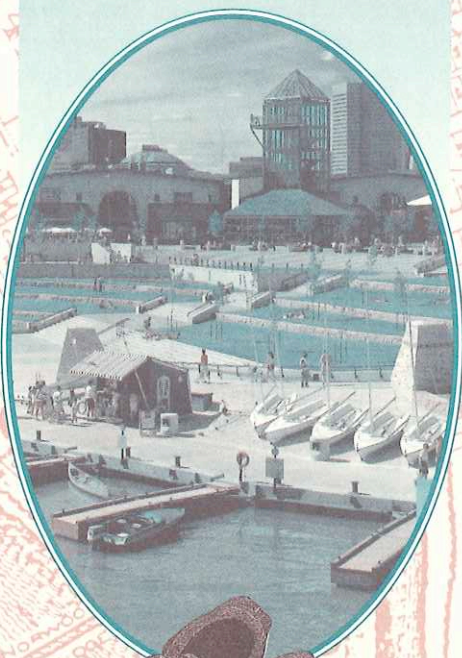




# Walking Tour Guide



The Junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers  
Au confluent des rivières Rouge et Assiniboine



**THE FORKS  
LA FOURCHE**



## Further Touring

Walking tours in other downtown areas are recommended, including:



Upper Fort Garry Gate on Main Street across from the Union Station, west of The Forks;



Historic St. Boniface, across the Red River from The Forks to the east;



West, along the Riverwalk to the Legislature and south through Osborne Village;



Winnipeg's historic commercial district, The Exchange, northwest from The Forks and Portage and Main.

## Acknowledgements

The guidance of Dr. Tim Ball, Mr. David MacDowell and other volunteer members of The Forks Heritage Advisory Committee is gratefully acknowledged. Special appreciation is extended to volunteer researchers Ms. Susan Rouse and Mrs. Dorothy Ridd, and Ms. Thora Cooke, Western Canada Pictorial Index Inc.

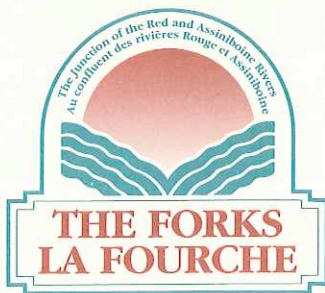
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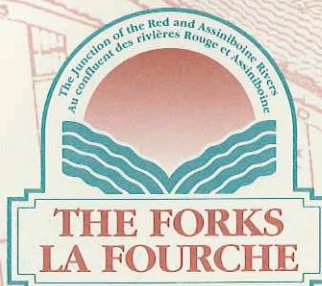
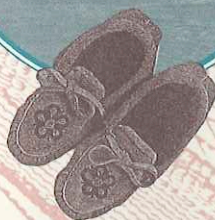
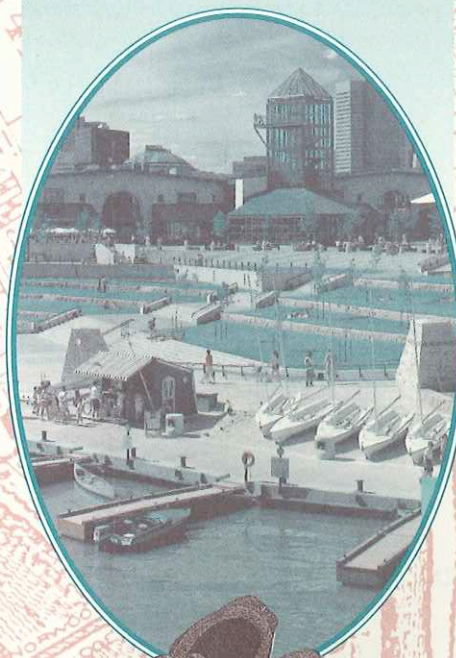
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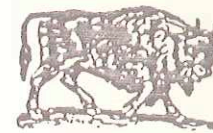


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# Walking Tour Guide



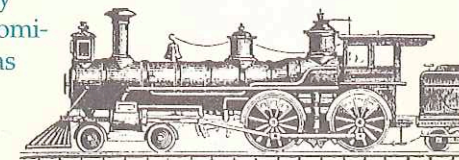
he junction of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, known today as The Forks, has been a 'meeting place' for thousands of years. Aboriginal peoples from across the North American plains came to this spot to trade, to hunt, to fish, and to celebrate.



