring rains in 1937 led to a somewhat improved harvest. In 1938, there were good crops and good prices in most districts of the BTNHR. Jobs, especially truck transport jobs, were becoming plentiful. It appeared to many, who endured the hard times of the 1930s, that life was finally returning to normal and much better times lay ahead.

- Alice Hurt, in her 1955 memoir, related vivid memories of the Great Depression, "*I travelled to Boissevain, again, during the Dirty Thirties. On the bus going out, I was shocked by the look of the countryside. It had always been so lush and green, a vast expanse of grain fields, pasture and rolling prairie. Now, it was all brown, the ditches full to the top with brown top soil.*

Fences were piled to the top of the post with soil caught in piles of tumble weed. Not a blade of green showed anywhere, nor were there leaves on the trees and bushes. A friend met me at the bus depot, the wind was blowing from the west and the air and sky were thick with dust. We could not tell where the road was and often had to stop and wait for a gust to pass because it was impossible to see ahead. The car was stopped entirely in places by blown soil, and we would have to back up and take a run at it to get through. When we reached our destination, we were black-faced and red-eyed. No one could use soap to wash hands or face because all water must go to the animals and poultry to drink. Small wonder some people became mentally ill, while others left everything and struck out for anywhere there might be green grass and trees with green leaves. In the Turtle Mountain area where the cattle had been famous for beef, milk and butter fat production, the dreadful sight of animals like skeletons, walking wild eyed and often tongue lolling out, last winter's dung still clinging to their withered flanks, sickened me to the point of vomiting." *(PMA :Hurt'55.)*

- Adrienne Vandenberghe came to Deloraine with her husband from Zwevezele, Belgium in 1925, "*We came to Canada to make a better living, as you couldn't make a living in Belgium or France at the time. We first worked for a year with a friend, August Janssens, and then in 1926 started our own farm, in the Dand district. And then the Dirty 30s came. In 1934, we had no crop at all. The grasshoppers came and ate all the crops in the region. We had no food for the cattle, and had to feed them Russian thistles. About six horses died in one winter. And I don't know how many cows died from having no feed for them.*" *(Mazur'81 :231.)*

- George Manshreck described similar experiences living in the Hartney area during the Great Depression "*Our area was hit very hard by the depression, both as a drought and poor prices. Our prices, you can hardly imagine this, but feed barley at the elevator was 6 cents a bushel; wheat was around 40 cents. Cattle were terribly cheap. My dad shipped 8 head of cattle into Winnipeg in 1934. They were 8 steers; two years old and he got $19.11 clear. The trucker got $42 for hauling them down. Then there was the grasshoppers. I remember one hot summer's day, standing in the shade of the house and looking up and you could see thick clouds of grasshoppers flying overhead on a strong west wind. Our methods of poisoning were so poor. We spread grasshopper poison by hand. You would go to town and they would mix up arsenic and sawdust at a building there, and he would give you so many bags per farmer. You would drive the fence lines and throw out handfuls of this poison bait to kill the grasshoppers, but it had no effect. It killed a few, but they were flying in on the wind from further west, where it was dryer and they had more hoppers. We had a lot of dust storms, too. You would see a black cloud coming up in the west and you would think 'Oh, maybe we'll get some rain.' All it would be was dirt and wind; dirt and wind. On top of that, the ground got so hard that you couldn't do any land work because it was so hard and dry and would blow away. So we didn't do much work on the land. I remember the dust came in so bad around the windows, we would take rags and stuff them around the windows so the dust wouldn't get in the house.*" Figure 9.1.22.

"*Yea, things were very tough back home. For instance, we went all summer without shoes because we couldn't afford shoes. We didn't have too many clothes, either. Mother washed every night and we wore practically the same clothes every day to school. We had to go on relief because we didn't have enough food. Relief payments were given out by the local council, $5.00 a month for groceries. Folks sold wood in order to make a few dollars; cut wood in the bush and sold it for $2.00 a load of poles. A lot of people went back to driving horses and buggy. The Model-T Ford didn't use much gas, but nobody had money to buy gas to keep the car running. The depression hit the horses especially severe, because with the grass being so short, they ate a lot of dirt with the grass and it affected their stomachs. There was a terrible lot of sickness just because of dry feed and not enough bulk. To keep them surviving, a lot of the farmers just worked their horses for only half a day, then turn them out to pasture so they could try and find some food. And then we also put up loads and loads of Russian thistles for the cattle to eat. Russian thistles is terribly poor feed to feed cows because it acts like a laxative. We would go out with a rake, rake them into rows and piles, and then we'd come along with the wagon and hayrack and Dad would throw the bundle up to you. You needed to tramp them down as you built up the load, and the Russian thistles would scratch your legs with every stomp. I detested that the most, building those loads of Russian thistles and then throwing them off into a stack after getting home. I just detested doing that.*" Figure 9.1.23. *(Manshreck'90.)*

Government Relief

Municipal councils in the BTNHR struggled with the immense fiscal difficulties brought on by the Great Depression. Relief issues were the main item of business for most civic and municipal governments from 1930 through to 1937. Poor crops, grasshoppers and low prices for grain and cattle forced many farmers into bankruptcy, as well as many businessmen dependant on agriculture. As a result, tax revenues were poor and municipalities were faced with the necessity of taking over many farms and properties for tax arrears. The number of foreclosures in the RM of Pipestone provides a good illustration of the level of financial distress experienced during the 1930s. In 1932, the RM offered 185 parcels in its tax sale of properties. In 1937, despite improving conditions, there were 148 properties on the tax sale list and, in 1939, the number was still over 100 properties. Adding to these difficulties was the provision of "Relief" in the form of seed and feed for those farmers who stayed on. Many of these residents were without means of any sort other than government relief. In 1932, the municipality borrowed $40,000 to provide seed and feed, taking promissory notes from the farmers. Seed oats were purchased from A.E. McKenzie of Brandon at 45½ cents per bushel. Feed oats, provided to give horses enough strength to pull implements, were purchased at a cost of 33 cents a bushel. In 1933, the by-law was rescinded as the RM essentially had no income for continuing purchases of relief seed and feed. In 1937, with federal assistance, the Province cancelled relief loans to municipalities, which in turn cancelled seed and relief notes owed to the municipality by its farmers. It is worth noting that not all districts in the BTNHR were equally hard hit during the Great Depression. In 1933, the farmers of the RM of Rhineland collected and donated a railway carload of feed grain to be dispersed to the needy farmers in the RM of Louise. *(Gosnell'68 :19.)*

- Irene Innes was interviewed by student Jason Gunson, on May 6, 1990. Following were some of her recollections about the Great Depression. "*There wasn't much money. We learned to do without money. It was a different type of life. We lived in a rented house for about $8.00 or $10.00 a month. It didn't have many facilities, no running water or nothing like that. We melted snow or ice. We didn't have electricity to pay for; and we didn't pay a high rent. We just got along the best way we knew how. There was no welfare then, either. If you didn't have, you didn't have. We just made out the best way we could. One of the things that happened at that time was that telephones were taken out of people's homes. Ours was taken out simply because we couldn't afford to pay the bills. There was just the odd one scattered throughout the community and that's where you went to use the phone if you had to. You missed out on lots of things, like cultural things and that. You just couldn't afford to go.*" *(PMA.)*

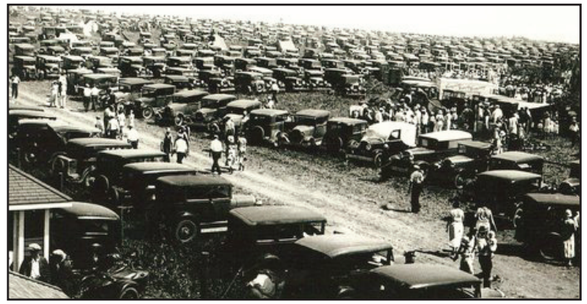


Figure 9.1.20. Above: International Peace Garden. July 14th, 1932 official opening. A view of parked automobiles stretching into the distance. *(peacegarden.com.)*

Figure 9.1.21. Above. "*Dedication, International Peace Garden, July 14th 1932.*" A view of part of the 50,000+ crowd that gathered at the Peace Garden from both sides of the border. *(peacegarden.com.)*

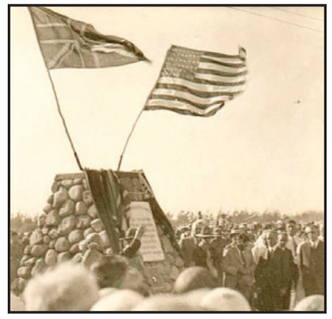


Figure 9.1.22. Left: Cairn dedication. "*International Peace Garden, Dunseith, North Dakota (USA) and Boissevain, Manitoba (Canada). To God in His Glory we two nations dedicate this garden and pledge to ourselves that as long as men live we will not take up arms against one another.*" *(peacegarden.com)*

Figure 9.1.23. Right: Floral gardens. The International Peace Garden, among other attractions, possesses over 60,000 plantings from across the globe, as well as many historically significant timber and stone park structures. *(peacegarden.com.)*

Figure 9.1.24. Above: Dust bowl. The western part of the BTNHR suffered major soil erosion during the Great Depression. The Melita-Pierson district is a former glacial Lake Souris delta and, therefore, possesses light sandy soils. Once the covering vegetation died and withered away, the area lost much of its top soil as a result of frequent dust storms that occurred during the early 1930s. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.1.25. Above: Crop failures. A photograph showing Canada thistle choking land that once produced bountiful wheat crops. Thistle was harvested and fed to cattle, in some districts, as there was no grass growing on the land with which to feed the animals. Many farm animals starved to death during the drought and locust years of the mid 1930s. *(A of MB.)*

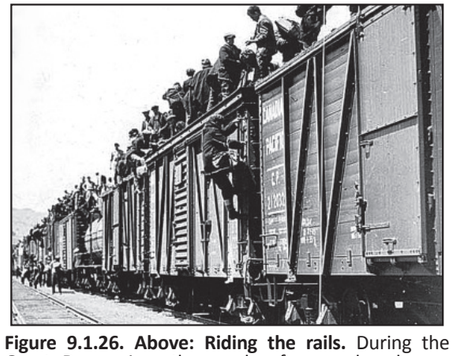


Figure 9.1.26. Above: Riding the rails. During the Great Depression, thousands of unemployed men hitched rides on freight trains crossing the country looking for any type of work that could be found. *(NFB.)*

