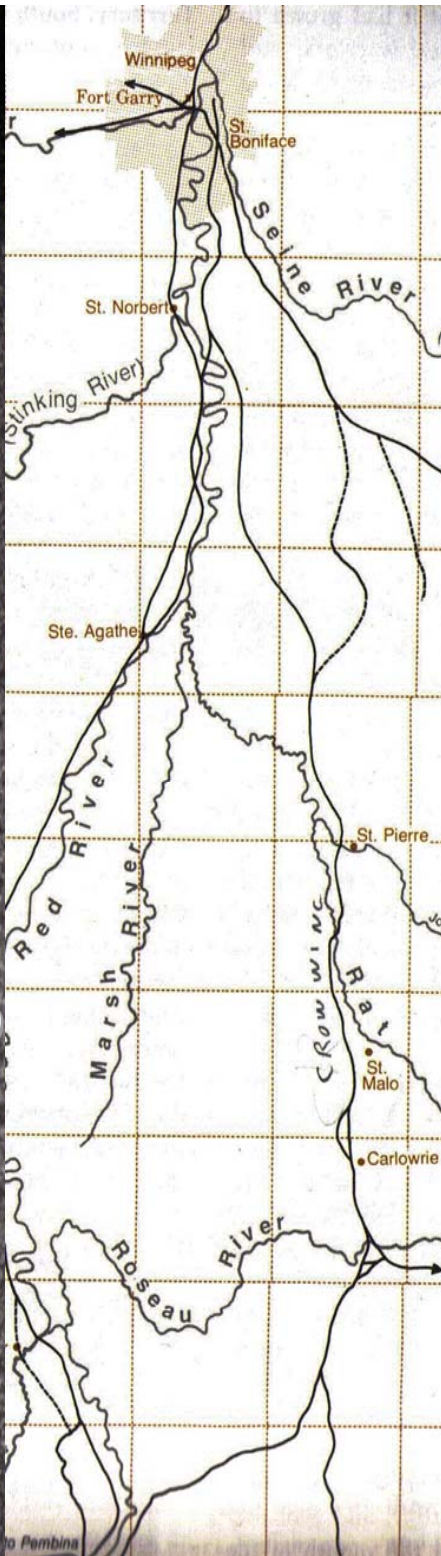


# Crow Wing Trail – chemin St- Paul



**Your adventure along today's CROW WING TRAIL will allow you to step back to a time when its existence was crucial to the survival of a developing country.**

**The trail was used as a safe and easy route to world markets of the 1800's. It was used to transport goods and people to and from the Red River Settlement and the Crow Wing Settlement on the Mississippi River.**

**Today, 190 kms of the trail have been revived as a recreational trail, part of the Trans Canada Trail, which links our country from sea to sea.**



## About this guide

This guide was developed to be used in conjunction with the *Tall Grass Prairie* interpretive map that identifies features such as access points and facilities, available at the Manitoba Recreational Trails Association [www.mrta.mb.ca](http://www.mrta.mb.ca).

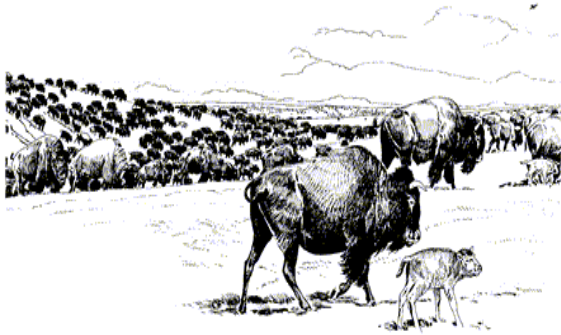
The emphasis of this guide is on discovery of the history of the trail, the lifestyle of those who used it and its importance to the development of a fledgling nation.

Although the present trail does sometimes follow many parts of the original trail, for the most part, it does not. Much of the landscape would have been the same and in some instances users will actually see what the original trail users would have seen in the early 1800's.

Today's trail is 190 kms long and has been divided into three sections. The northern section is from St. Norbert Heritage Park to Otterburne. The middle section is from Otterburne to St. Malo. The southern section is from St. Malo to Emerson at the U.S. border.

The trail promotes hiking, biking, horseback riding and cross country skiing. Motorized vehicles are not permitted when the trail is not located on a municipal road.

Map used is Manitoba topographic 62.  
**GPS is set to NAD 83.**



## BISON

Once one of the most abundant animal species on the continent, the bison assured man's survival in a harsh climate. The First Peoples, the Anishinaabeg, depended heavily on the mushkoday bizhikii for food, clothing and shelter.

