

WELCOME



Not long after releasing our first publication, we began hearing from readers the hope that a second volume would soon be in the works: and if I have learned anything in my last four years of research, it is that there is no end of heritage stories to tell.

Several initiatives have helped bring a focus to this second volume of *Vantage Points*. Last year the Turtle Mountain – Souris Plains Heritage Association sent Mary Conway, along with summer student Courtney Kerasz, to conduct a series of interviews among Elders of the Turtle Mountain Métis Community. The stories that resulted from these interviews are at times not that different from the experience of early European settlers. In some respects the Métis at Turtle Mountain were simply another group of people struggling with the same hardships of early settlement. However, the Métis of Canada form the only Nation which was born on Turtle Island and over time they have had to struggle with what that distinction means, both with their neighbours and various levels of government.

This *Vantage Points* will also explore the political and economic reasons behind the movements of other groups of people to and through southwest Manitoba: notably the Assiniboine and Dakota First Nations, who knew the Canadian prairies long before Europeans moulded the landscape to suit a much different economy. Also included is the interesting history behind Chinese establishments in rural Manitoban communities.

This last year we added new regions to our area of activity: the rural municipalities of Arthur and Edward and the towns of Melita and Pierson. We're pleased to share stories from this, the most southwesterly, corner of the province. Though these stories are site-based, the places they describe tell the story of the region's first inhabitants and first settlers: they are stories about people interacting with the land over centuries of time.

As always, there are many stories that we did not get to include this time around. I can only promise that future volumes of *Vantage Points* will relate the story of Sitting Eagle—a wandering Dakota man who has left a trail of memories in the minds of southwest Manitoba's inhabitants—and the history of Lake Metigoshe as prime cabin country. These stories, among others, got lost along the way and I hope to pick them up at a later time.

I hope you enjoy!

Teyana Neufeld - Researcher/writer and TM-SPHA Project Coordinator



Mary Conway made this book possible: by interviewing her friends and neighbours, providing ready answers to countless questions and opening up her photo albums. Thank you.

★ Check out the TM-SPHA website: www.vantagepoints.ca ★

Turtle Mountain – Souris Plains Heritage Association:

Our Southwest 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