Figure 9.1.27. Above: Farm auction sales. Photograph of a farm auction in the Elva area, mid-1930s. While the western districts of the BTNHR suffered the most in terms of crop losses and population decline, farmers in the eastern districts, such as the RM of Rhineland, were impacted by the rock bottom prices and job losses throughout the agricultural service industry. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

Figure 9.1.28. Above: World War II. 1939-45. Canadian recruits parading under the elm trees along Broadway in Winnipeg. *(Brenda Bond.)*

Figure 9.1.29. Above: Juno Beach, June 7, 1944. The D-Day Normandy landings involved over 14,000 Canadian 3rd Division soldiers. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.1.30. Above: Canadian casualties, 1939-45. Over 40,000 Canadian men and women lost their lives during WWII. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.1.31. Above: The Home Front. Women played a major role in the war effort on the home front, taking on many diverse jobs, including fabricating airplanes and even piloting new aircraft from Canada to England. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.1.32. Above: Utrecht, Holland. June 6, 1945. Canadian soldiers on parade in Utrecht after the city's liberation days earlier. *(canadahistory.ca.)*

Figure 9.1.33. Above: "*Back to Civvy Street.*" Jobs were initially hard to find for returning servicemen as the economy adjusted to peacetime production. Similarly, many former female home-front workers, resented being sent "back to the kitchen." (*canadahistory.ca.)*

Figure 9.1.34. Above: *"Rhineland Consumers Co-operative Limited."* Altona. Established in 1931, as with other similar community co-ops, it sold items such as gas, oil, grease and binder twine. In 1942, a machine shop service was added. Co-ops were established during the Great Depression and, by 1946, there were 665 co-operative societies in Manitoba, the most common type being stores, pool elevators, credit unions and poultry pools. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.1.35. Above: Altona Co-operative Service Ltd. store. In 1940, Altona Co-op Ltd. purchased the stock and rented the building of an exiting business and, four years later, boasted 800 members and $250,000 in sales. In recent decades, co-ops have consolidated operations into regional centres *(L&AC.)*

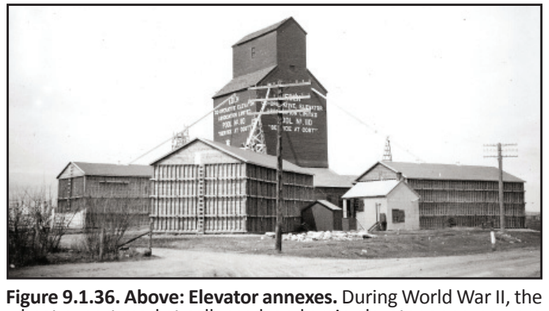


Figure 9.1.36. Above: Elevator annexes. During World War II, the wheat export market collapsed, and grain elevator annexes were built at most elevator locations to store the ever accumulating amount of grain, with as many as three annexes per elevator. Postwar, many were sold, dismantled and used in various projects including veteran housing developments. *(WFP'22-01-25 :C1.)*

Figure 9.1.37. Above: "*Customs Canada Immigration, Emerson. Manitoba.*" The above, attractively designed, Canada Customs building and manager's residence, were constructed in 1930 and located in Emerson at Main Street and Morris Avenue. There was a second customs house located on the new bank of the Red in West Lynne. Both were replaced in 1960 when the new Interstate #29 was constructed to the Canadian border. *(U of AB :Peel's.)*

After 1936, the economy slowly began to recover. The Better Roads initiative, instituted by the Province during the 1920s, was expanded during the 1930s, as make-work projects, and resulted in a rapidly expanding highway and road network connecting almost all the major towns and villages in the BTNHR. This led fairly quickly to a growing truck transport industry. With its "door-to-door" services, truck transfer businesses rapidly began to attract business away from local rail transport. However, the full effect of all-season highway transportation would be delayed as a result of World War II.

World War II, 1939-45

During the Great Depression, as a result of the economic hardships, alternative political parties developed, including Fascism in Germany and Italy and Imperialism in Japan. When Nazi Germany invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, the British Commonwealth declared war on Germany. When Japan attacked the US base at Pearl Harbour in Hawaii on December 8, 1942, the US entered the war, making the conflict truly world-wide. Manufacturing in Canada and the US increasingly diverted from domestic to military production. Many new manufacturing plants opened and huge numbers of women entered the workforce. Few people, if any, were unaffected by the war raging overseas. There were shortages of everything from building materials to food, to farm labourers. Ration book stamps were required for purchasing basic goods such as meat, sugar, butter, gasoline, etc. Young men and women enlisted or were conscripted. Exempt from conscription were farmers, food processers and other essential service employees. With the war effort gaining momentum, the economy in the BTNHR soon picked up, boosted by increasingly bountiful wheat crops and the successful introduction of vegetable oil crops such as soyabean, sunflower and rapeseed (canola). During the war, flour mills in the BTNHR ran continuously to supply flour for domestic and military purposes. *(Gosnell'68 :20.)*

World War II was one of the most significant events in Canadian history. Canada played a vital role in the Battle of the Atlantic and contributed forces to the campaigns of western Europe beyond what might be expected of a small nation of then only 11 million people. Between 1939 and 1945, more than one million Canadian men and women served full-time in the armed services. The war took the lives of 43,000 Canadians. The first major action by Canadian soldiers was the Dieppe Raid on August 19,1942. Nearly 1000 Canadians died and 2000 were taken prisoner in the raid that failed when the element of surprise was lost during the channel crossing. Canadians played a major role in North Africa, the Italian campaigns and the D-Day Normandy invasion on June 6, 1944. Nearly 150,000 Allied troops landed or parachuted into the invasion area on D-Day, including 14,000 Canadians at Juno Beach. Significantly, the Canadian landings at Juno Beach and the subsequent inland advances were among the most successful actions of the entire D-Day operation. Total Allied casualties on D-Day reached more than 10,000, including 1,074 Canadians. As the Allied forces advanced, Canadians were involved in front-line activity across France, Belgium, Holland and into Germany itself. The Third Reich finally surrendered to the Allied forces on May 8, 1945, after six years of bloodshed. The war in the Pacific theatre ended on August 14, 1945, when Japan surrendered unconditionally after the US dropped nuclear bombs on two cities, Hiroshima and Nagasaki. After six long years, World War II was finally over.

- Frank Godon, was a Métis elder and retired businessman from the Boissevain area when he was interviewed in 2001. Regarding his service during World War II, he related, "*In 1942, I was 19 and working driving a truck here when I joined the army. I ended up with the Winnipeg Rifles, the Little Black Devils, and we trained at Shilo, not so far from home. After basic training, we went by train to Debert, Nova Scotia and from there we took a boat over to England. It took us 28 days. Soon after we got to England, the duty officer told us, 'OK, we want some volunteers, we're making a regiment here with special training and you're going to go in with the Third Division. I figure, I've got nothing to lose, somebody's got to do it. So a bunch of us boys volunteered. I was assigned to the Third Division, Canadian Infantry as a rifle man and a 6-pounder anti-tank gunner, and on D-Day we were with the first wave on Juno Beach.*

There is some stuff that I don't like to talk about, but we'll get some of it. I can tell you that as we were getting into the landing craft, one of our officers shouted, 'Good Luck, boys, I hope you all come back, but I think not one of you are going to make it back.' So, we went in with the infantry and when we hit the beach. You know...you couldn't stop. Yeah, your buddy next to you is shot, but you just had to leave him and keep going, because if we stopped, for anything, then we would never make it. It was pretty hard, especially when we first hit the beach. The whole beach was just red with blood. But, we just kept going, and we were able to get across the beach, and then we started pushing the Germans back. But, our company went a little bit too fast, you know, and we got surrounded at Tiennes (sic)*. Yea, we got in so far ahead that we couldn't get resupplied with ammunition. We fought night and day until we ran out of ammunition and then we were taken prisoner.*

Yeah, I had about, five or six days in action, I just forget exactly. We ran out of ammunition and we were taken prisoner. Yeah, from there on, I was a prisoner. Well to tell you the truth, our people on the beach, they were surprised how we were advancing so fast. So we thought we could do that pretty swift. But we were too swift. If it would have been just another half-hour, we wouldn't have been taken prisoner.

And they were taking us and lined us up to shoot us, and an SS officer came; he said 'No, this is too close' — because we had some guys who could understand German, there was only about 12 of them and maybe there was 100 of us, and I thought well, you know we're going to die anyway, so we're going to try to get a hold of one of their machine guns, that's all we needed. Maybe we could have saved five or six or ten, maybe half, you never know. But word came, 'They're coming! They're coming fast, and I don't think we can push them back.' So they marched us out of there. I don't know how far we marched, but we later changed hands to a different group of Germans.

Yeah, from there on, I was a prisoner. If we would have just held on just another half-hour, we wouldn't have been taken prisoner because the Canadians were near and pushing forward. Yeah, I only had about five or six days in action, I just forget exactly, and I spent the rest of the war as a POW. So, after D-Day, my father and my mom gets a telegram, 'Your son is missing in action.' And after a while, when they couldn't locate me, they had me listed as 'Presumed Dead.' A lot of those who hit the beach, you know, there was nothing left of them. When you step on one of those mines, you're nothing. They can't even find your identification tags. And they figured that's what happened to me. But I was a POW for the rest of the war, a little more than a year. I went missing in June and I think it was not until October or November when the Red Cross notified my parents that I was not killed but in a prison camp. That must have been quite a relief for them." *(BCC :Godon.)*

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9.2 The Cross-over Years, 1950-80

The period, 1950 to 1980, was a time of transformational change in the BTNHR, as it was across Canada. The combined societal effects of advances in farm mechanization, rural electrification and all-season motor vehicle transportation had been largely delayed by the Great Depression and World War II. By the early 1950s, however, the North American economy had fully re-tooled and both agricultural and manufacturing industries rapidly expanded and evolved. The generation that lived through the hard times of the Great Depression and World War II now actively embraced the growing "cross-over" from the old, slow, labour-intensive ways to new rapidly-evolving technology-driven ways of farming, travelling, communicating and conducting business. A whole different world was about to emerge.