As explorers ventured westward across the country, the area became a natural location for forts and a major centre for the flourishing fur and pemmican trade. Pioneers followed, beginning what was to be more than 150 years of immigration, laying the foundation for the City of Winnipeg and the settlement of the Canadian West.

By 1860, steamboats were plying the Red River, earning it the nickname the "Mississippi of the North". Colonization inched across the prairies as the thousands of immigrants arriving at The Forks migrated west, establishing farms and new communities.

The arrival of the first steam locomotive on the prairies in 1877 heralded the end of a glorious riverboat era. The area near the junction of the rivers soon became a major rail terminus and a critical link between east, south and west. Over the next 80 years, railway activity increasingly dominated the site as people and freight moved across the country.



When modernized rail facilities were built on the outskirts of the city in the 1960s, the marshalling yards at The Forks became obsolete. But the site was not forgotten: from the rich history of The Forks was born a vision for the future.

Today, The Forks is a "Meeting Place" once more. A place for celebration, for commerce, for visiting, for lingering just as it has been for so many centuries.

*Welcome to The Forks!*



# A Bird's-eye View of The Forks

Our tour begins on the sixth storey tower platform of The Forks Public Market. Access to the tower is by stairs or glass elevator at the south end of the Market Courtyard on York Boat Lane. Any merchant in The Market will be pleased to assist with directions.

## The SOUTH View:

1 The tower platform faces SOUTH. In the immediate foreground are the Assiniboine River and the South Point (the wedge of land between the two rivers).

2 Beneath the platform is The Market Plaza. In summer, The Plaza is dotted with patio umbrellas and the performance circle is shaded by a white canopy. In winter, the open circle is a skating rink.

3 The most prominent river feature is the lighthouse of The Forks Historic Port *Wassau riverboat dock*

## The WEST View:

4 The Assiniboine Riverwalk extends more than 2 kilometres along the bank of the river WEST to the Manitoba Legislature and Osborne Village, one of Winnipeg's popular character districts.

5 The CN Main Line, on the 14 foot High Line embankment, and the Bridge of The Old Forts (Main Street Bridge) are in the foreground.

6 The elegant Hotel Fort Garry, opened in 1913, was constructed by the Grand Trunk Railway, in the classic "chateau" style made famous by the Canadian railways.

7 Through The Market Tower the low, green dome of the Union Station (VIA) can be seen. The Station sits at the foot of Broadway.

8 Closer to view is the Steam Plant with its 120 foot high smoke stack.

## The NORTH View:

9 Looking NORTH, past the Steam Plant lies the area of the former East Yards.



10 In the distance, is the High Line rail bridge

11 Nearer to view, The Provencher Bridge carries traffic from Portage and Main across the Red River into the heart of St. Boniface.

12 Riverboats dock near the WEST foot of the Provencher Bridge.

## The EAST View:

13 In the immediate foreground is the 4 storey Johnston Terminal.

14 In the distance to the left, near the river's edge, is the entrance to The Forks National Historic Site.

15 Hidden from view is the Kinsmen Building (Manitoba Children's Museum).

16 left of the Terminal is the Explore Manitoba! Travel Idea Centre.

17 The small building to the right is The Forks Pavilion.

18 The Archaeological Preserve is a protected area known to be abundant in heritage resources.

19 The Wall Through Time supports the Preserve and outlines the history of the site.

20 The skyline is dominated by the counterweight of the historic Grand Trunk Railway Bridge.

21 Just beyond the historic rail bridge, the waters meet. This is "The Forks", the junction of the rivers.

22 On the far shore of the Red River, beneath an illuminated cross, are the St. Boniface Hospital and Research Centre.



The Market Tower is a good spot to take pictures. Before leaving the tower, take a moment to notice the large skylight area in the middle of the roof of The Market buildings.

*Interpretive Panels Flood Markers*





## Early History and Area Geography

**A**s Ice Age glaciers receded, 12,000 years ago, Glacial Lake Agassiz formed from the melt water, covering southern Manitoba. When the lake drained, a flat plain with thick deposits of fertile silt and clay emerged. Today, the Red River drains this basin. The 'mighty' Red is formed in North Dakota and empties into Lake Winnipeg, 800 kilometres downstream.



