

## *Elva, and the oldest elevator in Canada!*



H. J. Archibald and his family came from the east in 1882 and settled northwest of where Elva was later built. Archibald established a post office out of his home.

With the arrival of the CPR in 1891, an unincorporated village grew on a corner of James Skelton's land. The community was later named after the first baby to be born in the district.

The elevator was built in 1897. At that time the Lake of the Woods Milling Co was one of Manitoba's top companies in the grain industry. The Lake of the Woods Elevator shared the business with three other elevators.

Elva continued to grow, and by 1908 the community boasted a population of 150 people.

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## *St. George's Anglican Church – Copley*



Copley Anglican Church may have seen better days, but the ruins of the standing walls alone on a vast prairie make an attractive sight.

European settlement made its way west of the Souris River in 1882. Before long a group of Church of England settlers built the first church (of any denomination) west of the Souris River.

By the spring of 1892 the building was ready for use. A small cemetery was soon established on the west side of the church. There are reportedly 11 graves in the cemetery, though only three headstones exist on the site today. The late 1890s and early 1900s brought poor farming conditions which caused many families to leave the district, leading to a decline in the number of church members. The church was finally deconsecrated on June 13, 1913 – the same day that a new Anglican church, St. John's, was founded in Pierson.

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## History Bits - Pierson District Heritage Association

### James Dandy - and his Park

In the early days of Pierson's development, Mr. James Dandy was one of the town's most active entrepreneurs. He moved to the village from Ontario in 1891 with his parents and siblings. He owned the town's first hardware, furniture and lumber business in addition to serving as the community's first postmaster. He later went on to finance the construction of the Leland Hotel and also owned farmland outside town.

In 1914 the Dandy family departed for a trip to Scotland aboard the Empress of Ireland. Shortly after the ship had left harbour, a massive fog bank emerged, and the Empress was struck by an oncoming coal vessel. The accident claimed 1,012 lives. Dandy survived by swimming in the icy waters of the St. Lawrence long

enough to be rescued, one of only 462 who made it through alive. He died a year afterwards, a result of spending too much time in the cold water.

An attractive park in the heart of Pierson honours his memory, and an interpretive sign outlines his accomplishments.



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## History Bits - Pierson and District Heritage Association

### The Boundary Commission Trail



If you look west from Road #157 W, at about Road #10 N, you can see down to the Souris River. This is one of a few remaining visible corridors of the Boundary Commission Trail.

Though at one time it crossed half the country, most of its impressive length disappeared underneath the feet of settlement and the technology of the railroad.

The trail began as a First Nations travel and trading route, which the fur traders of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century took advantage of when they began penetrating the interior of what was then called Rupert's Land. Not too long afterwards, the Red River carts of the Métis wore grooves into the prairie sod of the trail in their pursuit of the buffalo as the large animals retreated ever westward and into eventual disappearance. In 1872 the Boundary Commissioners used this trail when they were marking the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel as the border between Canada and the United States.

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## The Brockinton Site



Anywhere from 1100-1350 AD this site was occupied by the Duck Bay Culture.

They were a Woodland First Nation group who adopted traits from the plains people, including the practice of seasonal bison hunting.

During its earliest occupation, around 800 AD, the Brockinton Site was used as a bison kill and butchering site. Indigenous people installed a series of posts at the bottom of the Souris River Valley, building a pound. Bison would then be herded down the steep valley to run tripping and tumbling into the structure. A fantastic number of small side-notched arrows were found at this site,

These arrows were probably used to kill the bison at short range. After its use the pound was dismantled and the holes left by the post moulds were filled in with vertically placed bison bones.

This site has been occupied by three different historic First Nation cultures in the last 1,200 years. Most recently, the Williams Culture used the location as a camping place which dates back about 400 years.

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## Coulter Park & the Gould Stone House



Sourisford, as the name suggests, was well known for centuries as being a convenient place to ford the Souris River. Among the earliest settlers to build homesteads along the Souris River were Alfred Gould and David Elliot, who came west on

the Boundary Commission Trail in 1880. They built a log house and barn at the crossing. With the increase of settler travel westward, their home became a regular "stopping place." A regular post office called "Sourisford" was installed in 1883. Gould was postmaster for the first few years, after which Elliot took over until 1920. An unofficial community began to spring up as a blacksmith shop and general store were started up by other settlers. The stone building was built by Alfred Gould in 1902.

The history of Sourisford comes alive at Coulter Park, the oldest ongoing picnic site in Western Canada. Every year since 1882, this riverside grove, located a bit south of the old crossing, has been the site of a picnic which often attracted crowds of thousands.

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