Rural Electric Grid Completed

Almost immediately after the end of World War II, the Province's rural electrification plan was resurrected, as referenced in a December 1945 *Manitoba Co-operator* newspaper article, "*Plans have been prepared, surveys are being made, and work has already commenced on a program to electrify the entire province within the next seven years. This calls for an annual expenditure of $3,500,000 for line material alone, the erection of 72,000 poles and the building of 4,000 miles of line each year. Electric power will flow into 33 more Manitoba towns and villages next year. This program is in addition to that already underway in approximately 40 other towns and represents the first extension of service undertaken since before the war. It is estimated by qualified authorities that this program will give the province it's greatest impetus since the advent of the railroad.*" The article also noted,"*The commission is again giving free festoon lighting to the 157 towns and villages on the system for the Christmas season.*" *(Co-op'45-10-15 :10.)*

By the late 1950s, with ever-increasing numbers of rural homes being connected to electric power generated, at the time, by hydro stations on the Winnipeg River, the transformational societal effects of electrification were becoming evident. With the adoption of a variety of electrical appliances and devices, work about the farm became much less labourious. Modern conveniences, such as hot and cold running water, indoor washrooms, electric lights, and major kitchen appliances such as ovens, refrigerators and home freezers, began to be installed in most farm homes, with the latter negating the need to regularly run "into town" to purchase perishables. On the farmyard, electric-powered livestock watering systems replaced the old barn pump; electric heaters replaced wood stoves; yard lights and interior building lights replaced kerosene lanterns; and electric motors powered grinding, crushing and grain handling machinery, and even wood splitters. These electric-powered innovations were soon followed by the introduction of television, the far-reaching effects of which, the *Argyle Centennial History*, published in 1981, observed, "*The biggest influence on the social life during the late 1950s was the introduction of the television. It revolutionized family life, eating habits, house designs, even conversations, jokes and political attitudes.*" *(Argyle'81 :57.)*

Provincial-Municipal Road Networks Completed

The Province's road building programs were also quickly reinstated at the conclusion of WWII. Highway construction in southern Manitoba had not stopped entirely during the war; however, most activity focused on the building of graded local roadways, known as "market roads", connecting farmyards to the main roads. Assisted financially by provincial grants, many RMs in the BTNHR began to purchase crawler tractors, graders and earth-elevating equipment. The Louise RM local history made specific note of the road network improvements, citing, "*During the 1950s, public pressure for more all-weather roads became great in the municipality and, with new post-war funding, by the end of the decade, very few farms were without a grade of some type to their land and, in a great many instances, these roads were surfaced with shale or gravel, making foul weather travel much easier.*" Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Louise RM built many miles of quality graded roadway and, in 1963, won a provincial award for possessing the "*best system of market roads for RMs, having a total mileage in excess of 100 miles*." *(Gosnell'68, :21.)*

In 1964, the Province discontinued providing road construction grants to municipalities and took over complete responsibility for selected market roads within various municipalities. These roads were designated as "Provincial Roads" (PRs) and given a designated number, in the same manner as the existing Provincial Trunk Highway (PTH) network. By the latter 1970s, there were 12 PTH routes and 45 PR routes in Manitoba, all graded and surfaced and maintained year-round. Widening and "hard-topping" (asphalt) projects continued throughout the 1970s. By the end of the decade, the now fully-developed roadway network permitted all-year, all-weather motor-vehicle transportation between farm properties and communities throughout the BTNHR. Figure 9.2.20.

Less recognized, but of great significance, during this period was the introduction of municipal snowplows. This meant that road horses and sleighs were increasingly no longer required for winter transportation, and their numbers quickly declined. By the late 1950s farm horses had all but disappeared from BTNHR's farm operations other than for nostalgic reasons. The age of farm work horses had now fully and completely passed into history.

Rural to Urban Migration

With more roads open all year round, and with automobiles and trucks becoming increasingly more comfortable and reliable, farm- and small-town residents could now easily drive to larger regional centers for better prices and selection of goods than those available in the smaller villages and hamlets. As this was occurring, average farm size in the BTNHR was increasing through mechanization, resulting in a reduction in the number of farm operations and farm population, and a declining customer base for store owners and service providers in local villages. One by one, businesses in small towns changed hands, closed or relocated to the nearest regional centre. By the late 1970s, most small towns were experiencing rapid decline in population and services. A passage in "*Echoes of the Past: A History of the RM of Louise*", published in 1968, indicates BTNHR residents were quite aware of the changes occurring around them. "*Added to the pressure of senior governments to centralize, we find the 1966 census statistics bearing out the fact the population of the rural areas and small urban centres is declining at an alarming rate. This decline appears to be the result of farms increasing in size added to a general decline in the birthrate.*" *(Gosnell'68 :23.)*

Railway Branch Line and Elevator Closures

During the late 1960s, railway line and grain elevator owners came to recognize that, with larger farm trucks and more paved highways, grain farmers were now capable of travelling much longer distances to access elevator points. This prompted elevator companies to construct bigger, more modern facilities near strategic regional centres rather than maintaining smaller elevators at every railside community. With grain being essentially the only profit-generating commodity being transported, this allowed railways to justify abandoning unprofitable lines. Beginning in the early 1970s, an increasing number of railway spur lines were being closed, almost immediately followed by the closure of many wooden standard plan grain elevators located along these lines. From 1963 to 1981, the number of elevators in Manitoba dropped by 45% from 678 to 373. With a growing number of local elevator closures, farmers had fewer

Figure 9.2.1. Above: Farm mechanization. Reaping wheat with a pull-type swather during the 1950s. During the 1960s and 1970s, prairie farmers developed a near obsession with power machinery, and pull-type swathers soon gave way to self-propelled models. *(NFB.)*

Figure 9.2.2. Above: Farm mechanization. A self-propelled combine unloading into a farm truck. Comparing the number of workers in this harvest scene, with that in Figure 8.13.6 shows the impact of mechanization on farm labour requirements. *(NFB.)*

Figure 9.2.3. Above: 1970s. Bigger tractors and new equipment. Cultivators and disc-based field implements became popular during the 1970s. One man with the newest power machinery could now work several times as much land as his father or his grandfather could using the equipment available to them. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.2.4. Above: Post-harvest plowing. Turning over stubble near Elva with, what appears to be a 1960s model, International-560 diesel tractor pulling a four-bottom plow, fitted with rubber tires and a hydraulic cylinder. Note the two Elva elevators in the background and the single-engine airplane in the mid ground. *(Carolyn Goforth.)*

Figure 9.2.5. Left: Rural electrification. Linemen installing electric power on a southern Manitoba farm. By 1954, 75% of Manitoba's farms had electrical service. From 1920 to 1961, a total of 523 communities were connected to the provincial hydro power grid. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.2.6. Above: Hardtop Provincial Highways. By the late 1970s all PTH and PR routes had been hard topped with asphalt for faster and safer use. *(A of MB.)*

Figure 9.2.7. Above: Municipal Roads. Road King grader being used to build a new "high grade" road in the RM of Louise during 1950s, permitting all-season transportation for area farmers. During wet periods however, side roads could still be a problem. *(Brown'74 :7.)*

Figure 9.2.8. Above: "War-years" housing. Throughout WWII, and for a time after, the most common house styles were simply designed, lumber-saving, 1½ story, gable-roofed boxes, often called "war-years style" homes. *(L&AC.)*

Figure 9.2.9. Above: Ranch style homes. During the 1960s, Ranch style homes were very popular. Features included a single level, 2500 square feet, three bedrooms, 2½ baths, asymmetrical design, long low roof line, large eaves, stucco walls, large windows with simple frames and, in Canada, quite often with attached garage. *(Wikipedia & Pinterest.ca.)*

Figure 9.2.10. Above: Home television. Manitoba's first television station, CBC Winnipeg, went on the air in 1956. Television soon became a major influencer on cultural and recreational norms. *(NFB.)*

Figure 9.2.11. Above: Snowplows. The introduction of municipal snowplows during the 1960s opened up rural areas to winter transportation. *(A of MB.)*

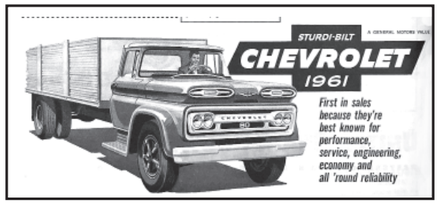

Figure 9.2.12. Above: Farm trucks. With modern vehicles and highways, a day trip of a 100 mi. or more, was now possible, compared to the maximum 10 to 12 mi. during the horse and wagon era. *(CG'61-2.)*

Figure 9.2.13. Above: The farm pickup. Half-ton farm "pickup" trucks became extremely popular and by the mid 1960s could be found on most every farm. *(CG'61-2.)*

Figure 9.2.14. Above: Rapid farm mechanization. Tractor and farm equipment sales exploded during the 1960s. By 1966, for every 100 farms on the Prairies, there were 160 tractors; 115 trucks, and 69 combines. (*MacEwan'71 :105.)*

Figure 9.2.15. Above: Swathers, 1970s. Self-propelled swathers became popular during the 1960s. By the early 1970s there were equipped with closed cabs to protect the operator from the dust and noise. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.2.16. Above: Four-wheel drive. First introduced during the 1970s by Versatile Manufacturing of Winnipeg, at one point the company controlled 70% of the North American four-wheel-drive articulated-tractor market. To date, the company has built over 100,000 tractors. *(versatile-ag.com.)*

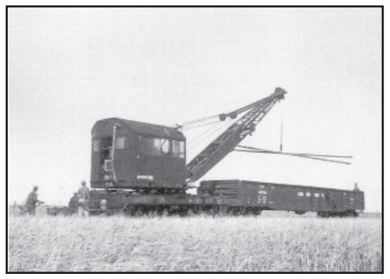

Figure 9.2.17. Above: Branch line abandonment. Removing rails from the CPR branch line running from Snowflake to Fallison in 1962. Original track was laid in 1913 with the use of mules. *(MacAulay'00 :42.)*

Figure 9.2.18. Above: Rail and elevator closures. Manitoba Pool elevator at La Rivière, shown in October 2004, being prepared for moving to Somerset. La Rivière lost its railway connection in 2001. *(HRB.)*

Figure 9.2.19. Above: Railway branch line abandonment. The former railway station grounds in Roland, photographed in 2018, once bustling with activity and buildings, now silent and vacant. *(EdLed.)*

reasons to come to town, further reducing the economic viability of local businesses. The shut down elevators were often moved, demolished, deconstructed for the lumber, sold to local farmers for private grain storage use, or simply left to decay. Replacing the network of older standard-plan wooden grain elevators, was a small number of large, high-capacity, steel and concrete inland terminals, strategically located along the few remaining regional rail lines. These huge industrial structures were invariably built outside town limits, for tax and liability advantages, and received grain deliveries from a wide surrounding area. Figure 9.3.17.