It sustained the fur trade with a staple of pemmican (dried meat) which the Métis used along with the animal's hide as a trade item for the commercial success of the Red River Colony.



## FIRST PEOPLES

Populating the continent since time immemorial, the First Peoples of this land divided territories amongst themselves. They established migration patterns throughout the continent.

Some of the conflicts between the Plains Tribes and the Métis over land use eventually led to new configurations of old trail and in particular the Crow Wing Trail further east of the Red River.



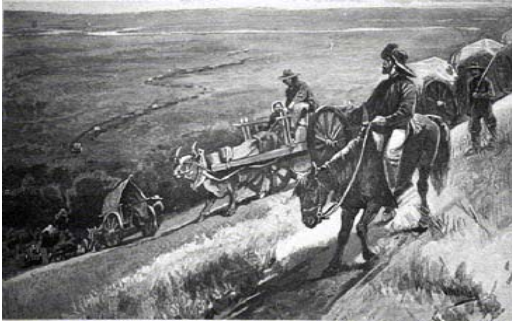
## THE FUR TRADE

From the early 1700's to the late 1800's the fur trade redefined the prairie's character. The French (LaVérendrye), the Scots (North West Co.) and the English (Hudson's Bay Co.), and even the Americans (Columbia Fur Co.), all had a commercial interest in the prairies.

They married into native tribes influencing culture, language, economy, transportation, communication and even religion.







## THE PLAINS

The great plains of this continent offered much in the way of natural resources to the outside world. For several hundred years these had to be transported using an arduous east/west water route.

This was not economical therefore the Hudson Bay Co. devised a north/south water route through Hudson's Bay which was still dangerous and seasonal.

The topography of the plains offered a much safer, faster and more reliable avenue south when cities in the U.S. began to flourish on the Mississippi in the 1820's.

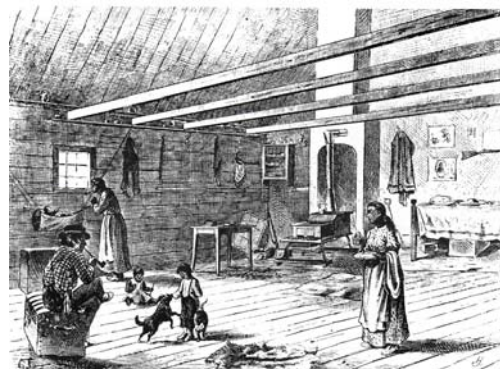


## THE MÉTIS

The offspring of more than a century of contact between white traders and First Nations peoples resulted in a new race of people in the West.

They earned their livelihood from the fur trade as traders, interpreters, boatmen, cart drivers and provisioners.

The Métis developed their own social and cultural identity as well as their own customs and traditions.



## THE TRADERS

The fur trade companies such as the Hudson's Bay and the Columbia Fur Companies either hired them, or they were independent merchants working in their own interest. Some of these men became prominent citizens of the era.

Many are honored as place names such as Kittson, Bottineau, McDermot, Garrioch and Sinclair.





## THE FREIGHT

Shipped south out of the Red River Colony were furs, skins, dried bison meat, moccasins and skin garments decorated with beads or porcupine quills.

Goods coming back north included tools, guns and ammunition, farm implements, dry goods, tobacco, liquor, clothing of all kinds and even window glass. The first printing press was shipped to Manitoba by ox cart.

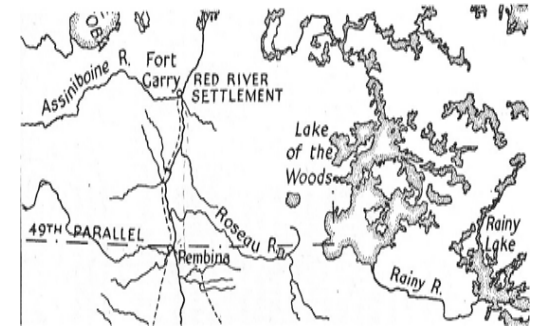


## THE FOOD

Wild game such as deer and prairie chicken along with berries and nuts were plentiful along the trail. One could always vary the diet by making "Rubbaboo" a sort of porridge made of dried meat, marrow fat with flour and onions.

The kitchen also carried butter, sugar, salt and tea. It was estimated that 10 kgs. per cart of hard biscuit were needed for a one-way trip.

Cooking implements were hung under the cart's axle.

