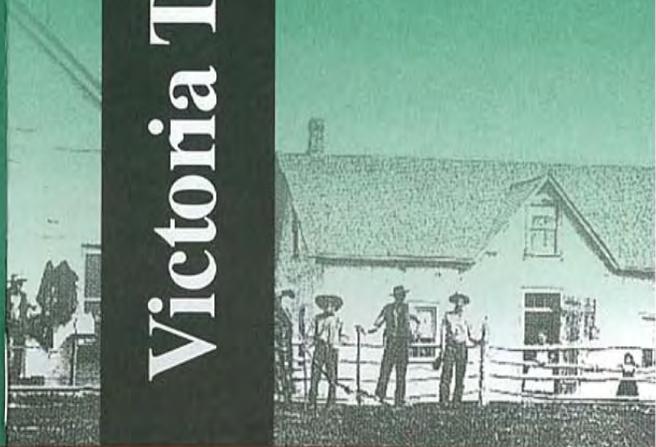


Historical
Walking
and
Driving
Tours



Victoria Trail



Alberta
RECREATION AND PARKS

Kalyna Country



Historical Walking and Driving Tours: Victoria and the Victoria Trail



This booklet contains a walking tour of the Victoria Settlement Historic Site and part of the Victoria Trail, and a driving tour of the Victoria Trail west from the Historic Site to Highway 38. The Historic Site is about 1 hour and 40 minutes from Edmonton, either by Highway 28 to Smoky

Lake, or along the southern route via Highways 21, 15, 45 and Secondary Highway 855.

A map of the tour route showing the location of the sites appears in the center of the booklet. Signs mark the location of the numbered sites described in this tour.

Wherever possible, historic names have been used for buildings and sites, names that often do not correspond to their current owners or occupants.

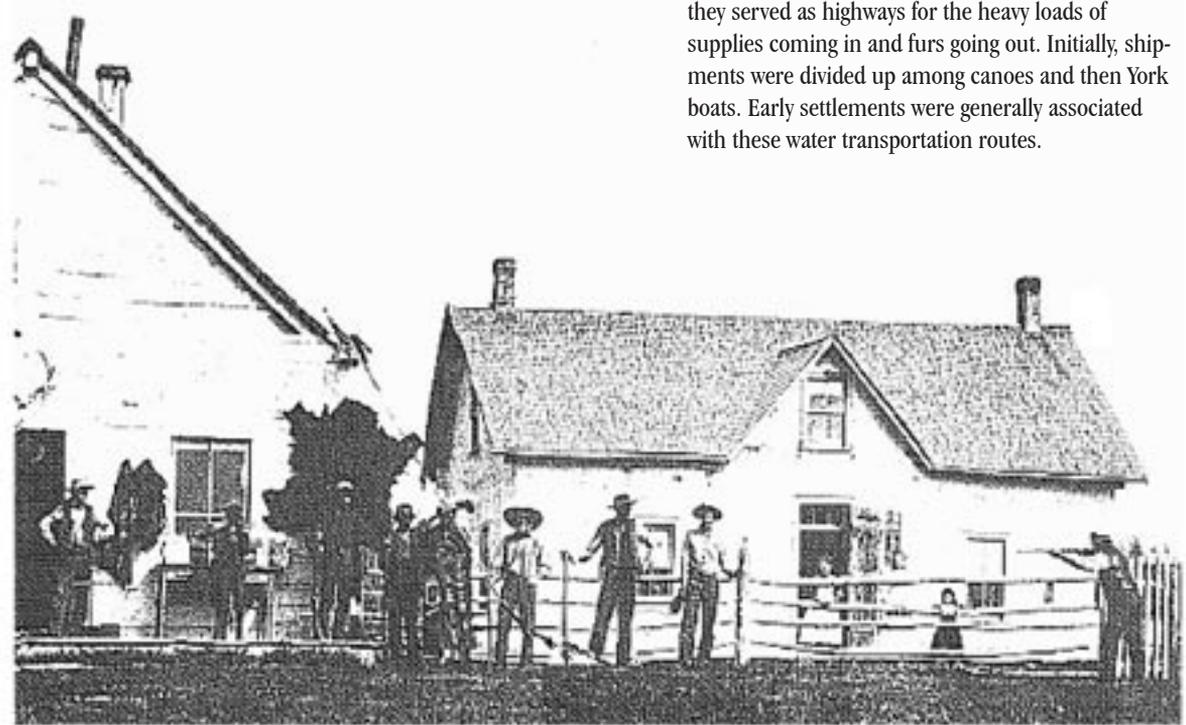
Please respect the privacy of property owners along the tour. Inclusion in this publication does not imply that a site is open to the public. Unless otherwise indicated, please view the posted sites from the road.



Introduction

Long before fur traders, missionaries, or settlers came to the north bend of the North Saskatchewan River, Aboriginal people were using the area as a seasonal camping ground and staging point for the annual buffalo hunt. The river was both a natural gathering point for kinship groups, and an informal boundary between nations.

For the most part, the area north of the river was the home of the Cree, while the Blackfoot nation dominated to the south. This situation varied to some degree, depending on the distribution of game, fluctuations in population, or changes in leadership, but during the period of European contact it remained relatively stable.



Cover Photo: Clerk's Quarters and Trading Shop at Fort Victoria, ca. 1890. (PAA B2406)

The first Europeans to venture into the area now known as Alberta were fur traders. Ever more aggressive competition from the North West Company and from assorted free-traders not associated with any company drove the Hudson's Bay Company to establish posts further and further from its bases on Hudson's Bay. By the late 1700s, forts were to be found across northern Alberta as far as the Rocky Mountains.

Close on the heels of commerce came religion. In 1840 the first Methodist missionary to the Aboriginal peoples arrived. He was soon followed by representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, who were by far the most numerous and best financed. Other denominations also sent modest contingents of missionaries.

Rivers and lakes provided the quickest and easiest access to the interior of the continent. Consequently, they served as highways for the heavy loads of supplies coming in and furs going out. Initially, shipments were divided up among canoes and then York boats. Early settlements were generally associated with these water transportation routes.



A Red River cart, n.d. (PAA B1043)

The most important overland route that eventually developed was the Carlton Trail, which stretched west from Fort Garry (Winnipeg), reaching Fort Carlton in the centre of present-day Saskatchewan, and continuing as far as Fort Edmonton. It became significant after 1860, and was chiefly used by the HBC and by Métis traders and buffalo hunters. Red River carts - small wagons with high axles and two large wheels - pulled by horses or oxen were the most common vehicles. Over the years, the thousands of Red River Carts that made the journey wore ruts in the prairie sod that could be seen for years after the routes were abandoned.

The final segment of the Carlton Trail was known as the Victoria Trail, after the last major stopping point before its western terminus at Fort Edmonton. Victoria was first established as a Methodist mission in to the Cree 1862. It was near the northernmost point on the North Saskatchewan River, on a narrow bench of fertile land above the high water mark. The attention of the Hudson's Bay Company was attracted by Victoria's geographical location, by the Aboriginal people who camped there frequently, and by the semi-permanent population of Métis around the Methodist mission. The site held the promise

of furs to be traded, and the threat of competition from free-traders. In combination, these attributes made it a good prospect for the Hudson's Bay Company and, soon after the establishment of the Victoria Mission, resulted in the construction of the Victoria post.

The fortunes of the community at Victoria followed those of the Trail. During the early years, when activity at the HBC post was a determining factor, growth was slow. The status of the community as a stopping place on the long haul between major forts provided some stability, as did the continued presence of the Methodist mission and the Métis settlers, but

the future was anything but certain. Traffic started to increase in the 1870s, after Canada acquired the North-West Territories from the Hudson's Bay Company and opened it up for settlement. Still, growth was slow. The first contingent of the North-West Mounted Police passed through in 1874 on their way to Fort Edmonton. In 1878, the first official survey of the improvements at Victoria was undertaken by the Dominion Survey. A second survey in 1884 established the Hudson's Bay Reserve and delineated the nine river lots of the Victoria Settlement to the east of it.

In 1885, the North-West Territories were shaken when, under the leadership of Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont, some Métis and their Aboriginal allies took military action against the representatives of the Canadian Government near Battleford, in present-day Saskatchewan. Long-brewing problems with Métis and Aboriginal land claims and the governance of the North-West Territories had led to unrest, and finally open rebellion. The violence spilled over into territory relatively close to Victoria, and rebels killed 10 people at Frog Lake. These events galvanized the Euro-Canadian population. Military units were mustered, and proceeded towards Battleford.



Pakan in 1917. (UAA 77-84-93)

Initially, residents of Victoria – who were mostly Métis - fled to Edmonton or to the woods, leaving only a few people to rebuff a raid on the Settlement. When units under the command of Major-General Thomas Bland Strange arrived at Victoria, some residents returned and formed themselves into the Victoria Home Guard. Under the leadership of Reverend McLachlan, the Methodist Minister, they prepared to defend their homes from possible attack. The post's palisade was rebuilt, and repairs were made to the buildings. General Strange and most of his troops continued eastwards after two days, and Victoria had no further involvement in the Riel Rebellion.