Bigger Tractors, Wider Equipment and Larger Farms

While horses could still be found on many farms during the 1940s, after World War II, farm tractors were quickly and widely adopted and, sadly for many, this period marked the end of the farm work horse after, quite literally, millennia of faithful service. Among the growing number of changes on the farm was the rapid introduction of, what was known as, "pneumatic" (rubber) tractor tires, first introduced during the late 1930s. With the benefit of rubber, tractors could find added traction in the field and be driven at higher road speeds. By 1950, rubber-cleated, air-filled tractor tires were standard features on new tractor models. Also widely adopted during the 1950s were hydraulic-cylinder equipped tractors, which permitted easy finger-tip depth and height control for field implements. During the 1960s, tractors began to be equipped with diesel engines and items, such as power-steering, electric starters and hydraulic-powered front end loaders and backhoes, became popular and useful additions to the growing arsenal of farm equipment and mechanical devices. During the 1970s, features such as cabs with air conditioners, heaters, AM, FM and CB radios, were introduced, as was tilt-steering and dual wheels. New types of equipment included self-propelled mowers, swathers and sprayers; stone-pickers, rotavators, wide-level discers; high-capacity round- and square-bailers; and larger and more sophisticated combines and tractors. Half-ton pickup trucks and large-box grain trucks also became commonplace features of 1970s farm operations in the BTNHR. However, new machinery was not cheap and, "*A farmer taking delivery of a 1970-model tractor was heard to remark that he would now command more field power, more working comfort and convenience, and more debt, that at any time in his farming career.*" *(MacEwan'71.)*

Also of significance during this period, 200-plus horsepower bulldozers began to be extensively used for breaking new land. Caterpillars, such as International Harvester's popular TD line of "crawlers", were capable of pushing over and piling standing trees and brush into linear windrows, which were then repeatedly burned and re-piled, as plows or discs turned over the growing amount of cleared land. This method was highly efficient and led to much previously uncleared land in the BTNHR being broken and turned into cropland or pasture. Statistics Canada data indicates that, between 1951 and 1981, "unimproved farmland" in Manitoba dropped by 1.7 million acres (from 6.9 to 5.2 million acres), while the "average improved acreage" per farm tripled from 205 to 857 acres, during this period.

Immensely powerful articulated four-wheel-drive tractors were introduced during the mid 1970s, initially by Versatile Manufacturing, of Winnipeg, which produced models 700, 800, 850 and 900, with horsepowers respectively, of 220, 250, 280 and 300. Figure 9.2.16. They were rapidly adopted and the concept was soon copied by other manufacturers. Size and power steadily improved, leading to larger, more efficient cultivation equipment designed specifically for the powerful four-wheel-drive tractors and permitting individual farm operators to manage increasingly larger acreages without additional labour inputs.

Also of great significance during this period, was the introduction of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Nitrogen was used extensively during WWII in the making of explosives and, after the war ended, factories started producing fertilizer from the nitrogen supply. Use of chemicals for pest control had been attempted during earlier decades, but applications took off after WWII with the advent of the insecticide commonly known as DDT and the weed-killer 2,4-D. Without having to compete with weeds or insect pests, crop yields rose quickly as did adoption rates, particularly during the 1980s. As a result of these technological and chemical advances and innovations, by the later 1970s, smaller and less efficient farms were being bought out at an increasing rate. A popular phrase at the time was to, "Go Big or Go Home!" *(Manitoba Agriculture.)*

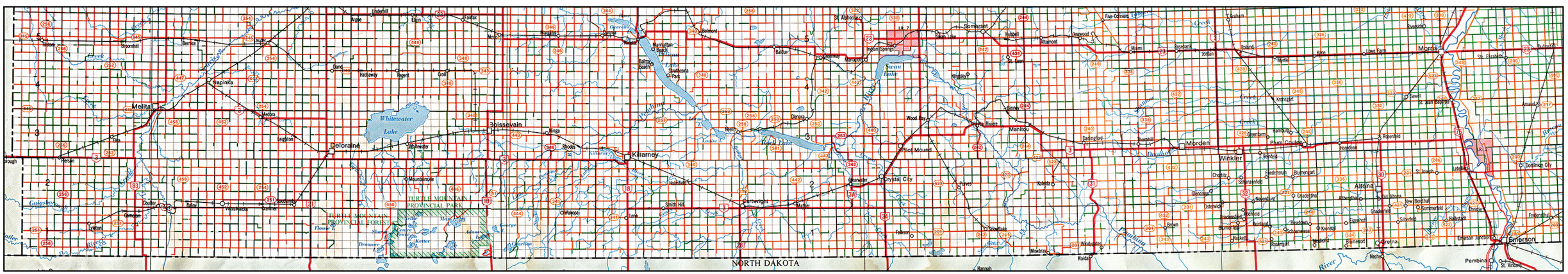

Figure 9.2.20. Above: Provincial road and rail network in 1977. Detail from a map issued by the Surveys and Mapping Branch showing roadways and railways, as well as lakes and rivers, towns, First Nation reserves, and parks. The roads include: PTHs (red shields); PRs (orange ovals); and municipal roads (without icons). Red indicates hard-top roadways, orange indicates gravel-topped, green indicates graded natural roadways and grey shows undeveloped road allowances. After almost a century of road construction, by 1977, virtually all the township road allowances had been "improved" in some manner. At this time, railway abandonment was just taking hold in the BTNHR and several spur lines seen earlier in Figure 8.1.5, by 1977 are no longer on the map. Over the next 20 years, the majority of the BTNHR's remaining railway branch line routes would be abandoned and rails removed. *(HRB.)*

- Grant MacEwan, in his 1971 publication, *Power for Prairie Plows*, noted, "*Canadians were witnessing an agricultural revolution such as they had not seen before. It was a good time to be in the machine business. Manufacturers began to pay bigger dividends, and dealers painted their homes and bought more expensive automobiles. A farm implement agency or dealership with a good line of tractors looked like the best business enterprise on most western town and village streets.*" *(MacEwan'71 :100.)*

Farmland Consolidation

As average farm size increased through mechanization, the corresponding result was a rapid decline in the number of individual farm operations. From 1946 to 1981, farm numbers in Manitoba dropped by 46%, almost half, from 54,448 to 29,442. However, in spite of, or because of, the decreasing number of farm operations and rapidly changing techniques and equipment types, grain farming in the BTNHR, was once again becoming a highly profitable enterprise. For many, it was a good time to be a farmer, in spite of a rapidly growing costs of production. *(Prov. of Manitoba.)*

Centralization and Regional Service Centres

While a great many of the BTNHR's smaller communities were experiencing population declines during the post WWII period, some of the larger regional centres, such as Altona, Morden, Winkler, Manitou, Killarney and Boissevain, grew as they absorbed businesses formerly conducted in the surrounding smaller communities. For example, census data shows that, between 1951 and 1981, Altona's population grew from 1438 to 2757 residents, as the surrounding rural (municipal) population declined from 6730 to 4525. Similarly, Killarney's population increased from 1262 to 2342 during these years, while the surrounding municipal population declined from 2310 to 1352. This rural to urban population movement occurred all across the BTNHR during these years. *(MHS.)*

The centralization of rural education was another major consequence of declining rural population and increased transportation mobility. "School consolidation", as it was known, occurred from approximately 1962 to 1967 and resulted in the closure of essentially all rural school districts, with students bused to 36 new divisional schools quickly being constructed in the province's larger regional centres. The now familiar "big yellow school bus", picking up and dropping off rural students, became the everyday face of centralized education and provided for a not-insignificant number of new jobs in rural areas, staffing and maintaining fleets of school buses. School consolidation was a hotly-debated issue. But, with ongoing rural depopulation, it quickly became unmanageable to fund and operate a large number of small rural school districts, often with only a handful of students attending. One of many newspaper articles published on the subject pointed to the quality of education: "*The problem is complex and many factors are involved. The small school district has in the past rendered excellent service; however, it has not been able, no matter how efficiently or disinterestedly it has been administered, to provide the type of education demanded to meet the changing conditions in our changing modern world.*" *(Co-op'45-09-01.)*

New Building Designs and Lifestyles

In the euphoria of the post-war economic and population boom, there was an almost universal, "out with the old and in with the new", mindset surging through both rural and urban populations in the BTNHR, as well as across the entire country. The early building stock, erected during the pioneer and wheat-boom years, suffered major losses at this time. Many well-known local and regional landmarks were demolished as the business sector restructured and modernized. These included, flour mills, hotels, commercial blocks, blacksmith shops, schools, elevator rows, railway stations, and many of the Region's attractive concrete arch bridges constructed during the 1920s. The national centennial, in 1967, and provincial centennial, in 1970, each resulted in a wave of well-attended community celebrations and a large number of local history book projects, which were a welcome and critical source of information for this publication. "Outhouse bonfire" events were popular centennial events and indicative of the "out with the old" movement. In addition to various landmark commercial structures, demolitions included many large and attractive school buildings and civic structures located in the Region's larger towns, replaced by new construction of modern design as these regional centres experienced new resident population growth along with the busing in of rural students.