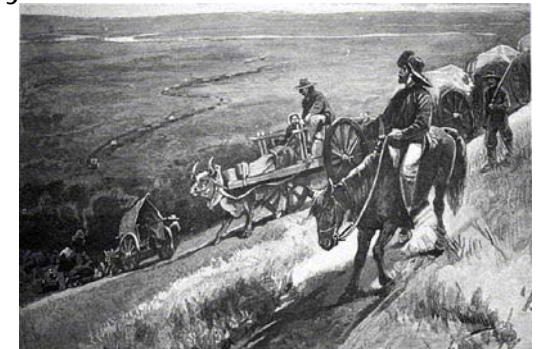


## THE TRAIL

One of several trails crossing the prairies since the early 1800's, the Crow Wing was upgraded and moved to the east in 1844. It offered better shelter, wood supplies, better water and was away from bellicose tribes.

It was safer, shorter and more economical to transport goods over land to the Mississippi than by canoe to the Hudson Bay.

A typical one-way trip took only 15 days for the 650 kms.







## THE CART

The Red River Cart was of French and Scottish origin, owing its invention to the fur trade. It first appears at Pembina around 1800. It was completely fabricated of wood, (mostly oak) which made it easily repaired on the trail. It was light but strong, able to carry over 450 kgs. of freight. The wheels were dished outward for greater stability. When crossing a river they could be removed, wrapped in hides and lashed to the bottom of the cart for flotation.



## Excerpts from the diary of the Hon. John Schultz Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba 1860...

"...this road or trail, called by those at this end of it "Old Red River Trail" was one which had been used for many years, and while our Métis and Crees were at war with the Sioux, it was considered both safer and shorter than the one on the west side of the River...and even then was often used, as being less open to prairie fires, with better wood, for encampments and high gravelly ridges to render part of it at least as good as a turnpike road. Its drawbacks were the many streams, eastern affluents of the Red River, which had to be forded, being after heavy rains very formidable obstacles to loaded or even light carts. The tracks, triple marked, were plain enough till the outer limit of the skirting woods was reached and then they began diverging like the ribs of a fan. I assumed that they would converge again on high ground, and so the best of them was followed.

... and the day ended with tired horses and only a short part of a day's journey traversed... the two rivers, with their muddy, murky banks and bottoms, were crossed at dusk, for it is a rule in prairie travel always to encamp at the further side of the stream, that the morning's start may be made with dry clothes and fresh horses..."

For more information or if you would like to become a member or donate to the trail please visit us on the web at:

[www.mrta.mb.ca/Trails/CrowWing/home.htm](http://www.mrta.mb.ca/Trails/CrowWing/home.htm)

or by e-mail to:

[cwta@voyageur.coop](mailto:cwta@voyageur.coop)

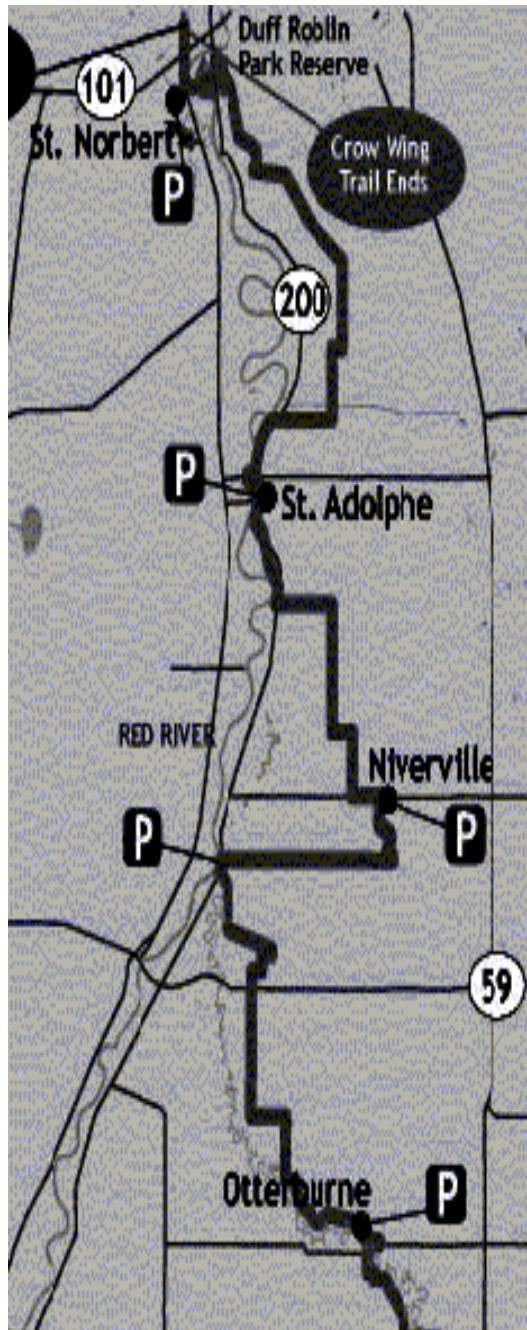
or write to us at:

Crow Wing Trail Association –  
Chemin Saint-Paul Inc.  
P.O. Box 268  
St-Pierre-Jolys, MB  
R0A 1V0





## SECTION 1

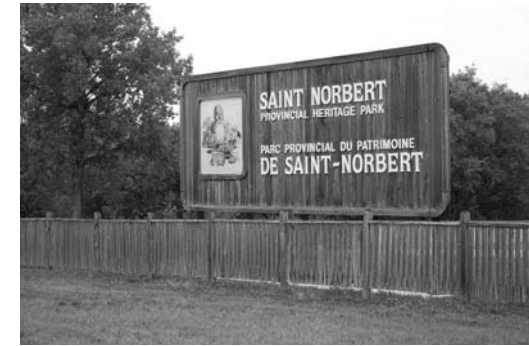


56 kms.

**This section of the Crow Wing Trail/Chemin Saint-Paul is between St. Norbert to the north and Otterburne to the south.**

**It is 56 kms in length.**

**It takes us through typical Red River Valley scenery.**



## St. Norbert

St. Norbert Heritage Park illustrates how a natural landscape used for hunting, fishing and camping by Native Peoples evolved into a French-speaking Métis Settlement and then a French-Canadian agricultural community of the pre-WW-1 period.

Visit the restored Turenne and Bohémier houses of the pre-1870 era.



**49°45.141'N, 97°08.680'W**





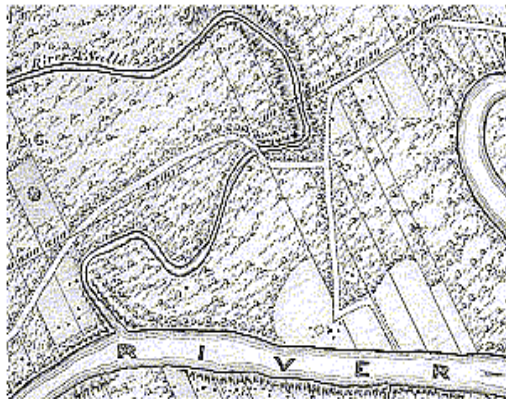
## The Red River Floodway

It was built in 1962-68 to divert floodwaters around the city of Winnipeg. At the time it was the largest land-moving project in the world.

It was put to the test in 1979 and again in 1997 during the "Flood of the Century". In 2003 it was designated a National Historic Site.



**49°44.930'N, 97°08.021'W**



## La barriere

Near here on November 1, 1869 the Métis barred the road to the representative of the Canadian Government the Honorable Wm. McDougald.

This intervention by the Métis forced the government to undertake negotiations directly with them. This eventually led to the creation of Manitoba as the fifth member of the Confederation on July 15, 1870.



## Prairie Trail

From this place, looking south, we can see some of the flattest land on earth left behind by ancient Lake Agassiz.

This flat land lent itself easily to the establishment of several "prairie cart trails" heading off in all directions from the Red River Settlement in the 1800's, trails that were first used by the Dakota and Ojibwa.



**49°44.726'N, 97°03.997'W**





### Seine River Diversion

This is an engineered channel stretching some 36 kms. to the east and finishing at the Red River near St. Adolphe.

It was constructed in the late 1960's to relieve downstream flooding along the Seine River and provide drainage improvements to the watershed.

The Seine River naturally empties into The Red at Winnipeg but when flows are high enough, water is diverted into the channel by culverts at Ste. Anne.

**49° 41.800'N, 97° 04.311'W**



### The Red River

This would have been one of the last chances to see the river as the trail would have slowly started to veer south east, headed for the "ridge" located along the east side of the Red River Valley.

The trail was relocated to the east side of the Red River in 1844 to avoid low lying country and harassment by the Sioux who resented travelers crossing territory which they considered as theirs.

**49° 40.949'N, 97° 06.763'W**



### Pointe Coupée

Pointe Coupée or "cut point" is the original name for St. Adolphe.

In 1869 during the resistance, a survey party came here to cut wood, take some measurements and dig a well. They took no notice of a warning from the Métis that this land belonged to them. When the party left, the Métis pulled out the survey stakes, burnt the wood and filled in the well.

**49° 40.548'N, 97° 06.930'W**



### St. Adolphe

First established in 1857 as a mission of St. Norbert, the area was initially settled around 1800 by the Métis who called it "Pointe Coupée".

The town was renamed in 1893 after Adolphe Turner donated a large amount of money for the erection of a church. Despite devastating floods in 1826 and 1852, several settlers came here from the Red River during the later half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Others came from Eastern Canada and the U.S. to become farmers and horticulturists.