The Assiniboine River joins the Red after winding 960

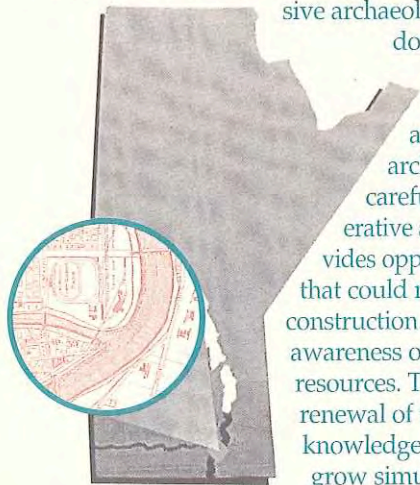


kilometres from the west. But it hasn't always done so. Over centuries the rivers shifted. About 8,000 years ago the Assiniboine met the Red about 15 kilometres south of here, where the La Salle River flows today. About 4,000 years ago, the Assiniboine drained directly into Lake Manitoba. Some 1,500 years later, the river jumped its

banks (this is called spring evulsion) and joined the Red where we see it today.

Due to the wealth of heritage materials in this area, extensive archaeological testing has been done throughout the site.

All excavation work at The Forks is observed and monitored by archaeologists. Through careful scheduling and cooperative action, development provides opportunities for research that could not be possible without construction. It also heightens public awareness of local heritage resources. Through development, renewal of the site and public knowledge of our heritage grow simultaneously.



## How To Use This Guide

**T**his booklet will guide you on a loop through the area known as The Forks, beginning and ending at The Forks Market. These pages however, can only begin to introduce you to the exciting history of the site and the City of Winnipeg.

Four areas of the site will be explored and maps of each are provided for easy reference:

### The Stable Buildings

### The Hudson's Bay Flats

### From Fur Trade to Railway

### The River's Edge



There are many excellent opportunities for photographs at The Forks. The film icon indicates some of the more popular photo spots.

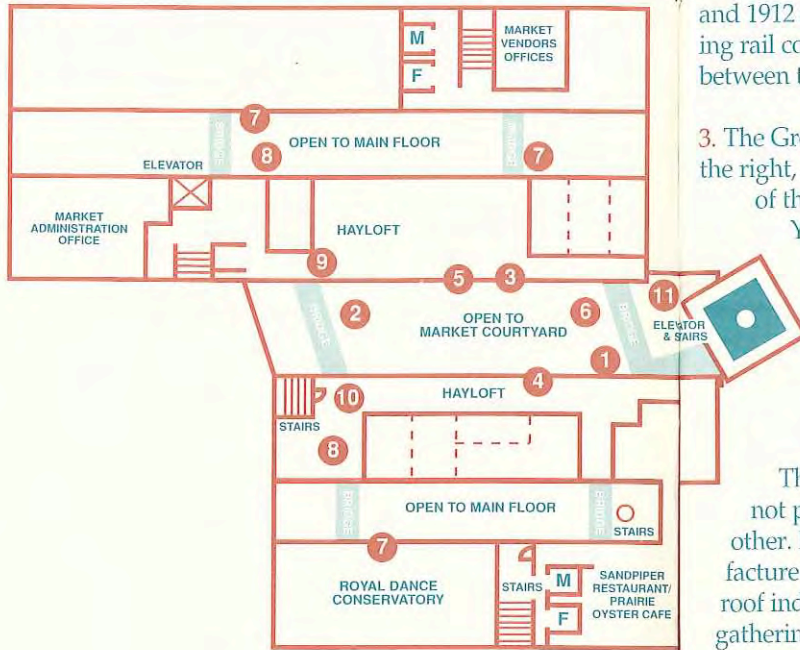
It will be helpful to remember that the Assiniboine River is at the SOUTH end of the site and the Red River on the EAST. The light in the Historic Port and the counter weight on the old rail bridge will confirm you are in the vicinity of the Assiniboine River (SOUTH). The imposing facade of the St. Boniface Basilica is a good marker to look for in the EAST. The low green dome of the Union Station marks the skyline to the WEST.