Heritage residential structures, probably more than any building type, suffered as a result of the new building boom. Many of the BTNHR's early brick and stone residences were vacated and replaced during these years, often by single-storey Ranch or Bungalow style homes, which remained popular throughout the 1950-80 period. Figure 9.2.9. On the farm, with the demise of the farm work horse and the growing trend to specialized "single product" rather than "mixed" production, many of the BTNHR's large southern Ontario and later gambrel-style "mixed-use" barns were converted into hog or poultry production. Most, however, were simply used for dry storage space or abandoned, as open-air "pole-barns" became the new norm for housing cattle. The high cost of maintenance for such large structures and their limited usefulness sealed the fate of many of the BTNHR's large barns. The nostalgic picture of a quaint farmyard, with neatly arranged, wooden outbuildings and a big red barn, contained within a white picket or page wire fence with a two-story farmhouse with verandah and nearby large garden, and chickens, cows, dogs and cats running free, disappeared completely during the 1950–80 period. This romantic and nostalgic picture of farm life was now more likely only to be seen in dairy advertisements on television than on any actual farm. Farming was quickly becoming big-business, rather than a rural-lifestyle, and the new modern-era farmyard soon reflected that new reality.

The loss of many landmark structures was a sad, but largely unavoidable, consequence of rapidly changing times. Heritage building preservation did not become a priority in the BTNHR until the 1980s, when it became clear that many landmark buildings had been lost and action was needed to save the best of what remained. New heritage legislation, the *Heritage Resources Act,* passed in 1986, facilitated the legal protection of municipally and provincially significant structures and now protects dozens of heritage structures throughout the BTNHR.

Social, religious and recreational norms also changed quite dramatically during the 1950-80 period, becoming increasingly "town-oriented." Local district events, such as a concert, wedding or funeral, traditionally held in a rural school, church or rural community hall now, more often than not, were being held "in town", in modern facilities. Similarly, town-sponsored celebrations, such as Altona's Sunflower Festival, Roland's Pumpkin Fair, the Winkler Harvest Festival and the Morden Corn & Apple Festival, have increasingly replaced the once common agricultural fair, as membership in agricultural societies decreased along with rural depopulation. The ever changing "new-ways" were welcomed, but perhaps with some apprehension due to the speed with which change was occurring. However, the "cross-over" period really was, for many rural families in the BTNHR, as the title of a popular 1987 song by pop-group REM proclaimed: "It's the End of the World as we Know It (And I Feel Fine)."

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Figure 9.2.21. Above: School closures. Most former school buildings were sold, moved and converted into residences or farm buildings or, like the Elva school above, dismantled for their lumber. *(Connie Renwick photo.)*

Figure 9.2.22. Above: School buses. Introduced with school consolidation during the 1960s, big yellow school buses became a daily sight on the Region's many rural roads, ferrying students to and from schools located in the larger towns. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.2.23. Above: New divisional schools. Boissevain (top) and Virden (below) collegiates are typical examples of many new large regional schools constructed in the BTNHR during the 1960s and 1970s. *(HRB.)*

Figure 9.2.24. Above: New home styles. As farms were passed on to the next generation or sold, the new owners invariably constructed a new modern home on a different location on the farm or as, in the case shown above, in exactly the same location. Out with the old and in with the new was the buzz-word throughout the 1950-80 period. Many heritage farm houses were demolished. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.2.25. Above: 1980s housing styles. House designs on the farm and in town were similar and influenced by new designs coming from the US. Non-farm, rural-residential development became increasingly popular during the early 1980s, especially in the eastern part of the BTNHR. With good roads now the norm, the owners were able to commute to town for work or school and live on a rural acreage. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.2.26. Above: Elva. An aerial photograph of Elva, 3-28W, circa 1980, showing a largely-vacated townsite with few, if any, services. Note the modern terminal elevator in the distance, which replaced the traditional elevators in Elva, at right, along with those in neighbouring communities. Elva is representative of dozens of the BTNHR's smaller communities. *(Bill Warren.)*

Figure 9.2.27. Above: Killarney. circa 2000. As one of the larger communities, with a main branch line and highway connection, Killarney became a regional centre during the cross-over years, as surrounding villages, such as Ninga, Wakopa, Holmfield and Neelin experienced decline. Note how PTH #18 skirts around the community. *(Wikipedia.)*

Figure 9.2.28. Above: Winkler. A recent view of one of Winkler's main commercial streets. Trees and planters are common fixtures of many of the BTNHR's regional centres. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.2.29. Above: Boissevain. Residents of Boissevain have been supportive of heritage preservation, and many early structures have been retained. *(PMA.)*

Figure 9.3.1. Above: Bordertown. Gretna in 2010. As a bordertown with one of the West's earliest rail connections to the US network, it was an important and thriving community. *(Flickr.com.)*

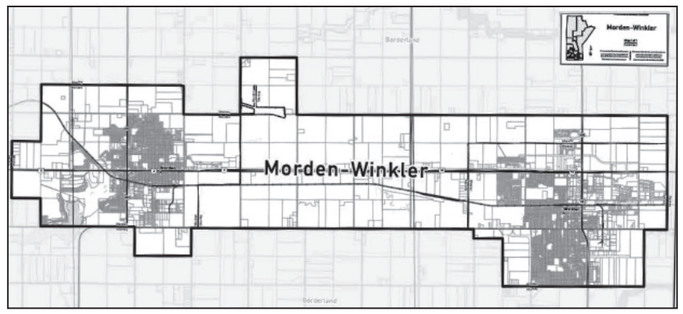

Figure 9.3.2. Above: Morden-Winkler Corridor. Booming population growth led to the creation of the new Morden-Winkler provincial electoral district. Corridor development includes a major hospital, various equipment dealerships, restaurants, the Pembina Threshermen's Museum, as well as homes. *(Prov. of Man.)*

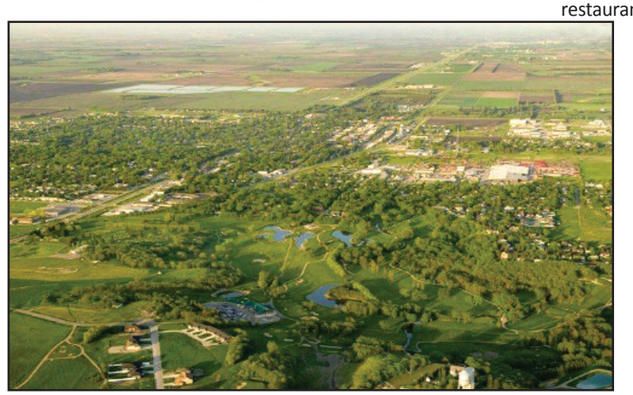

Figure 9.3.3. Above: Morden. Aerial view of Morden with Winkler in the distance at the upper right. The damming of Dead Horse Creek led to the development of several recreational projects, including a golf course and a popular man-made lake with park and beach areas. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.4. Above: Winkler. Winkler in 2021 had a population of 13,745, making it the fourth largest city in Manitoba. With recent population growth, entire residential suburbs are being built in both Winkler and Morden. *(City of Winkler.)*

Figure 9.3.5. Above. Recreational flying. During the 1970s and 1980s recreational flying became popular and home landing strips were commonplace. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.3.6. Above. Theme Festivals. Altona's Sunflower Festival is one of many community festivals in the BTNHR. *(MHS.)*

Figure 9.3.7. Above. Snowmobiling. Snowmobiling has long been popular in the BTNHR with its varied topography and groomed trails abound. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.8. Above: Ziplining. The Pembina River valley offers a variety of excellent outdoor summer recreational opportunities. *(Liz Tran.)*

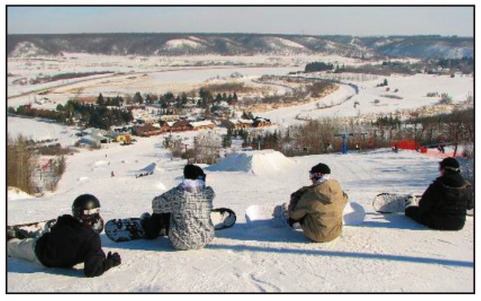

Figure 9.3.9. Above: Skiing and tobogganing. With the many hills and river valleys in the BTNHR, winter skiing and tobogganing have been popular winter activities from the early years to today. *(www.tripadvisor.com.)*

Figure 9.3.10. Above: The Trans Canada Trail. Between Emerson and Gretna, the TCT runs adjacent to the US border and across one of the world's flattest landscapes. *(Flickr.com.)*

9.3 A BRAVE NEW WORLD, 1980-2022

During the past four decades, the pace of change has only quickened, on the farm and in the BTNHR's many rural communities. New trends in transportation, farming techniques and population patterns, introduced during the previous post-WWII period, have now transformed the Region.

Rail and Elevator Industry Restructuring Completed

Throughout the 1980s, the provincial and local municipal governments partnered to improve the quality of municipal roads and provincial highways, with the latter paved with asphalt by the mid-1980s and the former by the early 2000s. While this was a boon for rural transportation, it was another nail in the coffin for small hamlets and towns that could not compete with larger business communities, now within easy reach. As automobile, and especially truck traffic continued to grow, local railway business declined significantly, prompting widespread line closures. And, just as the arrival of the railway spawned the growth of these communities, the departure of the railway resulted in their demise. The community of Snowflake provides a perfect example of the fate of the Region's many villages and hamlets during this period.