**49° 40.433'N, 97° 06.706'W**



### Trail

The trail at this point is slowly starting to head toward higher gravel ridges to the southeast, which were beaches, formed by ancient Lake Agassiz.

The land was often drier and offered better wood supplies, shelter and water.

Here one can imagine what a weary prairie traveler meant when he said..."each day seems to roll along, one into the other as an endless prairie".

**49° 37.156'N, 97° 04.250'W**



### Niverville

The name first appears on the CPR map of 1877. The name comes from a French nobleman from the fur trade era.

A German diplomat, the Honorable W. Hespeler who also built Manitoba's first grain elevator in 1879, planned the town. English, Scottish and Mennonite farmers settled the area.



**49° 36.361'N, 97° 02.540'W**





**Tourond Creek**

This is a Ducks Unlimited project, known locally as "Dead Man's Pond" and is an excellent site for observing birds and wildlife.

During the early 1800's, the French and Métis inhabitants of the area would have come here to hunt for pigeon, an important food source. It is said that 50 birds could be killed with a single shot of fine pellet ammunition. Due to over hunting, the species is now extinct.

Crown Valley Road was walked by hundreds of Mennonites from the river landing to the immigration sheds in Niverville.

**49° 35.469'N, 97° 07.037'W**



**Mennonite Landing**

This is the site of the first landing of Mennonite Settlers in Western Canada. From 1874 to 1880 some 7,000 came to Manitoba from German-speaking colonies in South Russia (Ukraine).

They were granted two reserves, both east and west of the Red River, totaling 25 townships in all. They were among the first Europeans to establish farm communities on the open prairie and became known for successfully transplanting their non-resistant church-centered way of life.

**49° 35.270'N, 97° 08.188'W**



**Trail... not all weather**

On a flat, featureless region of the prairie such as this, trail guides would remove the top branches from a tall tree thus creating a landmark seen from a great distance. These were called a "lob stick" or "chandelle" (a practice adopted from the fur trade). Later, posts were planted in the ground to indicate the route during winter storms.

**49° 34.985'N, 97° 07.816'W**



### Fields

Today's fields of corn, wheat, sunflower or canola would have looked much different to a traveler on the Crow Wing Trail of 1830.

Prairie Cordgrass, Sideoats Grama, Big Bluestem and Indian Grass grew a meter or more in height.

Grass could grow so tall that a man on horseback could not see over it. People could get lost on the prairie as if in a forest. It was said that a line often tethered children at play lest they disappear in the grass.

This road takes you along the Crystal Springs Hutterite Colony established in 1954.

**49°31.018'N, 97°05.511'W**



### Providence College

In 1912, the Catholic Order of Les Clercs de St-Viateur purchased 569 acres of land to establish the St-Joseph Home, an "agricultural orphanage" for boys.

It eventually became a seminary college and then, a secondary school before being sold to the Winnipeg Bible College in 1970.

The College now enrolls over 800 students from around the world and is the largest of its kind in Canada.



**49°30.109'N, 97°02.666'W**



### Otterburne

The Métis as a wintering ground for its wood and hay used this region of the Rat River since the early 1800's.

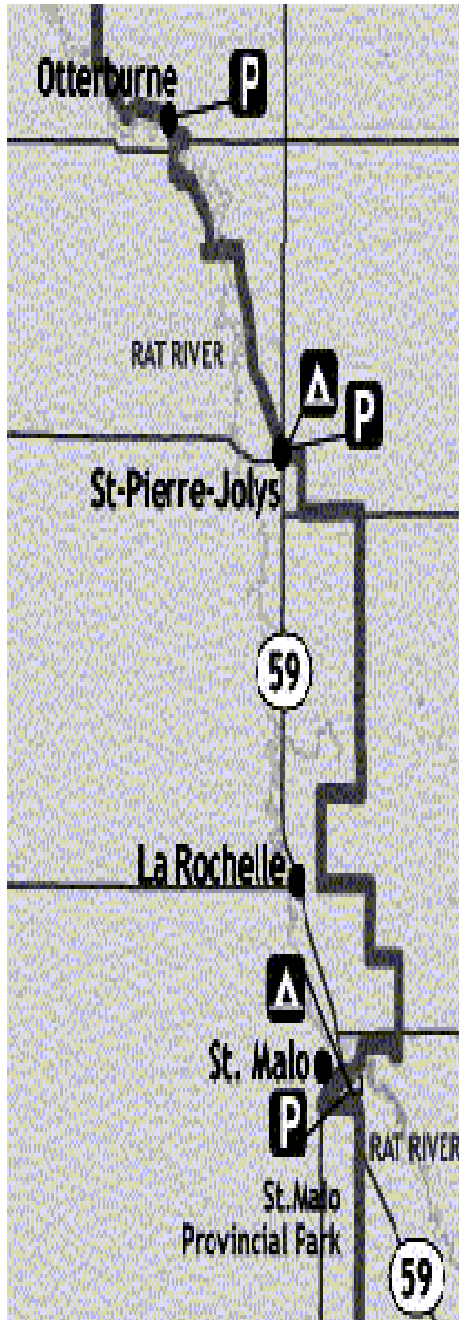
Encouraged by Father Ritchot, they started to make official claims to the land in 1870 as part of the "Rat River Settlement".