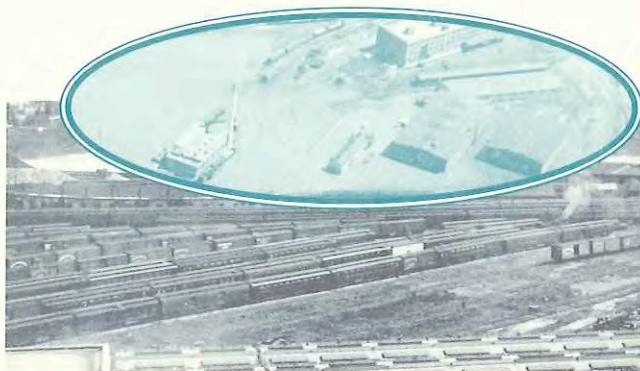


## The Stable Buildings: The Forks Market

The first stop on the tour are the buildings of The Forks Market. Before leaving the tower, take a moment to notice the roof of The Market buildings with the large skylight area in the middle. Then take the stairs or the elevator down to the second floor Hayloft. To further enhance your visit, a Market brochure is available at The York Shop Information Booth. The brochure is free and provides detailed listings of all the shops in The Market and outlines the specialties they offer.



**SECOND FLOOR**



1. The second floor entrance opens on to a bridge spanning the Courtyard below.

2. At the far end of the Courtyard a second, WEST bridge can be seen. At the turn of the century, goods arriving at The Forks by train were delivered to their final destination by horse and cart. The Courtyard and bridges are new constructions joining two separate buildings that were erected between 1909 and 1912 as stables for competing rail companies. This Courtyard was the roadway between the two buildings.



3. The Great Northern Railway stable, the larger building on the right, was designed by Warren and Wetmore, architects of the Union Station and Grand Central Station in New York. It housed 120 horses.

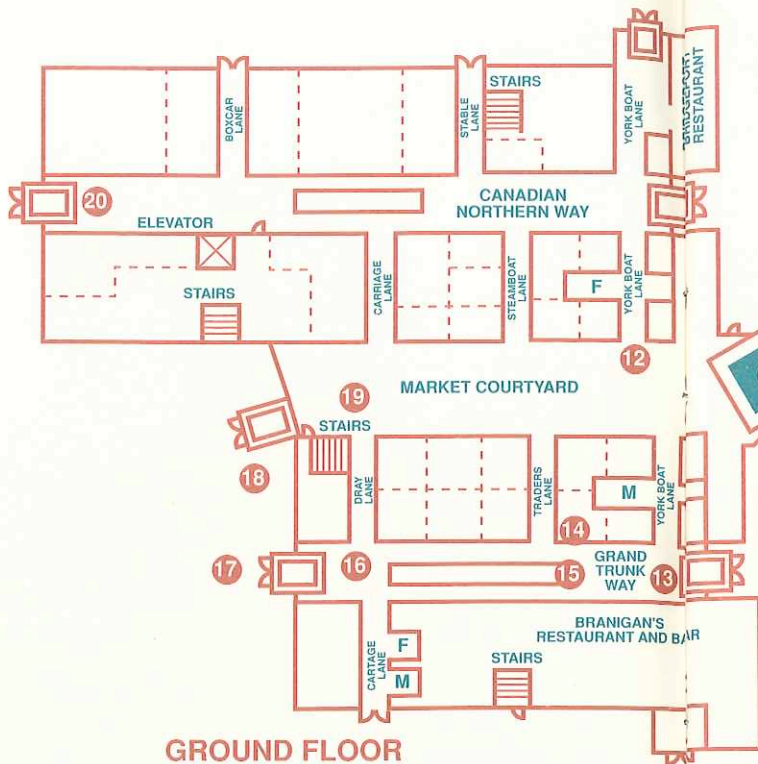
4. The building on the left was constructed by the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and is smaller, but nearly identical. Both these buildings had haylofts, tack rooms and storage areas on their second floors.

The walls of these wonderful old stable buildings are not perfectly straight, nor are they parallel to each other. It was therefore necessary to measure and manufacture each of the steel trusses that support the skylight roof individually. The Courtyard is now a very popular gathering spot.

5. The balconies are also new additions and replace small windows. A closer examination of the brick walls near the roof reveals evidence of earlier renovations.

