

GUEST EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION



When I came to teach in Deloraine in 1975, I brought with me a love of history but I had no idea of the rich heritage that surrounded me. It was an opportunity to change the way I taught as I learned to listen more than talk and visit historical sites rather than read text books.

For in my classes and my community were children of the Métis and relatives of leaders such as Cuthbert Grant. There were students whose ancestors were the first entrepreneurs of Old Deloraine. There were grandchildren of the only coal miners in Manitoba's history. There were descendants of soldiers who fought in the trenches at Passchendaele and the beaches of Normandy. There were grandchildren and great grandchildren who could still discuss the Great Depression with their grandparents.

Close by in exposed ploughed fields were the arrowheads of prehistoric hunters, buffalo pounds and the remnants of the burial mounds used over a thousand years ago by Canada's aboriginal people. On the Souris River and Turtle Mountain one could stand in the cellars of fur trading posts dating back to the 18th century. You could walk in footsteps of Dakota and Métis hunters on Yellow Quill Trail and stroll in the wagon ruts of the Boundary Commission Trail. Close by was the site of one of the busiest land titles offices, known locally as Newcomb's Hollow, where homesteaders laid claim to their $\frac{1}{4}$ sections of prairie soil. Here you could stand and imagine the Great Trek of the forerunners of the RCMP who camped close by on their arduous 1874 journey to control the whiskey traders in the Northwest Territories. You could visit ghost towns that were moved and abandoned by a mere stroke of a pen as the CPR laid tracks to the Rocky Mountains.

This is our local history, as rich as anywhere else in Canada. That is why the *Vantage Points* publications are so important. They reveal and preserve our heritage and share the many stories that may otherwise be lost. I congratulate the people in the Turtle Mountain-Souris Plains Heritage Association that have made this a priority. They are culminating and expanding the work of others like Chris Vickers, Bill Moncur, Ken Williams, Larry Clarke, Doug Morrison, and Richard Schoonbaert who unselfishly took time to record the past so we have an understanding of our roots and heritage.

The history of southwestern Manitoba is unique but is permanently entwined in the history of our entire nation. Although each group may interpret our history differently—from the Dakota to the Métis to the European settlers to recent immigrant families—we are ultimately part of the footprints of Manitoba. It is something to be celebrated and shared and this is what *Vantage Points* does so well. I hope there are many more volumes to come as so many people have a story to tell.

Bob Caldwell

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