It is said that an English-speaking engineer for the CPR notes it on the station map in 1876, with the name meaning "small river" in Gaelic.

**49°29.812'N, 97°03.086'W**



## SECTION 2



50 kms.

## About this Section

This section of the trail is approximately 50 kms. in length. It is a multi-use trail for hiking, biking and horseback riding.

Small sections are reserved for cross-country skiing in St. Malo Provincial Park and in St-Pierre-Jolys.

Drinking water, washrooms, food outlets, campgrounds and accommodations are available along the way. A separate groomed trail is available for snowmobiles.



## Prairie Vista

The prairies had a rich variety of grasses and forbs that were drought tolerant and needed full sunlight.

One of the obvious features of the prairie is the relative absence of trees. In the prairie's native condition, fires set by lightning or by the Aborigines kept out trees.

Drought and grazing by bison, antelope and elk, also prevented shrubs and trees from becoming established except in moist protected areas.

49°28.838'N, 97°01.811'W

Sec 2 Page 1/3



### Along the Original Trail

Although graveled over, you are now following the original trail along the Rat River.

One of the challenging crossings at Joubert Creek was, according to the Honorable J. Schultz, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba... "a very difficult stream to traverse in high water; the banks being steep and the bed of the river soft".

The next crossing was at Rivière du Milieu near Carlowrie and then on to cross the Roseau River.

49° 27.368'N, 97° 00.035'W



### Cairn

This cairn is on one of the surviving sections of the trail.

It commemorates the opening of additional segments of the trail in 1844 by Pierre Garrioch, making it an official supply route between St. Paul, Minnesota and the Red River Settlement.

Locally known as ***chemin St-Paul*** or ***la route de l'aile de corbeau***, it played an important role in the development of St-Pierre-Jolys and the surrounding area.

49° 26.541'N, 96° 59.198'W



### Maison Goulet House

Mr. Moïse Goulet was a freighter who transported merchandise by cart from St. Paul to Fort Garry.

His house was situated along the Crow Wing Trail two miles south of St-Pierre-Jolys and was a renting place for freighters.

It is at least 150 years old and is built of hand-cut logs. It was designated a historical building and given to the museum in 1985.

49° 26.412'N, 96° 59.209'W





### Convent

This is the former convent of the Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary, which is now the local museum.

The Roman Catholic religion played a dominant role in the lives of the early French settlers.

During the early decades, the popular and characteristically French Mansard and Gambrel-style roofs of many structures further denoted the French flavor of these communities.

Remnant examples of this can be found in most communities.

**49°26.541'N, 96°59.198'W**



### St-Pierre-Jolys

Shortly after his participation in the Red River Resistance of 1870, Father Noël Ritchot of St. Norbert gathered a group of parishioners and led an expedition down the Crow Wing to this area.

He was convinced that the land here was extremely fertile and a good place for an agricultural settlement.

As the expedition took place around the Feast Day of St. Pierre, the saint's name was chosen for the new settlement and church. The name "Jolys" was later added in honor of Father Jolys, the parish's first resident priest.

**49°26.486'N, 96°59.108'W**



### Lone Tree

This location is reminiscent of a welcomed site to the weary traveler.

A lone tree was a beacon on the prairie, often signaling that a spring or stream was nearby.

It provided a good place to rest or camp and some shade for the animals. Hence this observation from an early explorer... "and all was prairie, a tree would have been a companion, a friend..."