In 1886 the Government telegraph line connecting Battleford and Edmonton reached Victoria. A post office was opened in 1887, and named Pakan in honour of Pakannuk, a Cree Chief who had declined to join the 1885 Rebellion. The name Victoria was passed over to avoid confusion with the city in British Columbia, and from this point the community became known as Pakan. After 1891, when the railroad from Calgary to Strathcona was completed, more settlers started to arrive. For most, the route by which they came here was east, not west, along

the Victoria Trail. In the climate of optimism created by the new frontier, Pakan evolved from an isolated outpost to a supply depot for homesteaders. A government ferry was installed in 1892, and a third survey in 1896 formalised the river lots of the western portion of the Victoria Settlement and of the Lobstick Settlement further upstream.

By the turn of the century Pakan was a growing centre. Businesses and services were established to meet the needs of the newcomers, many of whom were Ukrainian settlers newly-arrived in Canada. The land north of the river and south of Smoky Lake was surveyed into sections in 1902. By 1906 some 250 Ukrainian families had settled in the vicinity of Pakan. An infrastructure gradually took shape at Pakan; the informal grouping of buildings became a legally subdivided and official community. Eventually, in addition to a church and school, Pakan had a hospital and a number of stores and services such as blacksmiths, a grist mill, a sawmill and a hotel. The ferry provided access to the south bank of the river, and well-established trails radiated in all directions. It seemed that Pakan was poised to become a significant and permanent regional centre.

All this changed in 1918, however, when the Canadian Northern Railway was built a short distance to the north. It replaced the Victoria Trail as the major access route for the district, and the railway town of Smoky Lake displaced Pakan as the area's main supply centre. The Methodist mission closed in 1921, and by 1930, only the homesteads, the church, and the Clerk's Quarters of the HBC post remained. Like the Victoria Trail, enough remains of Pakan and the Victoria Settlement to remind us of its role in Alberta's history.



Walking Tour

The walking tour is approximately 5.5 km in length. Eight sites are described, five of which are marked by numbered signs. It takes about 1.5 hours to complete the tour. There is a paved parking lot at the Historic Site, which is where the tour begins.

Please note: Much of the walking tour route is along roads or paths, but sites 4 and 5 are on a trail which is minimally maintained. Walking the trail provides insight into Victoria's natural setting, but there are no buildings to see. Sturdy shoes are recommended. The Historic Site is largely wheelchair accessible, but the rest of the route makes no special provisions.

The Victoria Settlement Historic Site buildings are open to the public from mid-May until early September. Contact Alberta Community Development (see last page of this booklet) for exact dates and scheduled events. A wheelchair accessible comfort station is available on site during that period.

Introduction

Victoria was established by Reverend George McDougall in 1862 as a Methodist mission to the Cree people. By 1865, Victoria Mission consisted of a house surrounded by a palisade, a school, a church, and an assortment of outbuildings. McDougall and his family made the site their home until 1871, when they moved to Edmonton.

The McDougalls persuaded about thirty Métis families from the Red River valley in Manitoba to come to Victoria. These were people with long associations with the Hudson's Bay Company; many were descendants of Company servants and their Aboriginal wives. Some stayed on at Victoria, and their names are on the patent titles for land in the Victoria and Lobstick Settlements. Whitford, Cromarty, McGillivray and Spence are some of the more prominent names. Some worked for the HBC, some took up farming, and many took part in the annual buffalo hunt.

In the manner they were accustomed to, each family claimed a long strip of land with a narrow frontage on the North Saskatchewan River. Known as long lots, or river lots, these parcels did not conform to the system later chosen for subdividing the Canadian west. This non-conformity, and a relaxed attitude to the legalities of land ownership, caused some difficulties when titles were formalised during the 1870s and 1880s.

Initially, it was the descendants of Métis, Scotch and English pioneers who dominated at Pakan and the Victoria Settlement. However, as the years rolled on, newcomers played increasingly significant roles. Around the turn of the century, American and, especially, Ukrainian immigrants made their mark. It was only with the arrival of the Ukrainians that large tracts of land away from the North Saskatchewan River were cleared and broken for farming.

The Historic Site

The Victoria Settlement Historic Site includes two historic buildings: The HBC Clerk's Quarters (1864), and Pakan Methodist Church (1906). There are interpretive panels at the site which provide a wealth of information about the historic themes relating to the Settlement in general, and these sites in particular. The following two entries are intended to complement these panels.



Pakan Methodist Church b.d. (PAA UV#)

Pakan Methodist Church (1906)

Reverend George McDougall brought his family to Victoria in 1863. The house that was supposed to be ready for them was nowhere near being finished, so they hastily erected a temporary log home. The McDougall's house and a church were completed in 1864. The original cabin became a school. A log church was completed in 1865.

A second church was built in 1887. It was also a log structure, but was located on River Lot 10, some distance west of the original Methodist Mission. This move was intended to make the church more central to the westward expansion of settlement that had taken place.

Finally, in 1906, the church that now stands was built on River Lot 6, north of the Hudson's Bay



The HBC Clerk's Quarters and Trading Shop, ca. 1895 (PAA G2953)

Company Clerk's Quarters. Logs for the church were donated by parishioners and prepared for use at the Pakan sawmill. The cost of construction was \$175.00. The church is a simple rectangular structure with a gable roof. The exterior is finished with drop siding, painted white. Inside, there is a single large room with a dais for the altar at one end. Gothic windows along each side of the church are the strongest clue to the ecclesiastical nature of the building.

After 1915 there was no Methodist minister resident at Pakan, and in 1921 the community was dropped from the list of Methodist missions. The church continued in intermittent use, sometimes with only the annual Memorial Sunday service in June to commemorate the McDougalls and other missionaries who served at Victoria and Pakan. The church was purchased by the Province of Alberta in the 1970s, and today serves as part of the interpretative program for the Victoria Settlement site.

The HBC Clerk's Quarters (1864)

The Clerk's Quarters was the home of the senior Hudson's Bay Company official at Victoria Post. It was among the first buildings erected here by the HBC. At its peak, the post at Victoria consisted of seven buildings enclosed by a 220- by 134-foot palisade. Today, the Clerk's Quarters is the oldest building in Alberta that remains on its original location.

Construction of the Clerk's Quarters was begun in 1864, and completed in October 1865. In common with many early log HBC buildings in the west, this one was erected using the post on sill method. Its walls were built by first putting up a frame of vertical posts mortised into horizontal sills. Short timbers with a tenon at either end were slipped into vertical grooves on the posts to fill the intervening spaces. These horizontal timbers were usually hewn flat on the top and bottom surfaces so that they fit tightly together.

This building technique was favoured by fur traders because it enabled them to erect structures of

almost any size with relatively short timbers. In addition, it was a simple matter to disassemble buildings constructed in this manner so that they could be moved to a different location or reassembled in a different configuration. Some of the logs in the Clerk's Quarters show evidence of reuse. Post on sill construction was used across Canada and was known by a number of names, including Hudson's Bay frame, Red River frame, and poteaux en coulisse. The latter is probably the original name, since the method came west with French-Canadian employees of the fur trade.

Initially, the outside of the logs remained exposed, while the interior of the Clerk's Quarters was finished with willow twigs and plaster. Later, this same wall treatment was applied to the exterior as well. A distinctive feature of the building is the gable above the centrally located main door.

From the mid-1870s onward, Victoria declined steadily in importance as a fur-trade post. Fur-bearing animals were disappearing, and people were taking up farming. The outpost was temporarily abandoned between 1883 and 1887, but was reopened in 1887 in a final attempt to compete with local free traders. It was closed permanently sometime between 1 June 1897 and 31 May 1898. After the post closed for the last time, the Clerk's Quarters became a private residence. The community of Pakan grew up around it, and then faded away as the years went by. Eventually, the Clerk's Quarters was all that remained of the HBC post. It was purchased by the government of Alberta in 1960, and was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1976.

The next four sites illuminate life beyond the trading post. The route follows the Victoria Trail and the North Saskatchewan River eastwards from the Victoria Settlement Historic Site.

The Victoria Ferry and the Egg Creek Oil Well

1



Geological Survey drilling rig at Egg Creek, 1898 (PAA A2143)

As early as 1887, there was a ferry at Victoria. Starting in 1888, Superintendent Griesbach of the NWMP recommended Victoria for a government ferry, citing as a factor the convenience of the trail to Edmonton south of the river along the route of the telegraph line. Finally, in 1892, a ferry was installed by the North-West Territories government.

Ropes and pulleys connected the ferry to a cable anchored to a tower on either bank. The ferry crossed the river without turning around; vehicles drove straight on and off. Two vehicles and a dozen people was a full load. The ferryman had a shack near the north tower where he could shelter between crossings, which he made on demand. In winter, the ferry was hauled onto the bank, staying there until the river was clear of ice.

One of Alberta's first oil drilling rigs was located a short distance upstream from the south tower, near the mouth of Egg Creek (across the river and to the right from this sign). The Geological Survey of Canada drilled from 1897 until 1899. They expected to find oil at about 2,100 feet, but they gave up when the drill jammed at 1,840 feet. No oil was found, but natural gas still seeps from the ground at the site.