- Landon Booker, in his self-published 1990 booklet entitled *A Diary of Snowflake, Manitoba*, lamented the loss of his town's railway link. "*On January 9th, 1989, Snowflake residents witnessed the end of an era, as the last train pulled slowly out of town. Beginning in November 1899, the railroad for many years supplied practically all passenger and freight service for the area. At the peak in the 20's and early 30's, six trains per week were running. With the coming of cars and trucks and better roads, first passenger service, and later freight service were gradually eliminated until, at the end, only an occasional grain train serviced the town. Such is the price of progress.*" Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Snowflake's population slowly, but steadily, declined along with the number of farm operations in the surrounding area. In 1986, the Snowflake branch of the Royal Canadian Legion closed. This was followed by the closure of the town's elementary school in 1992 and the United Church in 1994. In 2006, the town's war memorial was moved to La Rivière. Other post-WWII, business closures included Snowflake's bank, hotel and livery stable, lumberyard, drugstore, grocery store, service station, and its four grain elevators. All that remains today of this once small-but-thriving, community are weathered street signs, unmaintained building lots and lanes, two forlorn-looking former grain elevators, and, in 2007, three occupied homes. *(Booker'88 :23.)*

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s as, one by one, lines closed and rails were removed, most branch line villages experienced similar economic and population decline. Currently, most such villages possess only a handful of residential properties and few, if any, commercial services. In 2010, only a fraction of the BTNHR's once-dense regional railway network existed. Comparing the railway network of 2010 (Figure 1.18), with the 1920 network (Figure 8.1.5), shows 90% or more of the former network no longer exists. The original, and once critically important, main regional line running from Rosenfield to Napinka, had lost its entire middle section. The closure of large numbers of wooden "standard plan" elevators closely followed rail line abandonment. The loss of so many elevators was a serious financial blow to the local municipal tax base, already affected by a declining population base. In 1963, there were 678 elevator delivery points in Manitoba. Numbers dropped rapidly to 373 in 1981 and, by 2006, only 72 existed. In 2021, the number of delivery points rose slightly to 80, with large capacity new modern elevators constructed at eight new delivery points.

- John Morriss, former editor of the Manitoba Co-operator farm newspaper, recalled how the subject of rail line closures was a hot topic for many years and, "*...resulted in endless coffee shop debates on how much the road network would suffer from all the increased trucking after the lines and elevators were abandoned.*" No doubt there was concern about who would bear the increased cost of road maintenance on municipal roads and the economic "domino" effect of branch line closures. *(John Morriss'22.)*

Growing Domination of Regional Centres

The ascent of highway transport over railway transport and the steep decline in the Region's farm population, due to farm mechanization and expansion during the 1950-79 period, caused the decline of most of the BTNHR's small, former rail-side communities, but fueled the growth of a number of regional centres. These primarily included Altona, Winkler, Morden, Killarney and Manitou. During the most recent 1980-2020 period, rural to urban migration has continued; however, only a few regional centres continued to grow. Boissevain, Killarney and Manitou saw their population stagnate or decline slightly, while Morden, Winkler and Altona experienced sustained growth. Census data shows the extent. Between 1981 and 2016, Killarney grew by less than one hundred, (2342 to 2429); Manitou's population dropped slightly (861 to 840); and Boissevain lost four of its residents (1660 to 1656). During this same period, Altona's population increased significantly from 2,757 to 4,212; Winkler's increased from 5046 to 12,660; and Morden grew from 4579 to 8668. It is evident that service centralization continues, now focusing on the "smaller" regional centres.

Continued rural depopulation resulted in a number of municipal administration amalgamations. In 2007, the Town of Killarney merged with Turtle Mountain RM. There were numerous occurrences in 2015: Boissevain merged with Morton RM; Deloraine merged with Winchester RM; Killarney merged with Turtle Mountain RM; Waskada merged with Brenda RM; and the former RMs of Albert, Edward and Arthur all merged to become Two Borders RM. Such municipal government amalgamations resulted in the loss of local municipal offices and municipal councillor positions further reducing rural identity and representation, and small town economic viability. Municipal amalgamation was yet another "hit" to traditional rural lifestyles and population patterns in the BTNHR. *(MHS.ca.)*

An exception to the "rural to urban" population trend in the BTNHR involves the "Morden-Winkler corridor." As both communities experienced rapid population growth, the eight mile (12 km) highway connection between them has witnessed rapid development and, very likely, the two communities will soon be fully "connected" by urban development. This new population concentration has forced an adjustment to provincial electoral boundaries and the creation of the new Morden-Winkler Electoral Division, 75 square km in size and, in 2016, with a resident population of 22,000. Figure 9.3.2. The economic development in and around the Morden-Winkler corridor has fueled the development of a growing "non-farm rural-residential" population in the two surrounding municipalities, residential "acreages" have become quite popular. Census data shows that, between 1981 and 2016, the population of the RM of Stanley grew from 4257 to 8969 and in the adjacent Rhineland RM, the population increases from 4525 to 5945. These are the only two rural municipalities in the entire BTNHR to experience population growth in recent decades.

Farm Population Decline and Farmland Consolidation

Farm population across the BTNHR plummeted as farm sizes increased and farm numbers decreased, beginning in the 1970s. Provincial census data provides a stark illustration of the extent of the farm consolidation issue. As noted, between 1946 and 1981, the number of farms in Manitoba dropped by almost half (to 22,334). From 1981 and 2021, it fell by an additional 28% (to 8,398) and this trend to farmland ownership consolidation

continues. Also causing concern is the recent explosion in the investment value of farmland. Between 2006 and 2015, farmland values on the Canadian prairies outpaced urban real estate inflation by over 110%. Figure 9.3.18.

Despite dropping number of farm operations, growing cost and rapidly changing technologies, over the past several decades farming in the BTNHR has been a highly dynamic and profitable enterprise. For many, it has been a good time to be a grain farmer, in spite of rapidly growing costs of production. *(Prov. of MB.)*

- Grant MacEwan, former Dean of Agriculture of the University of Manitoba, commented on the growing efficiencies and profitability of larger, more efficient farm power and machinery during the post-1980 era, "*Because farms were made more productive, standards of living were raised appreciably. The gap between rural and urban living was made more narrow. It would have been difficult for even an old and loyal horseman to deny the gain.*" *(MacEwan'71 :107.)*

- Laura Rance, editor for Glacier Farm Media Corp. similarly commented on the rapid rise of farmland values and farm production profitability, particularly since 2006, noting, "*This period is also when farmland values have surged beyond all expectations and has resulted in a fundamental transformation of farmers from the ranks of hardworking, marginalized servants of the land to the wealthy elite.*" *(Rance'22.)*

This recent boom in farmland values has prompted investors to start purchasing farmland as a hedge against inflation. It is well known that Microsoft founder, Bill Gates has been purchasing large amounts of farmland in the US. Similarly, in Canada, former Winnipegger Robert Andjelic began purchasing farmland in Saskatchewan in 2011 for about $400 to $500 an acre, when farmland purchases in Saskatchewan were restricted to provincial residents only, which moderated prices. After opening up to Canadian residents shortly after, farmland prices in Saskatchewan rose quickly to $1500 and currently are "north" of $3000 an acre. His Regina-based land company now owns and leases out about 225,000 acres, about 75% of which was acquired in the last half of the last decade. Andjelic has begun purchasing land in Manitoba and Alberta, strategically in groupings. Today's huge costs in acquiring farmland make it virtually impossible for any "start-up" farmer purchasing their own farms, quite a change from obtaining a 160 acre homestead for a ten dollar administration fee. (*WFP'22-09-26 :B4.)*

Mega Farm Machinery

Farm machinery numbers, from Statistics Canada, illustrate evolution to modern mega-sized farm equipment. During the post-war period, machinery sales in Manitoba increased rapidly and steadily, as farms modernized and expanded in size. Survey data shows, from 1951 to 1991, tractor ownership grew from 50,984 to 73,523; truck ownership grew from 21,163 to 57,904; and combine ownership from 15,286 to 20,588. However, today's modern agricultural equipment, including tractors, trucks, combines and tillage equipment, is designed for optimal service on farms of 7000 to 10,000 acres. With this increased mechanical efficiency, machinery numbers have dropped sharply as less equipment was required, even as average farm size increased. Federal census data confirms this. It shows that between 1991 and 2011, tractor ownership dropped by 13,033 units to 60,490; truck ownership fell by 13,814 to 44,090; and combine numbers decreased by 9,258 units to 11,330. Provincial numbers for 2021 show tractor ownership had dropped to 55,783, almost 5,000 fewer tractors, in just ten years. Average farm size in Manitoba between 1981 and 2016 rose from 639 to 1,177 acres (259 to 483 hectares.) The trend to fewer numbers of modern mega-size equipment on larger-sized farms continues today. *(www.manitoba.ca/agriculture.)*

New Types of Crops

Crop diversification is one of the most visible and important recent agricultural trends in the BTNHR. This is largely due to the introduction of improved crop varieties requiring shorter growing seasons. In 2021, in order of cash receipts, the most valuable crops in Manitoba were canola ($2 billion); wheat ($1.5 bn.); soybean ($463 million); potatoes ($308 mil.); oats ($221 mil.); seed corn ($171 mil.); and hemp ($90.mil.).

- Canola recently surpassed wheat in terms of economic value to Manitoba. Historically known as rapeseed, the vegetable oil extracted was used for centuries for lamp fuel and machinery lubrication. It was not used as a food product until more palatable and nutritious "low erucic acid" varieties were developed at the University of Manitoba during the 1970s. The term "Canola" is an acronym for "CANada-Oil-Low-Acid." In 1998, a highly disease and drought-resistant variety was introduced and, soon after, canola was being grown worldwide, especially in Canada, US, China, India and France. Canola is considered a "healthful oil" and is used for a multitude of food and industrial purposes.

- Wheat is primarily grown to be milled into flour, although there are only three commercial mills left in Manitoba. The remainder is exported. Canada Western Red Spring wheat is the most common and is a high protein premier bread wheat. However, an additional nine varieties of wheat are grown, each suited to a specific product. Wheat is also used in livestock feed mixes, because of its high protein content.

- Soybean was first grown in the BTNHR during the 1930s with limited success; but with recent new varieties and a growing demand, the seeded acreages have grown rapidly. The main product is soymeal, containing up to 38% protein and is highly valued for use in livestock feed. "Special IP" soybean is used to make soymilk, tofu and miso. Demand is growing as consumption of protein-rich food increases for both human and animal feed.

- Manitoba currently produces 20% of Canada's potatoes. Most crops are grown under contract and involve 24 varieties in three types: "fresh", "processing" and "seed." Four processing plants, Simplot and McCain Foods in Portage and Naleway Foods and Old Dutch Ltd. in Winnipeg use much of the processing varieties grown. The remainder is shipped to the US and across Canada; however, exports to Mexico, Japan and Philippines are growing. In 2020, local processing capacity was increased and seeded acreage is expected to grow for some years to come, as a result.