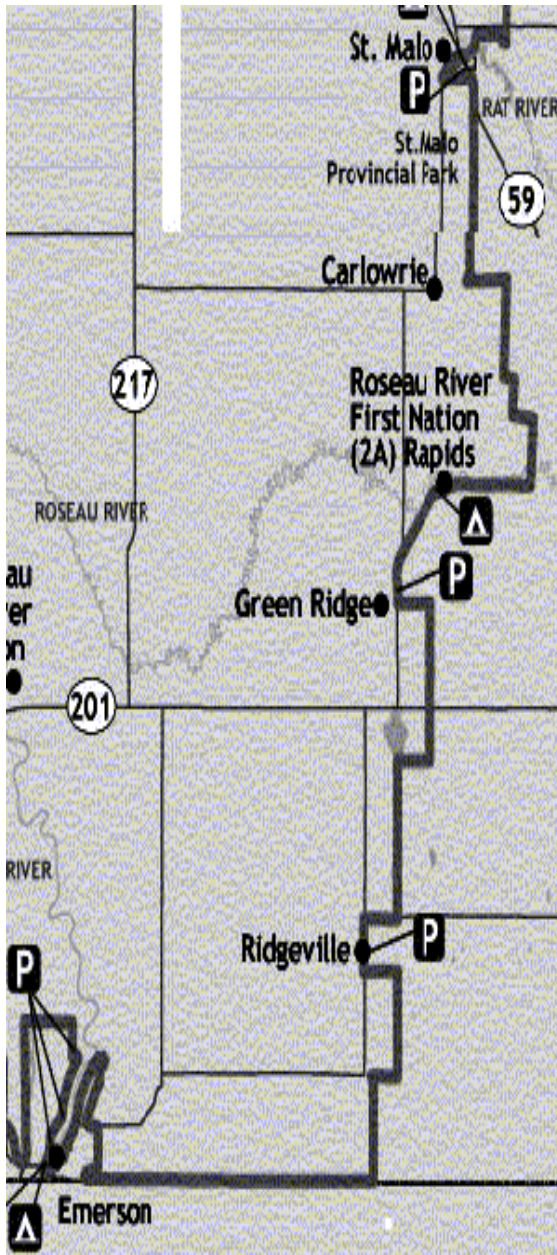


**49°21.320'N, 96°56.039'W**





### SECTION 3



88 kms.

### About this section

This is the longest portion of the trail running through sparsely populated agricultural areas.

Most of the trail is good for walking, biking and horseback riding. Horses cannot cross the suspension bridge at Senkiw and bikes have to be carried.

The portion from Ridgeville to Emerson is largely an undeveloped road allowance.

Snow shoeing and cross-country skiing can occur along the whole trail with the northern portion providing more tree cover. Water and washrooms are generally available in St. Malo, Ridgeville and Emerson.

Accommodations are available in St. Malo and Emerson.



### St. Malo Provincial Park

This is one of Manitoba's most popular parks.

In 1958, a reservoir was created when a dam was built on the Rat River due to growing concerns about the area's water supply.

In 1961, the north shore was designated a provincial park to provide camping, beaches and day-use facilities.



49° 19.062'N, 96° 56.356'W

Sec 3 Page 1/6



### **Maison-Chapelle**

1890 saw the beginning of the construction for St. Malo's first church, which included a second floor and measured 30 x 40 feet.

In 2003, local citizens reproduced it as a visitor centre.

At this location one can easily see the transition between the open prairie of the Red River Valley and the upland areas dominated by mixed woods vegetation.

**49° 19.041'N, 96° 56.929'W**



### **St. Malo Grotto**

St. Malo's second parish priest, Father Noret, arrived from France in 1895.

He brought with him his country's popular devotion to Our Lady of Lourdes and started the construction of the chapel with his parishioners a year later.

In 1902, the little chapel was replaced by an actual grotto built from fieldstones.

Pilgrimages still take place here on an annual basis.

**49° 19.017'N, 96° 56.811'W**



### **St. Malo**

Following a rapid growth in the region's population between 1881 and 1889, the pioneer farmer Louis Malo and Father Jolys from St. Pierre asked Bishop Taché to establish a new parish in the vicinity.

The St. Malo Settlement is one of six "special surveys" in Manitoba, which allowed for lots of roughly two miles deep and fronted along a section of a riverbank.

**49° 19.017'N, 96° 57.232'W**





### Senkiw Trail

Two alternative crossings of the river are possible. One for horses at **49°12.102'N, 96°53.638'W** (one mile west and ½ mile south) and for cars at Hwy 218, 5 miles west.

Please stay on the trail.

Before reaching the bridge, you will be crossing the War Road Path that was used by Sioux and Ojibwa between the plains and the Lake of the Woods. It can be seen on early maps of the explorers.

**49°12.329'N, 96°52.590'W**



### Senkiw Bridge

This is the oldest swinging bridge in the province. In 1946 local residents built this bridge with readily available materials such as the large cylinders from threshing machines.

It replaced a hand-powered cable crossing. It allowed children on the south side of the river to attend school on the north side.