Geological Survey drilling rig at Egg Creek, 1898 (PAA A2143)

In 1909 the name was changed to the Pakan ferry. A new bridge across the North Saskatchewan River upstream at River Lot 14 (Secondary Highway 855) brought an end to the ferry service in 1972. During its eighty-year history – one of the longest in Alberta – the Victoria ferry played an important role in the development of the surrounding area.

Continue 0.9 km east to Site #2

River Lot 3 and the Free Trader's House

2

Edward McGillivray was the free trader who built this house. He was born in 1816, and entered the service of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1836. After retiring in 1874, McGillivray settled at Victoria, on land that later became River Lot 7. He was awarded a pension by the HBC on the condition that he not compete with the Company. Despite warnings from HBC officials, who threatened to withdraw his pension, McGillivray became quite wealthy buying furs and selling merchandise at Victoria. He died at St. Albert in 1896.



The Free Trader's House, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

This house is thought to have been McGillivray's original home on River Lot 7, west of the HBC post. The date of construction is presumed to be about 1874. McGillivray built two houses on River Lot 7 in 1882, and another man was trading from the "old McGillivray House" in 1887. At some point - possibly in 1903 - the house was moved here, to River Lot 3. After 1949, its condition deteriorating and its function superseded by a new house, it was used mainly for storage. The Free Trader's House has been extensively restored and was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 2001.

River Lot 3 was one of the original nine Victoria Settlement lots surveyed in 1884. At 181 acres, it is the second largest, after River Lot 2 (414 acres). Among other interesting people, Joseph Favell, a riverboat pilot for the Hudson's Bay Company (see Site 3) lived on this land. He sold his claim at Victoria in 1882 and staked a new one upriver at what later became the Lobstick Settlement.

Continue 1.4 km east to Site #3



The Minnow, ca. 1898, enroute between Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and Edmonton (PAA B5608)

The Victoria site was an important gathering spot and fording place for Aboriginal people, dating to 6,000 years before the present. Near the end of the 1700s, canoes brought the first traders up the river. York boats soon followed, carrying larger loads of supplies and returning to York Factory on Hudson's Bay with the year's take of furs. After 1860, the overland route via the Carlton Trail started to gain in importance.

The machine age finally arrived on the North Saskatchewan River in the late 1800s. It was not the railway, but steamboats that ushered in the new era. The first HBC steamboat - the sternwheeler Northcote - passed Victoria en route to Edmonton in July, 1875. She was 150 feet long, had a beam of 28.5 feet, and drew 3.5 feet of water fully loaded with a 150-ton cargo. Joseph Favell, (see Site 2), who was reputed to know "every stone, bar and shallow in the river," was the pilot. The Victoria Rapids, audible from the riverbank east of Victoria Settlement, was a major obstacle. Rocks weighing up to 5 tons were cleared from this difficult stretch more than once, but no permanently clear channel could be established.

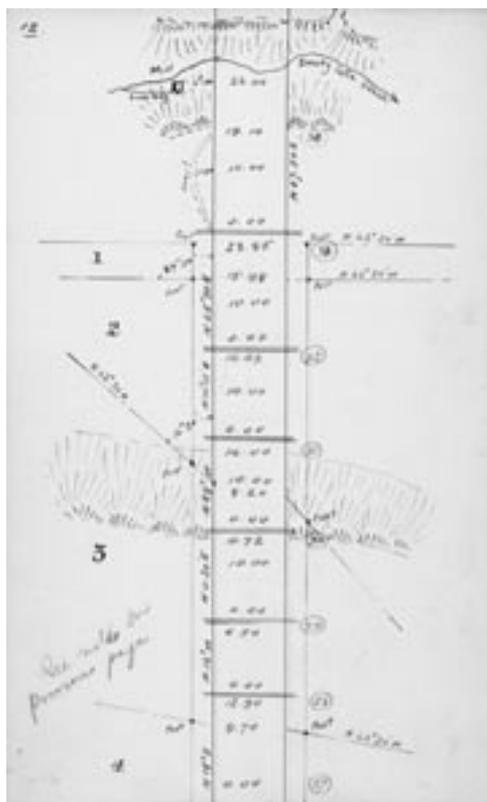
HBC steamboats, including the Lily, the North-West, and the Marquis, plied the Edmonton-Grand Rapids route on the North Saskatchewan regularly until

1886. After the North-West was retired in 1896, local steamboats made weekly trips as late as 1917. The Victoria Settlement was a stop on all these routes. The steamboats landed below the Victoria Post, near the spot later used by the ferry.

Continue 0.45 km east to Site #4

Fort White Earth and the Grist Mill

4



A page from Tom Kains' survey field notes, 19=884 (PAA 83.376)

Downstream from Victoria, near the confluence of the White Earth and North Saskatchewan Rivers, are the remains of another, earlier, fur trading post. It was known as Fort White Earth, or Lower Terre Blanche. Established in 1810, the fort operated only

three years. Both the Hudson's Bay Company and its main competitor, the North West Company, sheltered within one stockade to provide greater security, and to attract more trade. This valuable archaeological site was designated a Provincial Historical Resource in 1976.

The overland route eastward from Victoria was known as the Carlton Trail, after the HBC fort midway between Fort Edmonton to Fort Garry (Winnipeg). The deep ravine here at the mouth of Smoky Creek, which drains Smoky Lake into the North Saskatchewan River, diverts the trail from the river at Victoria. In 1873, the Hudson's Bay Company built a grist mill where the trail fords Smoky Creek. It had a millpond and a water wheel to provide power to grind the grain. The HBC charged one bushel for every five ground by the mill. It was hoped that the mill would encourage settlers to try growing wheat and barley. Difficulty in securing the services of a miller, however, caused the mill to close after ten years.

A second mill opened on the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River, just west of the ferry landing, in 1905. In 1915 it was modernized, and a large horse barn was built nearby. However, by 1922 competition from a mill in the community of Smoky Lake had made it unprofitable, and the mill at Pakan was closed down permanently.

Retrace your steps 2.75 km west to Site #1

This is the end of the walking portion of the Victoria Trail tour. The driving segment continues the story of the Victoria Trail. Please follow the numbered and directional signs which begin west of the Victoria Settlement Historic Site parking lot.

As you retrace your steps, you will see a log building among the trees on the west side of the road where it turns north to the parking lot. This was Frank Mitchell's Museum.



Frank Mitchell's Museum, 1971 (ACD 71-R311-5a)

John A. Mitchell came to Pakan in 1899. He bought and re-opened the Hudson's Bay Company store, which he ran as a general store until 1921. In 1908 he purchased the Clerk's Quarters, which he used as a residence. John's son Frank was a young boy when the family arrived at Pakan; he stayed for the rest of his life. In later years Frank became interested in preserving and communicating the history of the area. To do so, he started a museum. During the 1960s, he collected artefacts from the surrounding countryside and talked to many pioneers about their experiences. To tell the story of the Victoria post and the surrounding settlement, Mitchell acquired this building to display the things he had collected. He also built a model, adjacent to the museum, showing the Victoria post as it was at the height of fur trading activity.

Mitchell's museum building is itself something of an artefact. It is the former home of Benjamin Sinclair Jr., who held the patent title on River Lot 10 of the Lobstick Settlement. His father was Benjamin Sinclair Sr., the well-known Aboriginal missionary. Having acquired the building, Mitchell numbered the logs, took the house apart, and reassembled it here in the 1960s. Like the free trader's house on River Lot 3, this building has dovetail-notched corners.

After Mitchell died in 1975, his museum was open intermittently, but eventually the artefacts were moved to a museum in Smoky Lake. Today, the building and parts of his model of Victoria post are all that remain of Mitchell's museum. Its function of relating the history of the area is now carried on by the Victoria Settlement Interpretive Centre.

Driving Tour

The driving tour follows the historic route of the Victoria Trail for about 57 km westward from the Victoria Settlement Historic Site. The route is indicated by directional signs along the Trail, and numbered signs mark the location of the 15 sites described. The distance to each site, measured from the starting point of the driving tour, is shown in each site heading, and the distance between sites is noted in the directions. Use your odometer to help keep track of your location.

Please note: There are no services along the tour route. However, the main highway to Edmonton is easily accessible from several points. Exit points to local communities, with distances, are noted on the route map in the centre of this booklet.

For most of its length, the road this tour follows is unpaved. During warm, dry periods, it is a pleasant drive for any type of vehicle. Please exercise caution in freezing, snowy or wet conditions.

Introduction



A car on the Victoria Trail, 1927 (PAA G141)

For additional background information, please see the introductions at the beginning of this booklet.

The Victoria Trail is actually a portion of a much longer route that stretched from Fort Edmonton east to Fort Gary (present-day Winnipeg), and was known in its entirety as the Carlton Trail, after the Fort located at its mid-point. This was the major overland supply route of the Hudson's Bay Company.

After 1860, hundreds and thousands of Red River Carts made the trek west along the Carlton Trail with provisions and trade goods, returning loaded down with furs. In October 1874, after almost four months on the trail from Manitoba, part of the first detachment of North-West Mounted Police passed through Victoria and proceeded on to Fort Edmonton. Until the railway reached Calgary in 1882, this was – apart from the waterways - the most-travelled route west across the prairies.

