

Pivotal Events in / Settlement / Pre-Railway

1. Souris Mouth / Two Rivers

A Land Titles Office and Post Office were established at Souris Mouth, also called Two Rivers, in 1876 to meet the needs of a large territory beyond what was then the western boundary of Manitoba that was just to be surveyed in preparation for settlement..

This land office (1879-81), and the Two Rivers post office and hardware store of the 1880's were the only businesses ever to be carried on at the mouth of the Souris.

Alice Little, Manitoba History

Excerpt from Collection Canada Database:

Name of Office: Two Rivers
Federal Electoral District: Selkirk
(Manitoba)

Establishment 1880-11-01
Closed 1897-05-31
Former Name: Souris Mouth
Date of Change 1883-10-01

Postmaster Information:

Alex Clark: (1818-11-01 1881-06-01)
George Newcomb (1880-11-01
1881-12-26)
Nelson John Clark until 1897-05-31

Additional Information:

Sec. 16, Twp. 8, R. 16 - 1880-11-01

2. Land Titles Building



The former Land Titles Office and Post Office on NE 16-8-16, about a km west of

its original location. (likely NE 17-8-16) in 1887.

Built ca. 1880, it is the only existing Land Titles Office from the settlement era. Used as part of residence – has an old safe used by the Land Titles / Post Office.

Alexander Clark first came to this area in 1878. He returned in 1881 and became postmaster at Souris Mouth, later called Two Rivers.



This photo from “Prairie Echoes” by J.R. Rome is titled, “Clark Homestead 1882” There is evidence it is the same building pictured earlier.

His daughter’s memoir mentions that they built a home in 1881. It seems likely that this might be that home, and that it replaced a previous, more moderate (temporary) Land Titles building.

The Land Titles Office (but not this building) was relocated as settlement patterns dictated, first to the booming town of Millford, then to Brandon when the arrival of the railroad established that community, but the Post Office remained

In 1887 he moved this building from its original location (likely on his first property, NE 17-8-16), to his new property at this location in and added larger living quarters to it. He was postmaster until his death in 1896.

3. Treesbank Ferry (RM of South Cypress)

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The first Treesbank Ferry gave access to the Dominion Land Office of 1880 on the west side of the Assiniboine River, just up from the mouth of the Souris River. It served the area at this location until the railway came to Treesbank. It was then moved upstream to NE17-8-16W and known as Clark's Crossing. In 1898-99, the Rural Municipality of South Cypress constructed a road, built a new ferry, and took over its operation. When the Treesbank Bridge opened 2½ miles upstream, in September 1989, this long-established crossing closed after 109 years of service.

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/treesbankferry.shtml>

4. Criddle-Vane Homestead (RM of South Cypress)

The buildings on this site formed the homestead of English immigrant Percy Criddle and his wife and children, along with Mrs. Elise Vane and her children. They arrived in western Manitoba in 1882. Also known as Aweme (the basis for which is unclear although some stories maintain it is a truncation of "Awe Me"), the Criddles and Vanes tried to recreate a genteel English landscape in the Carberry sand hills, building a tennis court and golf course, among other amenities. Percy and his children were active naturalists, and his sons Norman Criddle and Stuart Criddle were acclaimed for their work in entomology, horticulture, and other pursuits.

In 2004, the site was designated as a provincial park.

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/criddlevanehomestead.shtml>

5. Rounthwaite



Rounthwaite (officially Naughton) was established on SW 23-8.18 about 2 km west of the present site. St. John the Divine Anglican Church (now at the Sipiweske Museum) was built there in 1882. The Post Office with Samuel Rounthwaite as Postmaster was about 1 km. south. The village was relocated after 1890 to be on the Wawanesa - Brandon RR line.

6. Original Rounthwaite Site

7. Minnewawa

The Post Office was first in the home of Mr. & Mrs. Young. Came from Carroll – one carrier was Mr. Crompton. It closed when Nesbitt opened. A school and cemetery were established.

8. Whitehead

The Charles Kent Store and Bertha –The Settlement also known as Whitehead

5. Whitehead Store - Charles Kent NE 4-7-18 (No record of a Post Office but C. Kent operated the Bertha PO. PO closed when Nesbitt established in 1891

Among those at the Grand Union are: G H Green, New York; John Gregory, Whitehead; W M Rose, A Strong, Portage la Prairie; D Limey, Port Arthur; R Donaldson, Algoma Mills.

The Souris city people purpose celebrating the 28th June instead of the First of July. They will go to the mill at Whitehead, and enjoy themselves in true picnic style.

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WHITEHEAD

June 5th, 1884.

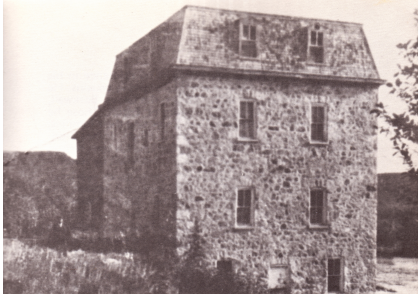
This infant city has not shuffled off this mortal coil, but promises to be a fine place if only the railroad would come anywhere near. Mr. Jno. Gregory is at present in Ontario; expected shortly.

Mr. John Martin, son of W. H. Martin received a bad cut while making some timber down 6-19, from his companion. Five

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9. Gregory's Mill



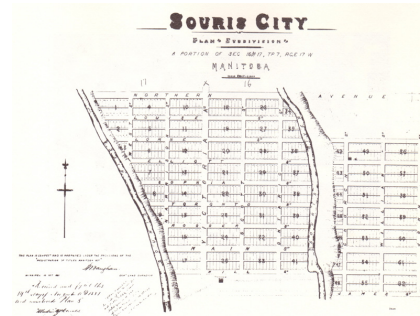
In 1883, John Gregory (c1828-1896) from Wingham, Ontario arrived in Manitoba and took up a homestead claim on 34-6-18 west of the Principal Meridian, in the Rural Municipality of Riverside. Near his home on the banks of the Souris River, Gregory constructed a three-storey stone mill, powered by river water held by an earthen dam, with a steam engine installed later as a backup during periods of low water. Working day and night, it provided flour for the settlers in the area, some coming as far as the United States to have their grain ground at the mill.

Gregory hoped the railroad would cross the Souris River by his mill. When it did not, he abandoned the mill and, gradually over time, the mill building was destroyed by the elements and vandalism. Just a few piles of rocks were left by the 1950s. The millstone, with the name of Gregory's sons carved in it, was retrieved from the site by Arthur Bund of Nesbitt and was displayed in Minnewawa Cemetery. A mill gear is displayed at the Sipiweske Museum in Wawanesa.

Historic Sites of Manitoba: Gregory's Mill
(RM of Riverside)

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/sites/gregorysmill.shtml>

10. Souris City



In 1881, a little village called Souris City, was created on the flats of the Souris River, South of where Provincial Trunk Highway #2 crosses the Souris River. **(16-7-17)** A plan of the village was registered in the Land Titles Office in Brandon. The village was completely laid out with surveyed streets and lanes. A plan of this village is available at the Oakland Municipal Office at Nesbitt, Manitoba. At one time the village population numbered 54 persons.

11. Millford



Most histories credit Millford as being the first place to get mail delivery in the southwestern corner of Manitoba, in effect, with being the first village south of the Assiniboine in the Westman area. Mail came via steamboat at first, and later over land. Millford appears on a route for mail delivery in an 1884 map.