

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this tour (volume #1) of heritage sites and stories from Southwest Manitoba. Our aim is to lift out lesser known stories of the region to add depth and breadth to the already intriguing attractions in the area.

These stories point to the colourful array of personalities, struggles and generousities that have shaped us. The articles in this booklet have been put together by our summer employee, Teyana Neufeld. Because we (those of us putting these stories together) haven't lived them, they are likely to contain errors or at least weak assumptions. We value your differing or complementary opinions. We've each taken on vantage points – be they physical or philosophical - from which we assess our world. Any site or story has many viewpoints.

There is evidence that humans have used this region to gather food, provide shelter and enjoy community for 10,000 years. We've chosen to loosely limit ourselves to the early 1800s (when Dakota and Assiniboine Nations were dominant, hunting bison and supplying the fur trade) through the mid 1800s (when Métis hunting parties and settlement reigned supreme) to the late 1800s and early 1900s (as European settlers moved in to radically transform the economy and appearance of the land).

We are the descendants of those earlier people of the plains, and all of us face the need to change the way we interact with the landscape as environmental concerns force us to evaluate our established and adopted ways. On the surface, we hope to celebrate our local sites and stories to enjoy them for their entertainment value. But we also hope to offer inspiration for the road ahead by looking beyond our own communities and comfort zones. As many of us have discovered over the years, our independence depends on our interdependence. It would seem wise for us to understand how this landscape has been used over the centuries so we can better contribute to the knowledge, interactions and lifestyles of our children and their children.

Understandably, Euro-settler stories have been better documented (at least in written form) than Métis and Aboriginal stories. As time elapses the older stories and sites get covered by the new, and so we're making extra effort to uncover those from deeper layers. We're hoping to find a blend in which everyone in the region will recognize their heritage as being central to the past, present and future. Thank you for participating in this journey.

David M. Neufeld – Chair

For more information please visit vantagepoints.ca

Turtle Mountain – Souris Plains Heritage Association:
Our SW Manitoba association of Councils, Locals, Municipalities and Citizens aims to:
celebrate oral histories ♦ protect heritage sites ♦ attract visitors
♦ promote creative and partnered economic development
♦ have this culturally and environmentally
diverse region recognized internationally for its beauty and spirited co-operation