

Geologists call me 'erratic'. Not that my behavior's erratic. Who's more stable than I am? It's because I, and others, were moved from our home thousands of years ago and left lying around - in an erratic way.

A massive glacier dug me up, pushed me and then carried me as it inched its way across the prairies. As the glacier melted - and couldn't carry my weight - I was dropped, and left behind. There are many of us across the prairies. Some the size of small cars, others as big as a house!

As we warmed from the Ice Age - large animals - mammoth, antelope and long-horned bison grazed here - hunted by saber-toothed cats and short-nosed bears. I became particularly important to the bison. Those huge rugged beasts with massive shoulders needed me. They'd come to satisfy an itch or rub off ragged winter coats by walking around my girth, scraping their flanks against my rough edges.

Many ancient animals died out. But the bison survived, adapting and evolving into smaller, but faster herd animals. After millions of these mighty beasts rubbed their tough hides against me, I took on a polished look. And the encircling rut at my base got deeper as more animals came to visit.

As a 'bison rubbing stone' I became a landmark, and a place for special ceremonies. I was important to human and beast.

But times change. The bison no longer run free. Human hunters have all but eradicated them, and many of us giant boulders have disappeared as well. With larger machines, we've been removed, or buried - especially in crop land, where we're a major inconvenience.

I'm a fortunate one - still right where that 'ol glacier left me - in the middle of a pasture south of Pierson.

In Spring, as my farmers check fences and our newborn calves, they'll come over to feel the

sun's warmth on my smooth, polished surface. And, yes, the cattle know I'm here to help scratch that itch. They too, follow the rut that goes around my base. Little do they know they're walking in the footsteps of their cloven-hooved cousins from thousands of years ago.



Stones, like this one near Pierson, have a story to tell.

I stand as a natural monument to the bison herds. When the sun's just right, I can see them surround me, hear the young ones play, taste the dust they kick up, smell the nutrient they leave behind and feel the earth shake from a million thundering hooves as they, en masse, evade a predator. Erratic yes. But as a keeper of the stories, I'm dependable as well.

Betty Sawatzky and David Neufeld adapted 'Story in a Stone' from a story written for Vantage Points 3.