The Victoria Trail has the distinction of being among those Alberta roads whose alignment existed prior to formal surveys being made. Though its position was noted in a variety of surveys of Victoria during the 1870s and 80s, legal definition of its route remained discontinuous until Township surveys of the area were completed after 1900.

Like the River Lot system at Victoria and Lobstick Settlements, the Victoria Trail did not fit the picture of the Canadian West envisioned by the federal government. It followed the curves of the north bank of the North Saskatchewan River, without regard for the scientific grid of townships mandated by Ottawa and implemented by the Surveyor General.

Until 1918, when the Canadian Northern Railway line was completed through Smoky Lake, just to the north, the Victoria Trail continued to be the premier access route to this district. Stopping houses, which provided shelter for travellers, as well as stores, post offices and churches, all appeared along the trail. In addition, access to the south side of the river was made possible by strategically located ferries.

Maps of the area illustrate the gradual erosion of the importance of the Victoria Trail that has taken place over time. Initially, few roads existed north of the trail. As the years passed, the railroad, and then

highways came to the fore. At first, access to ferries drew traffic to the riverside route, but eventually bridges made these obsolete.

Today, much of the original route has lapsed into private ownership, and the rectilinear township and range roads now provide access to the area. Those portions of the Victoria Trail which do remain provide a valuable insight into patterns of historic activity in the region, allowing us to travel in the footsteps of early traders, missionaries and settlers.

McDougall Graves & Mission (0.3km)

5

This site, which has interpretive signage, can be viewed by driving or, preferably, walking about 200m south from the Victoria Trail on the lane adjacent to the sign.



The McDougall graves, 1954 (PAA G1868)

The only visible remnants of the McDougall's Victoria Mission are five gravestones, which are located adjacent to the site of the Mission buildings. Four mark the graves of members of the McDougall family – Flora, Georgiana, Abigail and Anna - who died in the smallpox epidemic of 1870-71. Fifty Abo-iginal and Métis people also died of the disease at Victoria, but were buried elsewhere. The fifth grave marker, that of Frank Kennedy, infant son of local residents, was found in the vicinity and re-erected here. His grave is probably in the contemporary community graveyard (see Site 6).



The McDougall Hospital on its way to Smoky Lake, 1923 (UCCA UC8)

The Victoria Mission was founded in 1862. By 1865 it consisted of an eight-room log house, a stable, outbuildings, a small church, and a larger combined church and schoolhouse. All the buildings, and a garden plot, were surrounded by a palisade.

The objective of the Mission was to bring Methodism to the local population, as well as provide instruction in reading, writing and agriculture. In travelling among the Cree and Blackfoot people, the McDougalls also promoted inter-tribal peace. After the North West Territories were created in 1870, their travels helped instil confidence among Aboriginal peoples in the motives of the Dominion government.

In 1871, the McDougalls left Victoria. Prominent among the many ministers who served at Victoria until the mission closed in 1921 was Rev. James McLachlan, one of only two who stayed longer than 2 years. He arrived in 1879, led local residents in forming the Victoria Home Guard during the Riel Rebellion of 1885, and was the first postmaster of Pakan in 1887. In 1888 he oversaw the construction of a new church on River Lot 10. This move brought the church closer to the centre of the westward-

expanding population. McLachlan left Victoria in 1890. After 1900 the focus of the mission changed somewhat in response to the arrival of Ukrainian settlers. Rev. Charles Lawford MD was appointed missionary to the Ukrainians in 1901. Over the next twenty years he and his wife ministered to the spiritual and medical needs of the local population. In 1906 he oversaw the construction of a new church on River Lot 6, at Pakan.

Lawford had few illusions about his ability to convert the Ukrainian settlers to Methodism. However, he was able to convince the Mission Board that the best route to their hearts was through the medical attention he could provide. In 1907, the George McDougall Hospital was erected at the mission site. A new residence for Rev. Lawford was built at the same time. In 1911, a new church, especially for Ukrainian Methodists, was erected about 5 km to the north and east of the Mission. Success at converting the immigrants was indeed limited. With the decline of the community at Pakan, the mission was officially closed in 1921 and the hospital and house were dragged to Smoky Lake.

Continue 3.2 km to the next site.

Victoria Park Cemetery (3.5km)

6



Located overlooking the Victoria Trail. In warm, dry weather it is possible to drive up to the cemetery

Victoria Park Cemetery, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

This is one of six cemeteries within the Victoria Settlement. The first (see Site 5) is located on River Lot 8, at the site of the Methodist Mission, and dates from 1870. It contains the remains of 4 members of the McDougall family. The second is contemporary with the first, and also associated with the Mission. It contains many more graves, probably including those of victims of the 1870 smallpox epidemic, and is located on the boundary between River Lots 7 and 8, on top of the bluff above the Mission. A third, known as Asphodel Cemetery, is located some distance east of the Mission on River Lot 3, also at the top of the hill. This burial ground was started by a private company, but is now a United Church of Canada property. Two further cemeteries, one each on River Lots 1 and 2, are associated with the Ukrainian community, and the St. Elias Russo Greek Catholic Church, which dates from 1904.

In 1887 the second Victoria Methodist Church was built just west of the Hudson's Bay Company

Reserve, on River Lot 10. A "good building used for a church and school house" was noted by surveyor J.E. Woods in 1896. The Victoria Park Cemetery was established in about 1896 at the top of the rise of land above the church. With perhaps 100 burials, it may be the largest cemetery in the Victoria Settlement. Although the church and cemetery were located at this site long before, it was not until 1905 that the Methodist Church gained title to the land. Originally the church owned 40 acres here. Today just over 6 acres remain the property of the United Church of Canada, successor to the Methodist Church.

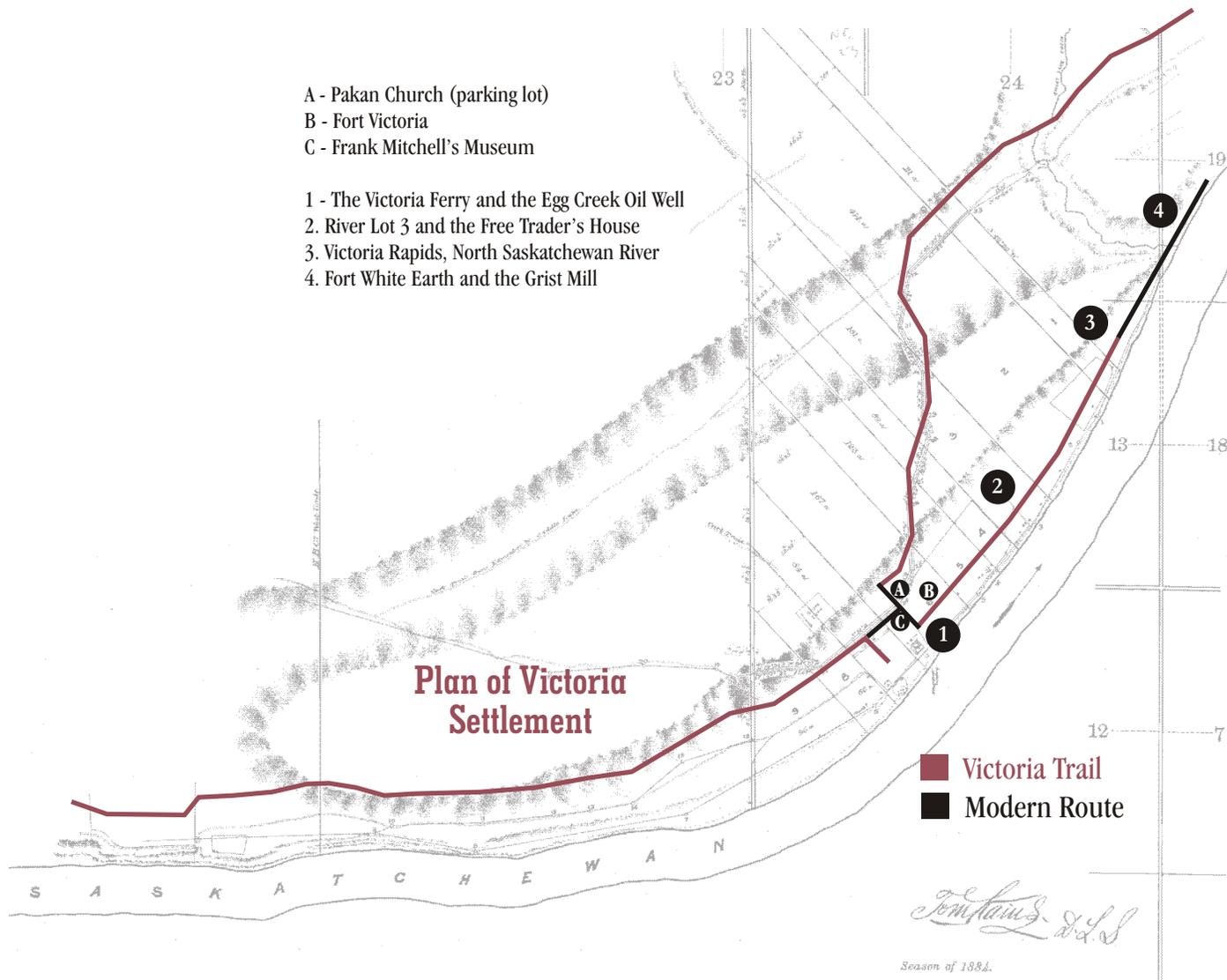
Extensive work, including removal of brush, fencing and the installation of a plaque, and re-consecration, has been done by the Victoria Home Guard Historical Society to reclaim the Victoria Park Cemetery. Though most of the graves are unmarked, their wooden memorials long-vanished, the clearing of overgrowth has revealed the outline of many burials, and some stone monuments can now be viewed.