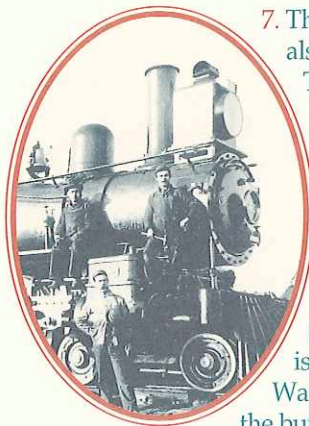






## GROUND FLOOR

6. Cross the bridge and explore the shops of The Hayloft. Notice the original oak floors, carefully repaired and restored.



7. The interiors of each building are also spanned by new bridges. These smaller courtyard areas originally allowed access to the stable stalls for the horses and carts entering either end of the building. In later years, when carts were replaced with trucks, both these buildings were converted to garages. The courtyard below is named Canadian Northern Way, for the railway that erected the building.

8. During renovations skylights were discovered in the roofs over these smaller interior courtyard areas, an unusual feature in buildings of this age. The original skylights have been enlarged and enhanced. Here bay windows replace small original upper windows.



9. Continue through the Hayloft and cross the WEST bridge. Notice the High Line rail embankment through the windows—chances are a train will be passing on the CN Main Line.

10. The Grand Trunk stable building also has interior bridges, skylights and bay window features. Continue exploring The Hayloft and its many delights and treasures until you arrive back at the elevator and stairway.

11. Make your way to the main floor. The Market Tower, the Atrium at the foot of the Tower and the two glass lean-to areas are new constructions. They provide seating for casual dining and enjoyment of The Plaza and the riverside views in all seasons.

12. York Boat Lane extends north and south on either side of the Courtyard. Take York Boat Lane SOUTH. The ceiling above is the original wood, now restored, preserved and fireproofed to meet modern safety standards. Renovations exposed as much of the original buildings as possible.



13. This is the Grand Trunk Pacific stable building. The inner courtyard is named for it: Grand Trunk Way.

14. Throughout the main floor of The Market the shops are nestled in distinctive archways. Great care was taken to match the original mortar (it took 11 attempts) and it is almost impossible to distinguish the renovations from original construction. All the bricks and other original materials removed during renewal of these buildings have been saved and stored for future use within this and other projects. Nothing was discarded.

15. Another staircase, this one spiral, leads to the restaurants upstairs.





16. The Grand Trunk Stable has one very unique feature the other stable building does not share: the second floor is suspended!

The original posts and beams were removed years ago and large turnbuckles installed to support the upper floor. These turnbuckles can be seen against the ceiling. Just above the level of the archways, pairs of large bolts protrude from the walls. These were uncovered when renovation work began in 1989. The bolts are the ends of the turnbuckles.



17. Continue exploring along Grand Trunk Way to the doors at the far end.

18. Many companies in the 1930's and '40's painted signs on the outside of their warehouses and other industrial facilities. CN Rail identified this building with such an exterior sign. It has been saved and if you step outside you will see it over the doors of the WEST end of the building.



19. Back inside, Dray Lane opens onto the Courtyard and there is a fire extinguisher installed against the wall here. Notice the square patch of blackened brick. This was the condition of the walls when renovations began. Decades of rail activity, with coal burning steam locomotives and diesel engines, had coated the natural coloured brick with a thick blanket of oily soot. Both buildings required extensive cleaning both inside and out. Today the warmth of the restored brick adds a special ambience to The Market.

20. Explore The Forks Market at your leisure. To continue the tour, exit The Market by the doors at the WEST end of Canadian Northern Way. A bright orange caboose should be on the right.