- Grain corn production in Manitoba largely serves domestic needs and processors. For example, the Husky Oil ethanol plant in Minnedosa purchases over 300,000 metric tonnes annually to produce 130 million litres of ethanol, which is added to all gasoline sold in Manitoba. The Diageo Canada Distillery in Gimli uses over 60,000 tonnes for the production of its spirits, including the world-renowned Crown Royal whisky. Other grain corn products include corn oil, corn meal, corn starch, corn syrup, and various types of thickeners and sweeteners. *(gov.mb.ca)*

Chemical Fertilizers and Herbicides

The use of chemical fertilizers in the BTNHR grew rapidly during the 1970s and 1980s, as elsewhere, and was quickly adopted by most farm operators. Since the pioneer years, wheat yields of 20 to 25 bu. per acre were considered bumper crops; however, since the 1960s, with the aid of modern chemical fertilizers and herbicides, average wheat yields in Manitoba have increased to a consistent 40+ bu. per acre and, in recent years, have surpassed 60 bu. per acre. Corn yields in the US increased from 54 to 170 bushels per acre since the 1970s. Currently, large anhydrous ammonia tanks pulled behind a "hoe type air-seeder" is a normal sight. Figure 9.3.12.

Figure 9.3.11. Above: Mega-size farm equipment. Today's massive four-wheel-drive tractors can pull wide-swath equipment and manage increasing acreages without additional manpower. *(Tim Smith, Bdn. Sun.)*

Figure 9.3.12. Above: Chemical fertilizers. A Versatile four-wheel drive tractor seeding and fertilizing a wide swath in one efficient operation. The tractor alone would cost $300,000 or $400,000. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.13. Above: Chemical herbicides. Many current crop varieties have been genetically modified to be resistant to herbicides, such as Roundup; however, environmental concerns from increasing use and transference of resistance to weed species are prompting farmers and processors to try alternative "regenerative" practices to reduce chemical usage. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.14. Above: Modern harvest equipment. Currently, newer combines and tractors can cost anywhere from $200,000 to $500,000 and grain carts from $100,000 to $200,000. *(mazergroup.ca.)*

Figure 9.3.15. Above: Hopper-bottom grain trucks. Large capacity grain trucks and paved highways allow crops to be transported long distances to market with ease. A truck and hopper-bottom trailer of this type, used, would today cost from $60,000 to $100,000 and more. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.16. Above: Modern workshop. Combines in a large metal shop, being readied for harvest. Large modern farm machinery and seeded acreages require large modern storage and repair shops. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.17. Above: Inland grain terminals. Modern concrete and steel grain elevators, such as this one near Elva, can store over a million bushels of grain. Most of the early "standard plan" wooden elevators had a capacity of 25,000 bushels. *(EdLed.)*

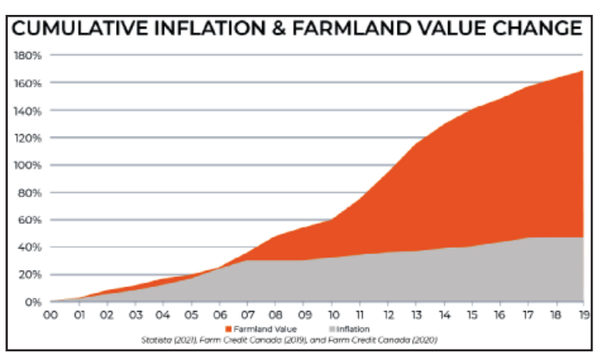

Figure 9.3.18. Above. Farmland value change. Since 2007, farmland values have exploded, often exceeding $3000 per acre in areas. Farmland is now deemed a good investment and is being bought up as an inflation hedge fund, leading to growing concentration of ownership. *(Farmcredit Canada.ca.)*

Figure 9.3.19. Above: Canola field. Canola is Manitoba's and the BTNHR's most valuable crop, contributing over two billion dollars to the provincial economy annually, surpassing wheat in economic value for the first time in 2020. *(Prov. of Man.)*

Figure 9.3.20. Above: Sunflowers. During the 1980s, over 300,000 tons of sunflower seed a day was processed into vegetable oil at Altona's Co-op Vegetable Oil plant. *(Prov of Man.)*

Figure 9.3.21. Above: Potatoes. Manitoba produces 24 varieties of potatoes, including Russet Burbank, grown specifically for French fry production by McCain Foods. *(Flickr.com.)*

Figure 9.3.22. Above: Hemp. Legalized in 1998, it is grown for its seed and, in Manitoba, is processed into hemp oil, protein powder and fibre, all of which is popular in natural food and health products. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.3.23. Above: Corn crop, 2010. First grown during the 1930s in the Altona area, today corn is grown as a forage crop for feed, as grain corn for processing and as seed corn for planting. *(EdLed.)*

Figure 9.3.24. Soybean. Soybean contains as much as 38% protein and is highly valued in meal and oil form, especially for livestock feed mixtures. *(Producer.com.)*

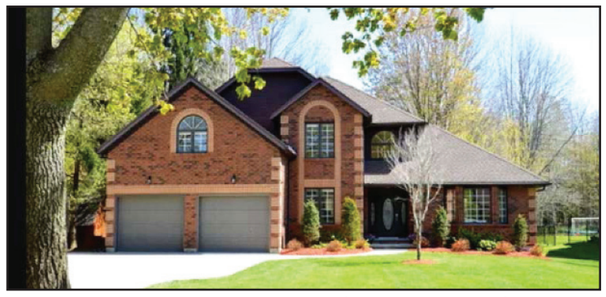

Figure 9.3.25. Above: Fewer but larger farm homes. New farm homes in the BTNHR can rival any urban residence in attractiveness. They are often located on expansive yards at some distance from farm production buildings, unlike the compact farmyard of decades past. *(Farmmarketer.com.)*

Figure 9.3.26. Above: Steel farm outbuildings. Typical of many modern farms, this farmyard possesses numerous metal grain bins and two large metal sheds including a massive Quonset. Farmyard sites were once a mile or less apart and numerous, today they are relatively few and often far between. *(CBC.ca.)*

Figure 9.3.27. Above: St. Leon windfarm. There are currently two windfarms in Manitoba, both are located in the BTNHR. The first, near St. Leon, began producing electricity in 2005, initially with 12 turbines, and enlarged with 51 more turbines in 2007, making it one of Canada's largest windfarms. *(Prov. of Man.)*

Figure 9.3.28. Above: St. Joseph windfarm. St. Joseph wind farm began operation in 2011 with 60 turbines producing 138 megawatts. Initially planned for 200 turbines, it was downsized to 130 due to the 2008 economic recession. The plant covers about 125 square km. west and south of the community of St. Joseph. *(Prov. of Man.)*

The pesticide DDT and herbicide 2,4-D were first introduced during the 1950s and, like nitrogen fertilizers, triggered a worldwide revolution in agricultural output. They allowed for enhanced pest and weed control in wheat, corn, rice and other crops, and vastly improved yields. Compared with mechanically weeding by hand or machine, herbicides were less expensive, faster, and often more selective. Another breakthrough occurred in 1974 with the introduction of "Glyphosate" also known as Roundup. Roundup was a non-selective weed control herbicide. It killed all plant life and quickly became popular in selected industries. Beginning in the early 1990s, chemical giant Monsanto Corp. introduced genetically engineered crops, resistant to chemical herbicides, particularly Roundup. Applying Roundup to glyphosate-resistant crops eliminated all weed pests without affecting the seeded crop, resulting in a crop free of competing weed plants, and was a breakthrough for producers. Monsanto released Roundup-ready soybean varieties in 1996, corn varieties in 1998, followed shortly thereafter by cotton, sugar beets and alfalfa. In 2005, 87% of Canada's canola seed was Roundup ready; it rose to 90% by 1998. The pairing of herbicides with engineered resistant seed is trending toward the consolidation of the seed and chemical industry. The Genetically Modified Organism (GMO) seed market is increasingly dominated by a shrinking number of companies with growing "ownership" of the grain seed supply chain. These companies legally "own" the patented seed grain as well as the harvested grain. Growers must purchase new seed every spring and cannot reseed any "company seed" grown on their own land, at risk of serious penalty. The widespread adoption, and continued growing use, of chemical fertilizers and herbicides, while greatly increasing yields, is also resulting in environmental degradation. *(Wikipedia.)*

Environmental Damage and Regenerative Agriculture

Modern, intensively managed agriculture has a great reliance on the use of chemical fertilizers and herbicides. Unfortunately, they also carry known risks to humans, through exposure to potentially toxic chemicals, and known risks to natural ecosystems through direct toxicity caused to non-target species by changes to critical habitat. Nevertheless, until newer and more pest-specific solutions to weed management problems are developed, there will be a continued reliance on agricultural herbicides and fertilizers. Not all effects of herbicides and pesticides are evident in the short term, as in the case of DDT. Fifty years ago, in the 1970s, the bald eagle had all but disappeared from many US states. The culprit was DDT. It was found that, when ingested, it prevented the eagles from reproducing successfully by weakening their offsprings' eggshells. The bald eagle became critically endangered. After being positively identified as the cause, several interventions from humans, such as banning DDT and protecting habitat, helped restore the bald eagle population to a stable and healthy size. Currently, the herbicide 2,4-D is the most widely used herbicide in the world, despite growing evidence it causes cancer in humans and known negative effects on wildlife habitat. Industry is often at odds with environmentalists and governments over the effects and causes of ongoing environmental degradation, claiming if properly applied, these chemicals pose no danger to wildlife or human populations. *(www.thejamesriver.org)*