Continue 3.6 km to the next site.

Victoria Walking Tour

- A - Pakan Church (parking lot)
- B - Fort Victoria
- C - Frank Mitchell's Museum

- 1 - The Victoria Ferry and the Egg Creek Oil Well
- 2. River Lot 3 and the Free Trader's House
- 3. Victoria Rapids, North Saskatchewan River
- 4. Fort White Earth and the Grist Mill



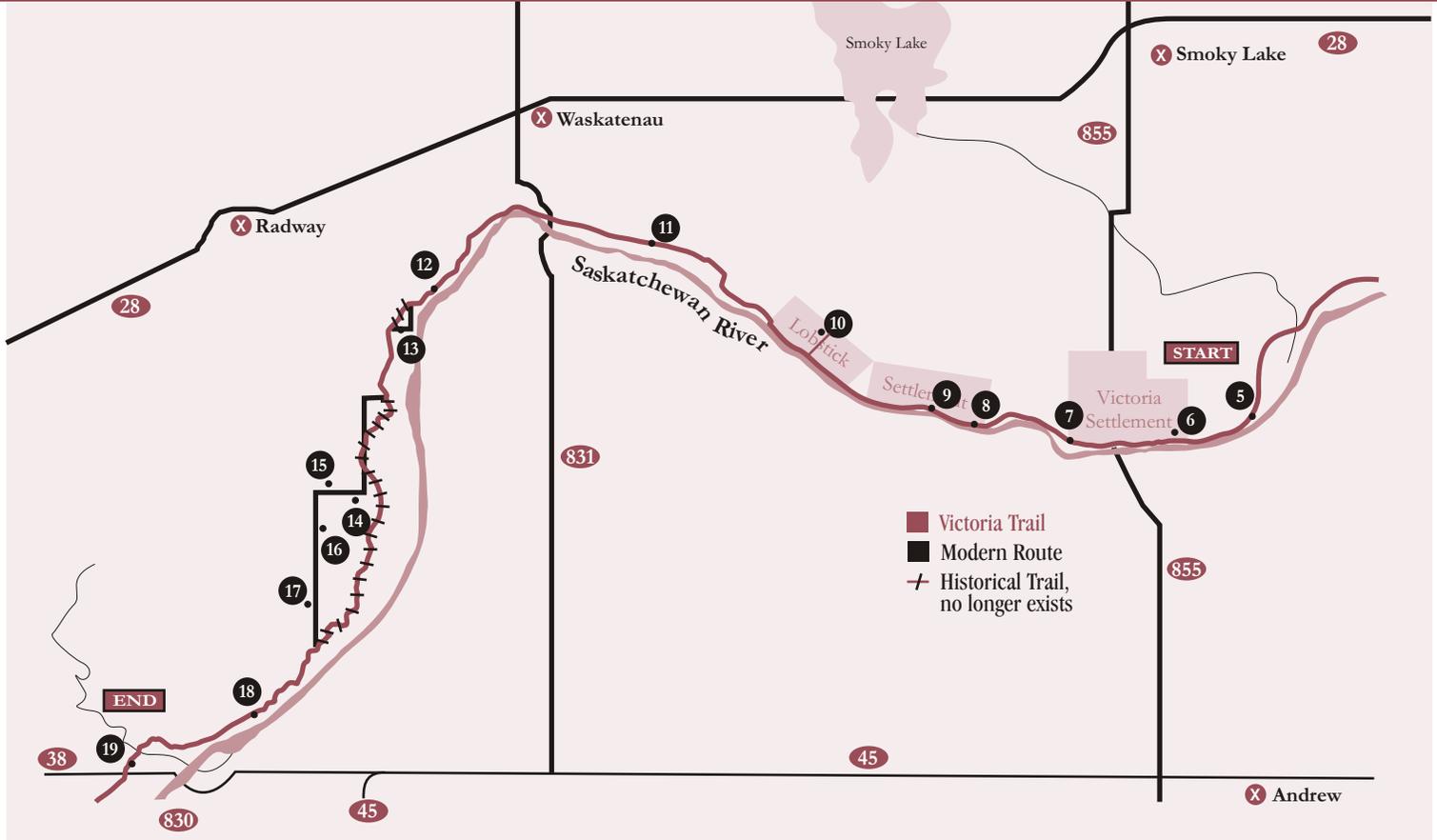
Plan of Victoria Settlement

Victoria Trail
Modern Route

Tomlinson D.L.S.

Season of 1884.

Victoria Driving Tour



5. McDougall Graves & Victoria Mission
6. Victoria Park Cemetery
7. Victoria Settlement
8. Lobstick Settlement
9. Whitford House
10. Lobstick Churches
11. McDonald Homestead
12. North Saskatchewan River
13. Sucker Creek Bridge

14. Eldorena
15. Jack Pine Grove School District
16. Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery of Eldorena
17. Survey System
18. Toronchuk Farm
19. Log Homestead

Dominion Land Surveyor William S. Gore visited Victoria in 1872, to survey the 3,000 acre Hudson's Bay Reserve mandated by the Deed of Surrender of 1869, which transferred Rupert's Land (see site 12) to the Dominion of Canada. In 1878, the claims of the residents of Victoria were documented by another survey, but these were not formalised until 1884 with the laying out of river lots one through nine east of the Reserve. Eleven more lots, known as the Victoria Extension, were surveyed in to the west of the HBC Reserve in 1896. Finally, in 1919, the Reserve was broken up into smaller lots more in keeping with those surrounding it.

The river lot system of land subdivision came to the north bend of the North Saskatchewan River with Métis settlers and Hudson's Bay Company servants from the Red River Valley in Manitoba. In turn, it had been brought there by *coureurs-de-bois* from their native Québec, where it had evolved under the seigneurial system of government. Established in 1627 (and officially abolished in 1854), the seigneurial system was based – with a few major modifications - on the feudal system of landholding in France. The characteristic long lots, each with narrow river frontage, remain as physical evidence of by-gone days in Quebec. Their presence across western Canada is an enduring legacy of the pioneering role of French-Canadians.

Controversy over the River Lot system of land subdivision was a contributing factor in the North-West Rebellion of 1885. At the forefront of Métis settlers' grievances were land claims issues. In the wake of the annexation of Rupert's Land by Canada, surveyors were sent out, first to establish points of reference, and then to subdivide the wilderness using the Township system. In theory, surveyors could dispense with the Township layout where river lots settlements already existed, but in practice they did not always do so. Delays and mismanagement by the Canadian government of this issue, and others of larger scope, eventually led to outright rebellion.

At Victoria, existing landholdings were respected in the 1884 survey, and there was no local support for the insurrection. Surprisingly, eleven years after

the Métis uprising, river lots did become an issue at Victoria. It was only after pressure from Frank Oliver, MP for the area, that the river lot, rather than Township, system was applied to the Victoria Extension and Lobstick surveys in 1896. With names like Norn, Cromarty, McGillivray, Howse and Whitford, the earliest settlers at Victoria were Métis of British extraction. They came from the Red River Settlement, near Lake Winnipeg, at the invitation of Reverend McDougall. Their move to Victoria not only gave them a fresh start in a land still relatively rich in buffalo, but provided a valuable link between the missionaries and the local Aboriginal population.