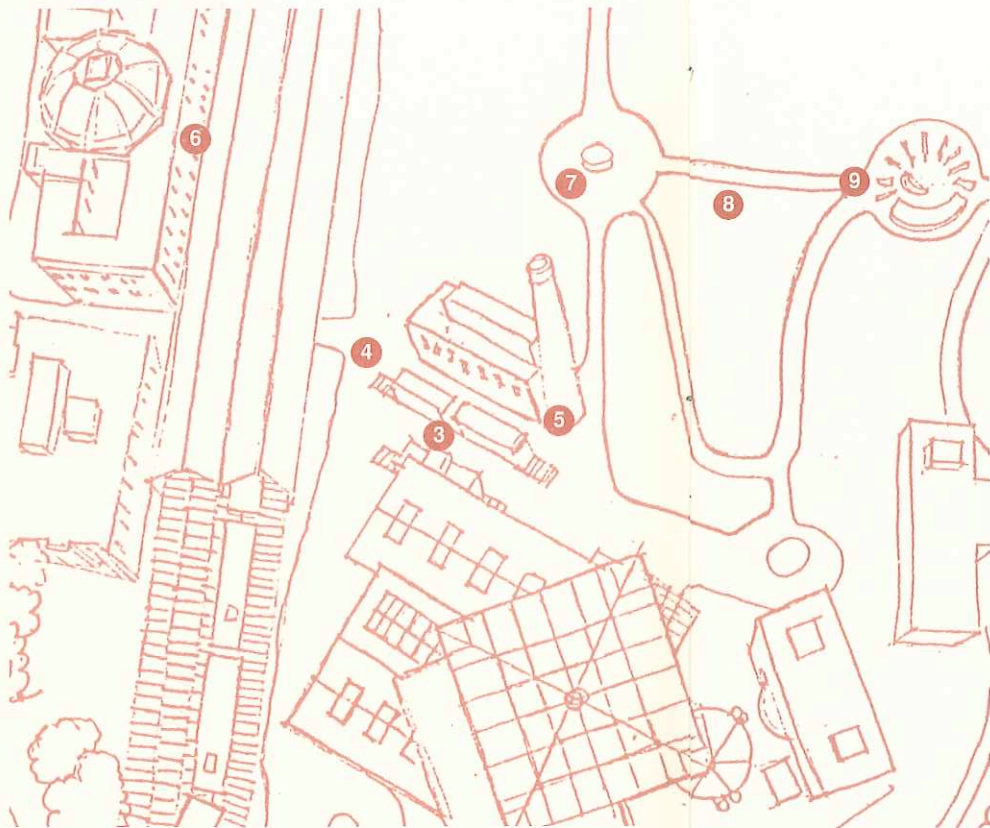




## The Hudsons Bay Flats



*Railway activity has dominated this site for more than 80 years. Restored rail cars provide a glimpse into the area's rich railroad history. These cars are the beginnings of a small collection and the display may change as other vehicles become available.*



1. Caboose No. 76602 was built at CN's Point St. Charles shops in Montreal in the late 1930's and was in service until 1988. This caboose was carefully restored by employees of the CN Transcona shops in Winnipeg. Interior and exterior refurbishment took place on site and the Caboose was officially donated to The Forks in September of 1992. Interpretive information is provided on plaques.

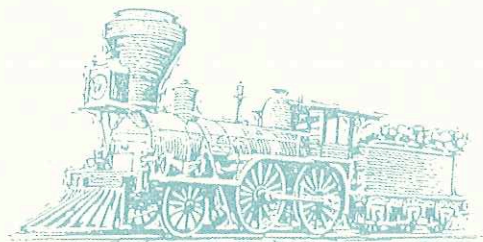
2. The two boxcars are examples from the CN's rival company, Canadian Pacific Railway, also still in operation today. CP Car # 197474 was built in 1903 and

CP Car # 216274 in 1919. The two cars are typical wood boxcars with steel ends. Although Canadian Pacific was not active here, these cars are representative of the freight activities associated with the stable buildings. They have been refurbished on the exterior and are now used for storage.

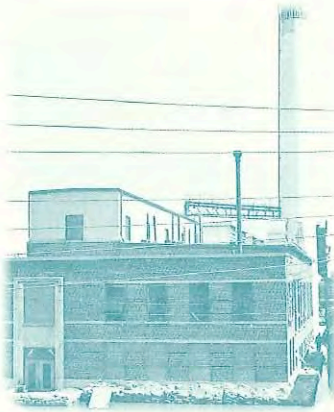
3. The passenger cars on display have had exterior repairs and refurbishment. Both these cars had extensive damage to the original canvas roofs. Few railwaymen remain with the specific knowledge and experience required for this restoration work. Many of the traditional skills associated with the railway have disappeared since the departure of steam in the past few decades.