The long term effects of chemical fertilizers are also a growing concern. It is well known that nitrogen-based fertilizers can be transported, via leaching or surface runoff, to contaminate groundwater or distant surface water sources. Recent massive algae blooms in Lake Winnipeg are indicative of growing nitrogen fertilizer runoff pollution in Manitoba's rivers and lakes. Despite this, fertilizer use continues to grow. Between 2005 and 2019, fertilizer used on Canadian farms increased by a massive 71%. In 2020, as part of it's climate change plan, the federal government proposed reducing nitrogen-based fertilizers use on Canadian farms by 30% by 2030 to meet Canadian climate change commitments. Industry stakeholders are not supportive of the plan, citing "*The 30% reduction target is not achievable without putting production and exports in jeopardy*", and "*that going beyond 14% would be economically inviable, since many of the changes required are costly for the farmer.*" The widespread use of Roundup is also a growing concern with a real possibility of the transmission of GMO genes via pollen drift to wild plants creating herbicide resistant weeds. Traces of Roundup have also been increasingly detected in rain and air samples in rural areas. Yet, application rates of Roundup continue to increase. Over the past 20 years, in the US, Roundup concentrations applied to GM corn has increased by 25%, from 1.5 lb. to 2.0 lb per planted acre. Growing biodiversity loss is another growing concern, through the loss of food sources and habitat for insects, in turn affecting food supply for bird populations. The elimination of milkweed from the rural landscape, for example, would seriously impact the critical work of pollinators. Biodiversity is negatively impacted by continuing conversion of the few remaining natural areas into cropland. These include sloughs, abandoned railway rights of way, old farmstead sites, wooded bluffs, and cropland encroaching into road allowances. These all combine to reduce wildlife shelter, feeding areas and travel corridors. Industry players are beginning seriously to take note and make changes to protect the environment and their own livelihood by adopting more sustainable production techniques. *(WFP'22-9-10.)*

- Laura Rance, well-known agricultural journalist, and V.P. of content for Glacier FarmMedia, in recent newspaper articles, has reported on an encouraging new trend. being promoted by governments, environmentalists and, surprisingly, a growing number of farmers and processors, regarding concern over unintentional negative impacts on soil fertility and health, biodiversity, and food safety. In Manitoba, McCain Foods, General Mills and various government programs are sponsoring a variety of "regenerative farming" cropping techniques. Ms. Rance notes, "*It is based on principles such as minimizing soil disturbance and chemical inputs, maximizing diversity of animals and plants, keeping the soil covered with growing plants as long as possible during the year, and adapting to the local environmental and climatic conditions.*" McCain Foods has committed to implementing regenerative agricultural practices across 100 percent of its contract potato acreage by 2030. Though the concept is intended to improve food security and health, many producers see only vague promises of improved soil "health" as the payback and are not willing to take the financial risks. The immediate financial costs are producer borne and investments in land and equipment are too great. How to feed the world in a sustainable manner is yet to be determined. *(WFP'22-10-1 :B6.)*

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And so, the above collection of stories is, more or less, how the BTNHR came to be what it is today – with all the modern comforts and conveniences its residents are able to enjoy, and of which generations past would no doubt be envious. The Region's next chapter, the three or four decades to come, will no doubt be a monumental period, hopefully with largely positive developments. Time will tell and history will judge.

The End - For Now.

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MCUA - McCord University Archives, Montreal, Que.
MNHS - Minnesota Historical Society, Saint Paul, Minn.
NFB - National Film Board of Canada, Ottawa, Ont.
NDSU - North Dakota State University, Institute for Regional Studies, Fargo, N.D.
PMA - Pembina Manitou Archives, Manitou, Man.
PTM - Pembina Threshermen's Museum. misc collections and archives, Morden, Man.
ROM - Royal Ontario Museum, Toronto, Ont.
TPLA - Toronto Public Library Archives, Toronto, Ont.
U of AB - University of Alberta - Peels Postcards, Calgary, Alta.
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About the Author

Edward M. Ledohowski is a native of Manitoba's Interlake region, attending elementary school in his hometown of Poplarfield and high school in nearby Fisher Branch. During the 1970s, he attended the universities of Winnipeg and Manitoba where he studied physical and historical geography, agriculture, and resource management. His 1988 Master's thesis proposed a comprehensive plan for the preservation of rural heritage architecture in Manitoba and was entitled *Rural Vernacular Architecture as a Cultural and Economic Resource in Manitoba: A Methodology of Techniques for Management of a Rural Resource*.

From 1982 to 2014, Ed was employed by the Province of Manitoba with the Historic Resources Branch, starting as an architectural field researcher and completing his career as Provincial Heritage Site Designation Officer. During that time, Ed authored a number of research reports and articles on rural heritage architecture and heritage tourism in Manitoba, as well as publishing a comprehensive illustrated family history and a Poplarfield and district community history.

Some of his more recent heritage projects include principal researcher behind Prairie Public Television's 2011, Emmy Award-nominated, "*Steamboats on the Red River,*" documentary. In 2013, he produced a monogram entitled "*Portrait of a Prairie Grain Elevator*", a history of the former Federal grain elevator in Snowflake, Manitoba, done in association with a commissioned painting by well-known west coast artist Christopher Walker. His recent publications include: *Gimli Public School 1915-2015: A Commemorative History,* (2015); *Gimli Harbour and Fishery: An Illustrated History,* with Andy Blicq (2017); *The Heather Curling Club 1916-2016: A Century of Hurry! Hard!*, (2018); and *Notable People From Gimli: Post 1945*, with Andy Blicq and Wally Johannson, (2022).

Ed was also principal transcription editor of a memoir of Sioux Elder and educator, Doris Dowan-Pratt. This was a joint project together with Leona Devuyst and the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre, and published in 2020. *Trailblazer in First Nations Education: Duzahan ManiWin, Doris Dowan-Pratt* won the 2021 Margaret McWilliams literary award in the Memoirs category.

Over the years, Ed has been a volunteer planner and guide of heritage bus tours for various organizations and events, most frequently for the Manitoba Historical Society. He is also a founding member of the Manitoba Recreational Trails Association which planned the route and nurtured the early development of the Trans Canada Trail in Manitoba. His interests, in addition to history and hiking, include photography, backyard landscaping, cycling, canoeing and curling.

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Front cover top:

- Dominion of Canada General Map of the North West Territory Shewing Dominion Lands Surveys to 31 Dec 1882. Printed 1883. Archives of Manitoba (623.2 gbbc). (A of MB.);

Front cover bottom:

- Manitoba Department of Highways, 2010 Highways Map;

Front cover photos:

- Two w*arriors on horseback, Library and Archives Canada;*

- Moving to new homestead, 1909. Archives of Manitoba;

- Locomotive at Bannerman, 1908. Pembina Manitou Archives;

- St. Joseph wind farm. Ed Ledohowski photo, 2020;

Rear cover:

- Map of Manitoba, proposed boundaries, 1882. Library and Archives Canada.

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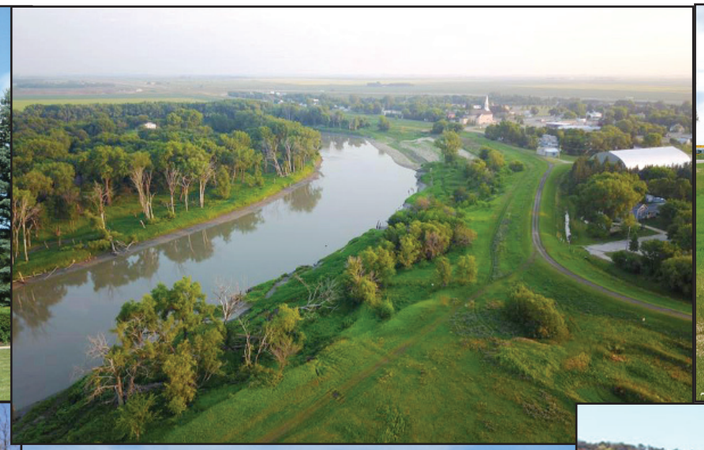
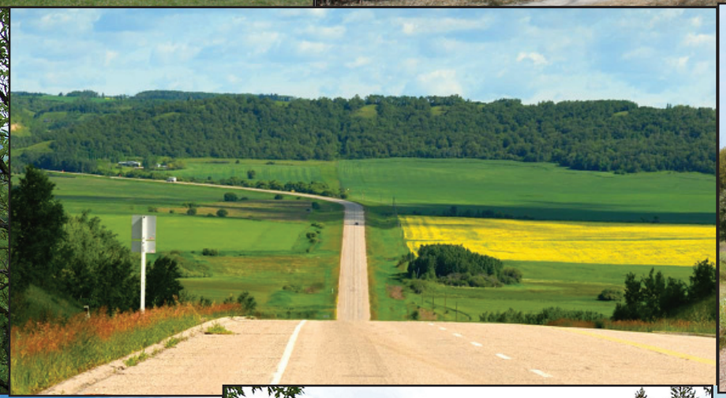


ROLAND
HOME OF 4-H AND THE GIANT PUMPKIN

WHITEWATER LAKE
Wildlife Management Area

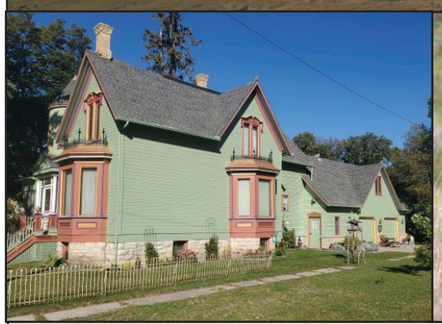


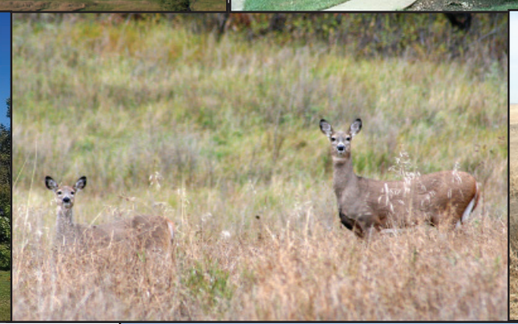
Manitoba
3
EAST
BOUNDARY
COMMISSION
1872 1874
N.W.M.P.
ROUTE

1930
DELORAINE

VICTORIA LAKE
S D NO 446
1885 1961

CHICKEN HILL
1893 1968





The Boundary Commission Trail
1872–1874
From Lake of the Woods to the Rocky Mountains

TURTLES BACK
HIKING TRAIL
MAPS

Published map depicting proposed new Province of Manitoba boundaries approved by Parliament on March 21, 1881 — but contested by Ontario and resinded in 1884. *(Royal Ontario Museum.)*

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