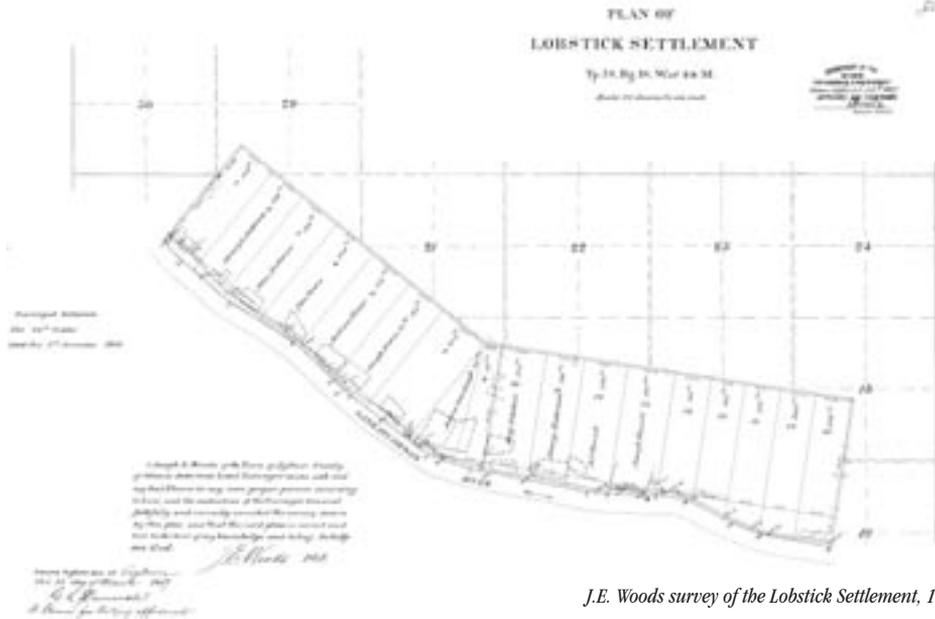
In 1982, the Métis people were recognized as a distinct Aboriginal group under Canada's new constitution. They can trace their origins to the 17th century, when Europeans – almost exclusively male fur traders - first came to stay west of the Great Lakes. Cree, Ojibwa and Saulteaux women married these newcomers, and together they brought a new people into being. Initially, the word Métis referred to children with French paternity. Country-born, Half Breed, and Black Scots were names historically applied to children with fathers of Scots, English and other European origin. A unique Métis culture evolved from this diverse background, combining elements of Aboriginal, Catholic and Protestant traditions. Today, descendants of these people have chosen Métis as their collective official name.

Continue 6.9 km to the next site.

Lobstick Settlement (10.0km - east end)

8

The name Lobstick is descriptive, and probably indicates that a specially altered marker tree was present in the vicinity. A lobstick is an evergreen tree, chosen for its size and prominent or significant location – for instance on the bank of a river where there was a good crossing place – which has had all its lower limbs removed. This results in a highly visible silhouette, which is a great aide to travellers in a vast land with few distinctive features.



J.E. Woods survey of the Lobstick Settlement, 1896 (AE Sett52)

By 1873, homesteads were starting to appear in the area now known as the Lobstick Settlement. Some of these people had previously been resident at Victoria Settlement, but had sold their interests there and staked new claims up-river. Perhaps it was the attraction of greater expanses of flat land for farming. Or maybe Victoria was too closely associated with the Methodist Mission and the Hudson's Bay Company for those more inclined to Anglicanism (see site 10) or free-trading.

Joseph E. Woods, Dominion Land Surveyor, was charged with mapping and subdividing the land in Township 58, Range 17 (containing Victoria Settlement) and Range 18 (Lobstick Settlement) during the season of 1896. This he duly set out to do in May, but had completed only a few traverses in Range 17 before he received orders to halt his work. Settlers in the area objected to the Township system he was using, and wanted to have river lots corresponding to the improvements they had made over the previous twenty or more years. Frank Oliver, Member of Parliament for the area, lobbied on their behalf. As a result, Woods began his survey anew, laying out the Victoria Extension and the Lobstick Settlement in late October and early November.

Lobstick Settlement consists of 18 river lots ranging from 85 to 204 acres in size. Woods noted that "... the settlers have all good buildings and considerable fencing keep a few cattle and horses and do some farming." The location of houses, stables, fences and road alignments on his survey map indicate that he did a good job of approximating the legal lot lines to the unofficial divisions made by the settlers.

In the first half of the 20th century, Lobstick Settlement had a succession of schools and churches (see Site 10), and a post office. However, in more recent times, as travel became easier and rural populations declined, services moved to the towns and the land passed into fewer hands. Today, the windbreaks that mark some property lines and the distinct jog which the Victoria Trail makes at each end of the Lobstick Settlement serve as reminders of some of Alberta's earliest farmers and landholders.

Continue 1.8 km to the next site.

Whitford House (11.8 km)

9



Whitford House, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

Known locally as the Anderson House, this is the last remaining *in situ* example of a Métis house within the Lobstick Settlement. Located right beside the Victoria Trail, as were most of the early homesteads, it has been standing abandoned for at least thirty years, yet it is still solid and square. The skill of its builder is evident in the shaping of the squared logs, the fit of the half-dovetail corners, and the chinking in the gaps. Shingles - probably added at a later date - have protected the building, but in recent years, weathering has removed some, and it is possible to see just how fine the handiwork is.

Francis Whitford is the first recorded owner of River Lot 14, on which this house stands. His name appears on the 1912 document transferring ownership of the land, upon his death, to his neighbours, Henry Anderson and James Favell. The Whitfords, a Métis family from the Red River Valley, had been noted as residing at Lobstick as early as 1873, so it is quite possible that Francis was not the first member of his family to own the land. This connection to a family with such a long history in the area makes it tantalizing to speculate on the age of this house.

Archival sources indicate that the first Northbank Post Office, established in 1907 with Henry Anderson as postmaster, was located on Section 11, Township 58, Range 18, West of the 4th Meridian. This has led to speculation that this house was the

site of that post office, since it would be on section 11, if the standard township survey had been used here instead of river lots. However, it is much more likely that the post office was actually situated to the west, on River Lot 11, which was actually owned by Henry Anderson in 1907. In most cases, the quarter section is indicated for post office locations. For the Northbank post office it is not. In all probability, a clerical error added the section designation where none had been specified.

This house, approached as it is from the east along a long straight stretch of the tree-lined Victoria Trail, is one of the most memorable landmarks on this drive. The image is truly evocative and emblematic of the region's history.

Continue west 4.8 km, turn right and go north 0.7 km to the next site.

Lobstick Churches (17.2 km)

10



Holy Transfiguration Church, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

The first church within the Lobstick Settlement was Anglican. It was named "St. Columba of Iona and St. Kentigern, North Bank", and was created on November 21, 1908 by Bishop Cyprian of Calgary. Sts. Columba and Kentigern lived in the sixth century, and were responsible for bringing Christianity to western Scotland. Their choice as patron saints for this church probably reflects the origins of the

parishioners, who, with names such as Howse, Sinclair, Anderson, Whitford and Favell, could trace their ancestry, through HBC servants, back to the British Isles – often to Scotland. The parish consisted of those portions of Township 58, Ranges 17 and 18, West of the 4th Meridian, lying north of the North Saskatchewan River. The Anglican Church had title to the northernmost 24 acres or so of River Lot 5, and just less than 15 acres at the north-east corner of River Lot 4. A church and manse, or priest's residence, were built.

Over time, the original Métis landholders at North Bank were replaced by more recent arrivals. The bulk of the Anglican property passed to William Kulka, then owner of River Lots 4 and 5, in 1940. Only a two-acre plot was retained by the Church of England – probably because it was a cemetery. Grave markers of Métis settlers and other Anglicans dating as early as 1902 and as late as 1944 can still be seen. Names like Bodnar, Wakaruk, Kulka, Charuk, Sadoway and Feniak came to the fore in the Lobstick Settlement and area. With the change in demography came a change in denomination. A new church – the Russo Greek Orthodox Church of the Holy Transfiguration - was erected on the two-acre parcel on RL 4 in 1952. Father John Wasil oversaw the construction, and stayed on as parish priest for twenty years, until his death. That he was much loved is evidenced by the bronze plaque erected in his memory in the churchyard.



Headstone at Northbank churchyard, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

In 1977, ownership of the plot on which the Holy Transfiguration church stands finally passed from the Church of England to the Russo Greek Orthodox Church of Canada Cemetery Company of Warspite, for a consideration of \$1. By this time, rural populations had already been in decline for some time, and eventually the Holy Transfiguration parish was merged with five others in the area. The simple, gable-roofed building is identified as a church by the presence of an Orthodox cross over the front door and on each end of the roof. A fieldstone-clad belltower stands to the west of the church, and the cemetery plot occupies much of the rest of the property. Although it is infrequently used, the site is well cared-for.

***Return 0.7 km south to the Victoria Trail.
Turn right and continue west 8.8 km to the
next site.***

(West End of Lobstick Settlement, 20.0 km)

MacDonald Homestead (25.4km)

11



MacDonald house and barn, 1920 (PC)



Indian Reserve No. 126 1886 (NCR 291)

The McDonald Homestead is located near the eastern end of the former Indian Reserve No. 126. This Reserve was surveyed in May of 1889, in settlement of the claims of the Cree band of Chief Muskegwatic, or Bear's Ears. The band was small, numbering only 40 in 1890. By 1891, numbers had further declined, as some members moved to the larger Saddle Lake Reserve, and Chief Muskegwatic, an elderly man, passed away. Four families remained, including the Chief's widow and family, and the family of his brother, named Matoosk. The land was good, and Matoosk was able to sell some of his surplus hay to travellers on the Victoria Trail. However, in 1896 the Wahshatanow or Hollow Hill Creek Reserve reverted to the government of Canada when the few remaining members of the band were persuaded to move to a new parcel of land adjoining the Saddle Lake Reserve about 60 miles to the east. The former Reserve land was opened up for settlement in 1904.

