

AFTERWORD

It is a frigid January afternoon, there's a whiteout just beyond the windows. The north wind howls over the lake and gains strength before it hits the cabin. I've stoked the cookstove a few times. The Turtle Mountain wood gives off good heat, but not enough warmth to take away the chill from the room. I have learned to be cautious of the possibility of a chimney fire. The roar of the flames as they sweep up the stovepipes, and the sight of the flames as they shoot out into the sky, can be also be bone-chilling. For me, it's time to turn up the electricity. For the homesteaders, it was just one more part of pioneer-life to endure, along with droughts, frosts, dust-storms, plagues of grasshoppers, swarms of mosquitoes, prairie fires and many more daily challenges to be met, such as tonsillectomies and appendix operations done on the kitchen table.

Our series of Vantage Points books has told many stories about challenges faced and overcome. Articles talked about the layering of footprints as explorers, fur-traders, Métis buffalo hunters and pioneers who ventured westward to build new lives on prairie soil. The government advertised this land as holding great opportunities for future livelihoods, and it was free for the taking. But we know that when the homesteaders arrived, this wasn't an empty land. Travelers didn't have to forge completely new trails; those paths were already there, pounded into the landscape by the migrations of buffalo that were followed by Aboriginal peoples. Until recent times, history books seemed to indicate that life in Canada basically began with explorers like Jacques Cartier. But consider reading the *Inconvenient Indian* by Thomas King; *1491: New Revelations on the Americas Before Columbus* by Charles C. Man; *The Orenda* by Joseph Boyden.

In future Vantage Points, the Turtle Mountain – Souris Plains Heritage Association members plan to dig deeper into our heritage and research so many other stories waiting to be told. We welcome contributions from First Nations and Métis story-tellers – we especially seek stories that are still only in oral form, tales heard from parents and grandparents. Your voices need to be heard.

- Leona Devuyt, TM-SPHA Chair
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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 re-
gion recognized internation-
ally for its beauty and spirited
co-operation



vantagepoints.ca

Thank you

- To our readers who provide feedback and information that gives us continuing incentive to research our local history;
- To TM-SPHA members who represent communities and local governments within our region;
- To our Municipal governments who provide per capita funding and knowledgeable advice;
- To the citizens who are willing to be interviewed and to the interviewers who help collect data on our heritage. You have told us so many stories that make us reflect, appreciate and often smile;
- To the Turtle Mountain Métis Local and the Southwest Manitoba Métis Federation, our association partners since our inception
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- To Ken Storie, the author of this book, a very knowledgeable guy who, although he is 'hired' to research and write the stories, does many times more work than he charges. Definitely his fee for service is far below minimum wage. We hope you had as much fun reading his book, as he says he had writing it.

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