It was restored in 2000 by volunteers of the Trans Canada Trail after having been destroyed twice by floodwaters and rebuilt.

**49°11.894'N, 96°53.019'W**



### Roseau River Vista

This is an excellent view of the river valley.

Explorers such as LaVérendrye to Dawson used this river as a means of getting to the Red River from Lake of the Woods.

Log drives were once popular and the largest sturgeon ever caught in Manitoba came from this river.

In this section of over 30 kms. the river level drops one meter for every km., cutting through these ancient sand and gravel ridges of glacial Lake Agassiz.

**49°11.875'N, 96°54.581'W**



### **Three Fires**

These grounds are a meeting place for the Anishinaabeg Nation, which includes the Ojibwa, Potawatomie and Odawa Peoples.

The lodge here is central to the social well being of the society.

It is used for ceremonies such as weddings, healings, funerals, adoptions and honourings. It provides a forum for teaching and leadership. It is considered a "safe" place.

### **Please be Respectful**

**49° 11.875'N, 96° 54.581'W**



### **Wounded Warrior Rock**

During the late 1700's and early 1800's, encounters between Ojibwa and the Sioux were frequent.

This rock is the spot of a pitched battle. Afterward, by mutual acceptance, it became the boundary line between the two Nations.

To this day, both Nations regard this as a spiritual site, making offerings of tobacco and sweet grass.

During the dust bowl conditions of the 1930's, drifting soils covered much of the boulder.

Due to its spiritual significance, this site is not marked.



### **Kirkpatrick Swamp**

This swamp is typical of many that were found on the prairies before modern agriculture was established.

Many of these wetlands were considered an impediment to progress and were drained.

To people on the trail, they were a source of food with their bounty of waterfowl. Water, both surface and groundwater still plays an important role in the development of the area.

**49° 07.112'N, 96° 59.190'W**





### Ridgeville

This town so named by a pioneer settler by the name of Fitzgerald, because of the prominent sand ridge that extends for ten miles on an otherwise flat landscape.

Settlers began arriving in 1873, a school district was organized in 1880 and the railway arrived in 1902.

**49°03.919'N, 97°00.513'W**



### Canada/U.S. Border

The border had always been the center of conflict between the monopolistic Hudson Bay Co. and the free trading Métis of the early 1800's.

In 1849, the Company finally brought some of them to court for transporting goods into the U.S. but to no avail (Sayer Trial).

The trade was declared "libre" or free and the Company's monopoly was broken.

**49°00.030'N, 97°00.616'W**



### Emerson Trail Head Sign

The first post office was opened here in 1871 as Pembina and later changed to Emerson in 1879.

It was considered the "Gateway to the West" as early settlers bound for southwestern Manitoba came through via the U.S. in 1873.

In 1889, the Hudson's Bay Co. sponsored the settlement of West Lynne, a town on the west bank of the Red, and united it with Emerson.

**49°00.355'N, 97°12.922'W**



### Fort Dufferin

On September 18, 1872 a group of British Royal Engineers and Canadian civilians arrived here by steamboat. They were to build a fort that would serve as the headquarters for the survey of the international boundary.

The primary reference point from which the boundary survey began was located here.

The North West Mounted Police also used this fort in 1874 to start their famous March West and then in 1875 it became an immigration center for thousands of people seeking new homes in Canada.

**49°01.822'N, 97°12.153'W**



### Trans Canada Trail Pavilion

#### TRAIL ETIQUETTE

- PLAN AHEAD
- Be aware of local trail conditions.
- WHEELS YIELD TO HEELS
- Stay on the trail, and respect private property including crops, livestock and equipment.
- Close all gates.
- Keep pets on a leash.
- TAKE only photographs,
- LEAVE only footprints.
- ENJOY THE ADVENTURE

**49°00.323'N, 97°14.069'W**

This pamphlet is an initiative of the Crow Wing Trail Association.

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**First edition 03-09**

#### **Acknowledgments:**

Manitoba Recreational Trails Association  
 Chaboillé CDC  
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 Manitoba Lotteries Corporation  
 Manitoba Archives  
 Manitoba Culture, Heritage Tourism & Sport  
 Manitoba Historical Society  
 Minnesota Historical Society

The Municipalities of:  
 Ritchot, De Salaberry and Franklin  
 Roseau River First Nation  
 The Towns of: Emerson and Niverville  
 The Village of St-Pierre-Jolys

Ed Ledohowski  
 Murielle Bugera  
 Réal Bérard  
 Georges and Florence Beaudry

#### **Recommended reading:**

The Red River Trails –  
 Minnesota Historical Society –  
 1979 – ISBN – 0-87351-133-6