Samuel McDonald came west from Ontario in 1906. By 1908 he had built a substantial log house here, just north of the Victoria Trail beside Pine Creek. The next year, Sam and his wife Janet opened a general store in their house. In 1913, Samuel McDonald gained title to the land he had been occupying for four years, and also became the local postmaster. The McDonald General Store thus became the Pine Creek Post Office as well. This preferment is an interesting window on the times. Sam had a strong association with the Conservative Party, which came to power in the federal government in 1911. His predecessor

as Pine Creek postmaster, Jack Henry, was a Liberal Party supporter, but two years after Robert Borden replaced Wilfrid Laurier, Jack himself was himself dismissed, for "political partisanship".

Cedar siding and a verandah were added to the house in 1917, as the McDonald family prospered. In 1919, however, the Canadian Northern Railway was built several miles to the north, and activity shifted away from the North Saskatchewan River and the Victoria Trail. By early 1920, Pine Creek Post Office was closed, as was the general store. Sam McDonald focussed on farming, and the Victoria Trail faded from busy thoroughfare to quiet country road. Anna Mae and Donald, the next generation of McDonalds, retained ownership of their family home until 1993, when new owners began the process of restoration. This site was designated a Registered Historic Resource on July 6, 1994.

Continue west 9.3 km to the next site.

North Saskatchewan River (34.7 km)

12



North Saskatchewan River, 2002 (ACD 02-R196)

The North Saskatchewan River rises in the Rocky Mountains, in the Columbia Icefield, and flows generally northeast to about this spot. Then it turns almost due east, reaching its most northerly point near the historic location of the Hudson's Bay and North West Company forts at the mouth of the White Earth River. From there, it flows southeast and then northeast again until, after more than 1200 km, it joins the South Saskatchewan River to form the Saskatchewan River. As such it flows generally northeast to Lake Winnipeg. Finally, via the Nelson River, the waters of the North Saskatchewan reach Hudson's Bay.

The charter of the Hudson's Bay Company, granted by King Charles II of England in 1670, specified that the company could claim all lands in the watershed of the Hudson's Bay. Named Rupert's Land after the king's cousin Prince Rupert of Bavaria, the first Governor of the HBC, the extent of the grant was originally unknown. It was the Saskatchewan River system which defined Company's huge western hinterland and, subsequently, title to vast tracts of land across the Canadian prairies.

Explorers noted that the Blackfoot people called this river *Omaka-ty*, or "Big River". French Canadian maps dating from the 1790s label it *Rivière Bourbon* in honour of the French king. But it was the Cree

name, *Kisiskatchewan Sipi* meaning "swift current river" that endured. Alexander Mackenzie wrote the name "Saskatchiwine" in 1793. The modern spelling came to the fore in 1882, when the Alberta and Saskatchewan Districts of the North-West Territories were created.

The sweeping vista from this point on the Victoria Trail reveals the size of the North Saskatchewan, Canada's fourth-longest river. Historically it has been both a major transportation route, and a barrier to travel. It provided the means, initially, for Aboriginal people to take furs to trading posts near Hudson's Bay, and subsequently, for fur traders to penetrate deep into the heart of the continent. Until this century, the river was an impediment on north-south routes, but today regularly spaced bridges provide year-round access.

Continue 1.6 km to the next site.

Sucker Creek Bridge (36.3 km)

13



Sucker Creek Bridge site, 2002 (ACD 02-R195)

The route of the Victoria Trail is littered with hazards. Not least of these are the numerous creeks and rivers that must be crossed. To add to the difficulty, many of these watercourses are situated in deep ravines. Forging these obstacles was the only option available to pioneer travellers. Consequently, the Trail periodically leaves the bank of the North Saskatchewan River to seek out easier crossing

points upstream on these minor tributaries. Early on, surveyors were charged with finding the best route for the Trail – including crossing points and suitable locations for bridges - and were empowered to change its alignment, if they saw fit.

The first bridge over Sucker Creek, as this stream was then known, was built in 1906. It was a 40 foot untreated timber truss, built on the historic Victoria Trail. The approach from the north was a fairly gentle grade, but on the south side the bank was quite steep. By 1915, this span was in poor condition, and in 1917 it was reconstructed. The creek was prone to flooding, and the south end of the bridge was washed out on more than one occasion. In 1939 the bridge was described as being in very poor shape, and the following year saw it replaced with a steel pony truss costing \$4,244.72. At this time the name of the watercourse was noted as Myrtle Creek.



A pony truss bridge, 1965 (AT 00839-1965-1)

Over the years the bridge and its wooden deck and substructure were repaired, replaced, reinforced and painted. By 1960 the name had changed again, this time to Namepi Creek. This most recent name, which means “carp” in Cree, hearkens back to the earlier Sucker Creek name, which was probably a translation from local Aboriginal usage. Finally, in 1977, the steel bridge was removed for reuse on the Boyer River at High Level. The historic alignment of the Trail was abandoned in favour of a rectilinear route following the outline of the section. The Creek was directed through a 5.5 m diameter corrugated steel culvert, and a roadbed laid over top, eliminating the need for a bridge.

When the Namepi Creek bridge was removed, the wooden abutments and pilings were left in place. These, along with the north and south approaches and the homestead located at the north end of the span, can still be seen from the new road alignment.

Continue 6.5 km to the next site.

Eldorena (42.8 km)

14

Settlers began to arrive the vicinity of present-day Eldorena as early as 1887. Although they cleared and cultivated the land, their claims could not be made official until a survey was completed. This did not occur until 1904, when the first homestead was officially registered, that of Dmetro Antosko on NE 34-57-20-W4. As claims were taken up, and population grew, demand arose for a variety of services. In 1907, Eldorena post office was inaugurated on the next section south of Antosko, at NE 27-57-20-W4, in the home of Harry Chorney. Jack Pine Grove School District #2051 was established in 1909, and a one-room school was erected in the following year.

In 1907, local residents organized to establish a church to serve all denominations. By the time construction began in 1913, the Ukrainian Catholic community in the area was sufficient to support a single-denomination church. Built on the north-east corner of Dmetro Antosko’s quarter section, under



*Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary church,
2002 (ACD 02-R195)*

the supervision of Father Phillip Ruh, it was named Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Father Ruh, a Belgian priest who had transferred to the Ukrainian Basilian Order, was a newcomer to Canada at that time. Trained in architecture in Germany, and familiar with Ukrainian church styles, he became renowned for the many churches – large and small – he designed across the prairie provinces in the years that followed.

The Eldorena Ukrainian Catholic Church of the Protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary has five domes, all covered with silvered sheet metal. The large octagonal main dome above the crossing of the nave and transepts is surrounded by four small ones on the peaks of the cross gable roof. The original wood drop siding has been covered with stucco, but otherwise the church remains in good condition, and the adjacent cemetery is well maintained. Inside the

sanctuary, the original paintings by Peter Lipinski, one of Canada's best-known artists in the Ukrainian church tradition, are of particular interest.

While the church has always been the most prominent feature of Eldorena, there were other aspects to the community. A number of stores were opened in the early years: Kozlowski's in 1918 just south of the post office; Shykora's in 1920 immediately east of the church (later this was also the site of Eldorena post office); and Sekersky's in 1925 north-west of the church. The final element of the locality of Eldorena was built in 1926. It was the "Tovarystvo Zaporozhe", or "Zaporozhe Society" hall, which commemorates the 16th century Zaporozhian Kozaks of central Ukraine. By selecting this name the community reaffirmed its ties with Ukrainian history. The hall was the community's cultural centre. Social events, recitals, plays, dances and

celebrations all took place there. It even served as a school for a while.

Eldorena's pattern of development is typical in the context of rural east central Alberta in the early twentieth century. From untouched bush, settlers carved out farms, and soon turned their attention to building their communities. Spiritual, educational, material and cultural needs were met through a combination of individual initiative and cooperative effort. Typical also, is the pattern of decline which followed the trend of younger people leaving for the city. Some communities have disappeared altogether, but Eldorena's church and hall endure, providing a glimpse of the region's pioneer past.

Continue 0.4 km to the next site.

Jack Pine Grove School District (43.2 km)

15



Jack Pine Grove School (?????)

The history of Jack Pine Grove School follows a scenario seen across rural Alberta. The details vary, but the trends are the same. During the early twentieth century, as homesteads were being taken up and immigrant families were growing, schools appeared all across the countryside. These were generally small and closely spaced, taking into account the limited mobility of the school population. Most children walked or rode a horse to school.

School District #2051, Jack Pine Grove, was established in 1909 by a committee of local settlers.

In 1910, a wood frame, one-room schoolhouse was erected on SW 3-58-20-W4, just west of the cross-roads which later became the centre of Eldorena. It had a hipped roof and was clad in wood siding. Its most striking feature was the bank of large windows along one side. This was a typical feature of schools at the time, intended to provide ample natural light and air, while maximizing the wall surface available for blackboards. Teachers were paid \$55 per month, and lived with local families until 1919, when a one-room teacherage was built on the school property. Eventually, the number of students outstripped the little school's capacity, and a second room was added in 1922 to accommodate them. At the same time, the school property was fenced and a stable was erected. The teacherage was expanded to two rooms in the late twenties.

After 1926, the Tovarystvo Zaporozhe Hall (see Site 14), close by, provided overflow classroom space. This arrangement worked well, and little changed until 1946, when Jack Pine Grove School burned to the ground. The Hall provided an interim venue until a new school could be erected. This was a two-room, stucco clad building with central heating and modern conveniences. It was opened in 1947, and was located some distance further west, on the north-west corner of NW 34-57-20-W4.