Car No. 354 was built by CP Rail in 1926. It began as a 'buffet and parlour car', CP 6665. It was later converted to a coach and rode the rails as CP 1355. Finally sold to the Winnipeg District Water Works it became car #354. It is typical of main line, first class passenger cars used between 1914 and 1931. It has been restored to the original colour.

Car No. 351, built in 1924, is more unusual in character. It was originally a gas, electric or 'battery' car but was rebuilt by the T & NO Railway (Temiskaming and Northern Ontario). Also called a 'combine' car because it was used for both passengers and freight, it was the middle vehicle of a three car set. The colour is typical of cars of that era.







4. To the WEST of the Steam Plant the outer edge of the flood plain can be seen through the underpass. This gentle slope up to Main Street is the second flood level. It also accentuates the height of the rail berm (High Line rail embankment), constructed to protect the rails from high floods.

5. Until it ceased operation in the mid 1960's, the Steam Plant provided power to the Union Station, the Hotel Fort Garry and several other buildings in the immediate vicinity.

6. Today, Union Station is a passenger depot for VIA Rail. Designed by the architects of Grand Central Station in New York, construction of Union Station began in 1907, and was completed in 1911. In those days, excavation work was done by men and horses. Union Station is one of the few monumental railway stations left in Canada and is recognized as a national architectural site. It was completely refurbished in 1992. Western Canada's first locomotive The Countess of Dufferin, can be viewed in the station.

7. Cobblestones cover extensive areas at The Forks. These were the original paving materials used by the early railroads. The sandstone cobbles are about as deep as they are thick and may weigh as much as 30 to 40 pounds each. A closer look is available here where they have been reused in Arrival Square but they can also be found in their original locations beneath the surface of roads. The cobblestones are also used in the plaza between the Johnston Terminal and the B & B Building (Manitoba Children's Museum). As cobblestones are recovered they are stored for use in future projects.



8. Renewal of The Forks is proceeding along several carefully planned "sight lines" that lead the eye toward the rivers. The first of these visually joins the dome of the Union Station with the St. Boniface Basilica across the Red River. As can be seen here, the pathway and the entrance to the park have all been constructed on this sight line.

9. There is much to learn of the agricultural history of this site as you continue along the path, toward the river (EAST), to the entrance of The Forks National Historic Site.






Remembering that this flood zone was built up some one and a half metres during the railway era, imagine how it must have looked to the earliest visitors to the site: with prairie tall grass rippling in the breezes, giving way to dense woods at the river edge. Rich with game and other wildlife: bear, moose, wapiti (elk) and herds of bison roamed the area freely.

Before the arrival of colonists, the 2 metre high Buffalo Grass and other tall grass plants hid all but the largest animals. Prairie Tall Grass was well named!

The trees that grew along the riverbanks were a source of fuel and construction material. Frequent flooding created lighter soil that was ideal for agriculture compared to the heavy clay soils (gumbo) beyond the flood zone.

During the fur trade period much of this region was granted to the Hudson's Bay Company and was often referred to as 'the Hudson Bay flats'. This reserve was the centre of activity for several decades. The 'flats' were a gathering place for Red River Cart brigades prior to the annual bison hunts.

Lord Selkirk purchased a large tract of this land to create a permanent settlement for newcomers from Scotland. After wintering on Hudson Bay following the Atlantic crossing, they arrived opposite The Forks in 1812. Their arrival posed a direct threat to the fur trade, and they were viewed with hostility by the Indians, Métis and fur traders.

 At this time the Hudson's Bay Company and the rival North West Company were locked in a bitter struggle for control of the fur trade. In 1816 a confrontation occurred in which 21 people died.

The Seven Oaks Museum is located near the site of the battle, about 3 kilometres north of The Forks. The two warring companies amalgamated in 1821 and peace came to the community.