Within a few years of its construction, the second Jack Pine Grove School was lifted up and moved away to the town of Radway. This 1953 event was the result of a trend of rural school district consolidations and closures driven by falling population and improved transportation. Today, very few one or two-room schoolhouses remain in operation in Alberta. Jack Pine Grove School played an important role in the lives of many people during its 43 years of operation. That these years were formative and remembered affectionately is borne out by the presence of a monument commemorating the school, its trustees, teachers and students, located on the south-west corner of the Eldorena intersection.

Continue 2.0 km to the next site.

Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery of Eldorena (45.2 km)

16



*Ukrainian Orthodox Cemetery of Eldorena,
2002 (ACD 02-R195)*

Providing a fitting burial and memorial could prove a problem to early immigrants on Canada's frontier. Initially, there was no infrastructure of undertakers, clergy and cemeteries in place. For the most part, the only funerary tradition was the Aboriginal tradition, which probably did not include interment, the most common European practice. In contrast, Aboriginal people usually placed a body on the surface, exposed or encased with logs or stones, or raised it above the ground on a platform or in a tree. Bodies were not gathered in regulated plots, rather, arrangements were made as appropriate.

These time-honoured methods, adapted to a nomadic lifestyle, were not what Euro-Canadian settlers expected in a funeral. Adherents to many denominations not only wished to have their funeral conducted by a cleric, but to be buried in ground consecrated by their own faith. This presented difficulties when population was sparse, or a particular group was not numerous enough to support a church – and cemetery - or clergy. A number of solutions were found when the need arose.

Private cemeteries, often on a rise of land, or in a corner or along the boundary of a quarter section, served the purpose in many situations. Such family plots sometimes expanded, as neighbours might prefer to use an established burial ground. However,

most remained small; individual graves are not unusual, since people generally took any opportunity to use a more formal arrangement.

In most cases, a cemetery associated with a church was the preferred situation. Ideally, the church and cemetery would be the same denomination as that professed by the deceased. When this was not possible, the hallowed ground of another congregation was a good second choice, if such arrangements could be made. In rural church cemeteries, it is not unusual to find a grave, or even a whole section of graves – usually off to one side – which do not match the denomination of the church.

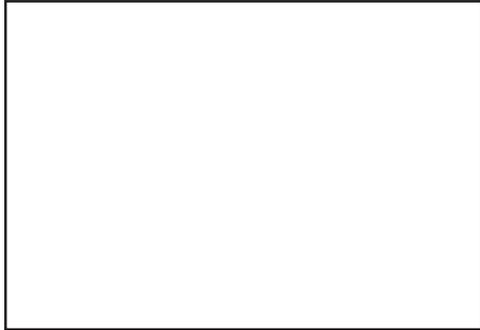
This cemetery was established in about 1910 at the north-west corner of SW 34-57-20-W4, on land owned by the Chorney family. In 1921, two acres at this location passed into the ownership of the Ukrainian Greek Orthodox Church Cemetery Company, at a cost of fifteen dollars. There has never been a church on this site; the nearest Orthodox church is in Radway. Nevertheless, this plot provides a suitable and convenient final resting place for Orthodox residents of the Eldorena area. It represents a compromise between the family plot and the church cemetery.

The headstone inscriptions reveal a great deal about the lives and history of the area. The dates of death show that most of the burials occurred in the first half of the twentieth century, and that the young and the old are the largest groups represented. Infant mortality was much higher in the early twentieth century than it is today. Many original homesteaders died where they settled, but their children and grandchildren often gravitated to the towns and cities, where they made their homes and later died and were buried. Recent years have seen a growing interest in genealogy which has led to the refurbishment and even renewed use of neglected country cemeteries.

Continue 2.3 km to the next site.

Survey System (47.5 km)

17



A township, 1881 (PAA)

In 1872 the Dominion Lands Act became law. It provided that the North-West Territory (including present-day Alberta) be surveyed according to the rectangular system used in the United States. The basic unit of this method of subdivision was the township. Each township was divided into 36 square sections measuring one mile on each side. With the exception of sections eight and twenty-six, which were allocated to the Hudson's Bay Company, the even-numbered ones were classified as free homestead land. For a ten dollar fee, anyone twenty-one years of age or over, or the head of a family, could claim one of these sections. Provided settlement and cultivation of the land could be proven, title to the land would be issued to the homesteader after three years. Odd-numbered sections were reserved for railway land grants and sections eleven and twenty-nine were set aside for schools. Grazing, timber and hay leases were also accounted for under the Act.

Today, most of rural Alberta is organized according to the Alberta Township System (ATS). Rural properties are located by Quarter, Section, Township, Range and Meridian. East-west township roads every two miles, and range roads every mile outline the patchwork of landholdings. The signpost at this junction indicates the intersection of the old organic method – Victoria Trail – and the new scientific method – Township Road 574 and Range Road 203 – of selecting transportation routes.

Continue 4.8 km to the next site.

Toronchuk Farm (52.3 km)

18



The Toronchuk farmhouse, 2002 (ACD 02-R253-16)

The first group of Ukrainian settlers came to western Canada in 1892, subsequently selecting lands east of Edmonton and south of the North Saskatchewan River for their homesteads. By the turn of the 20th century, additional homesteaders had arrived in the vicinity of the Victoria Settlement.

The traditional farming and building skills of the newcomers held them in good stead in the rough frontier conditions. Using materials readily at hand, rudimentary structures were erected as the land was cleared. Larger, more comfortable homes soon followed. This house belongs to that second set of houses. It has the distinctive hipped roof and plastered log walls that make these buildings easily recognizable. They generally had a rectangular floor plan, oriented east-west, with the door and most of the windows facing south. Inside, there were usually two rooms, with a central earthen oven functioning as both a stove and a furnace.

This area was surveyed into townships in 1906. Title to this particular piece of land was first granted in 1908, to Jakym Iwaszuk, of Skaro. In 1925, ownership passed to William Toronchuk of Cookville. Though many Ukrainian settlers built themselves a Canadian-style house as soon as their resources permitted, they also often kept the original homestead, as have the Toronchuks, who - as of 2002 - still own this land.

Continue 3.7 km to the next site.

Log Building (56.0 km)

19



Log House, 2002 (ACD 02-R253-23)

The log building at the crest of the hill above the Redwater River bridge is on land originally owned by Jack Karran. He was the son-in-law of Samuel Cook, the first settler in this area. Samuel Cook arrived in the Partridge Lake district, near Fort Saskatchewan, from New Brunswick in 1894. The next year, he rafted down the North Saskatchewan River to the point where it was joined by a small watercourse, now known as the Redwater River. Here he settled, with his wife Amelia and their family. They carved out a farm from the bush, and when the Dominion Survey was finally completed, he registered their claim and received title to the NE, SE and SW quarters of section 36, Township 56, Range 21, West of the 4th Meridian, in 1905.

The Cook family had a considerable impact on the area. In early days, their home was known as a “stopping place”, where travellers could find a hospitable welcome. Sam Cook also operated a ferry service, using a raft to cross back and forth over the North Saskatchewan River. The establishment and naming of a post office at their home in 1907 formalised the local description of the vicinity as “Cookville”. Samuel Cook was the first postmaster. When Sam and Amelia moved to the Redwater area in 1909, the post office was relocated to the home of their daughter Mildred and son-in-law

Samuel Hanlon, on section 2-57-21-W4, just to the north-west. The Cookville post office continued in operation until 1925.

Another local name came from the Cook family. Amelia School (1909) was named after Mrs. Cook by Jack Karran, husband of eldest daughter Maggie May Cook and owner of SW 1-57-21-W4, located immediately to the north of the Sam Cook homestead. The general area became known as the Amelia District, with the Amelia Greek Catholic Church (1911, near the school), and the Amelia store (active until the 1990s) perpetuating the name.

Continue west 0.6 km on the Victoria Trail to Highway 36.

End of Tour (56.6 km)

The Victoria Trail originally continued all the way to Edmonton. Portions still exist from this point onwards, but they are discontinuous. There are two routes back to Edmonton from here. The first goes west along Highway 38 to Highway 28, returning to the north-east part of the city. The second goes east along Highway 38, over the Vinca Bridge, then back to Edmonton via Fort Saskatchewan and Sherwood Park. Consult the map at the beginning of the tour to select your return route.

Further Reading

A Veritable Canaan by Peter Melnyck. This lavishly illustrated book illuminates the history of Victoria and Pakan from the 1860s to the 1930s.

Fort Victoria by Leslie J. Hurt. This occasional paper, published internally by the Historic Sites Service, provides a wealth of detail on the fur trade and missionary activity at the site.

A History of the Pakan District by Frank E. Mitchell. This privately published memoir is full of recollections and colourful stories.

By River and Trail: The History of Waskatenau and Districts by the Waskatenau and Districts Historical Society. This two-volume local history has many anecdotes and photographs relating to the Trail and area.

Check out this website for more pictures and information: <http://www.smokylake.com/history/>

Acknowledgements

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