These 'flats' were also the site of an experimental farm, established about 1838. The farm had a dairy, pigs and poultry. Various grain and root crops were raised on about 60 acres of cultivated land (about twice the area around you). The



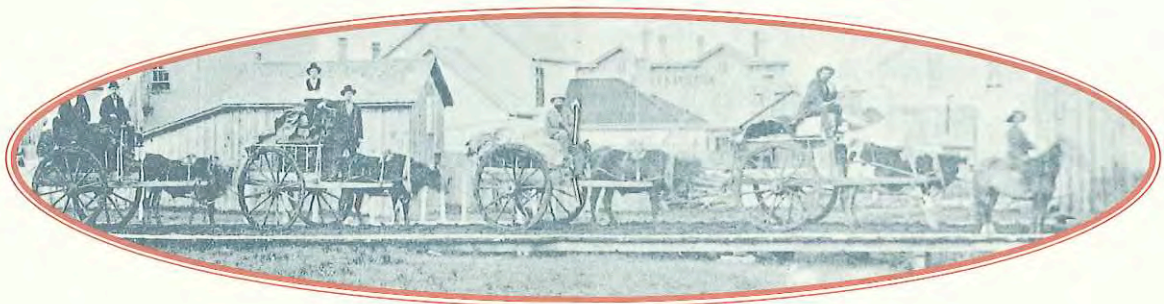
project was abandoned in 1841 and moved to Lower Fort Garry, 20 kilometres to the north. Manitoba continues to be a leader in agricultural research, a legacy of those early experiments. Throughout the past century many important discoveries have been made here, among them new wheat species, such as Glenlea and Triticale. In St. John's Park, the oldest in the city, a cairn marks the planting of the first wheat in the west, by the Selkirk Settlers in 1812.

Over the next 50 years houses, commercial establishments and other enterprises sprang up around the fringe of the settlement, including Finklestein's emporium, near the river.

The area was cleared in 1888 to make room for what was later to be known as the "East Yards". The Canadian Northern and the Grand Trunk Pacific Railways established their marshalling yards here between 1908 and 1911. These were the central marshalling yards for various railways for more than 60 years. The tracks stretched across the Low Line bridge and angled across the yards in a line that is still visible today in the orientation of the parking area.

In 1988, one hundred years later, the area was again cleared to accommodate the development in progress today.

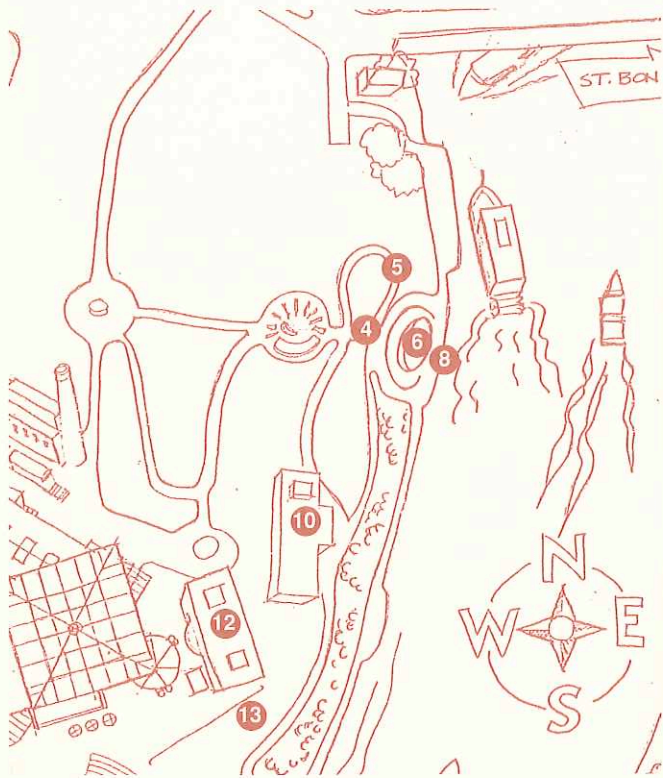
10. As you approach the entrance to The Forks National Historic Site, turn around and take a moment to appreciate the downtown skyline. This is a most unusual view of Winnipeg and one that was not available to the public for more than 80 years.





## From Fur Trade To Railway

Following extensive archaeological investigation of this nine acre area, Parks Canada opened The Forks National Historic Site in the summer of 1989. Interpretive staff are on duty May through September.



1. The entrance to The Forks National Historic Site is a circular structure, symbolic of the ancient Aboriginal meeting place: the sundance circle and the whole earth. Notice the texture of the



Tyndall limestone used. This rock was laid down beneath Manitoba millennia ago and fossils can easily be found on its surfaces.



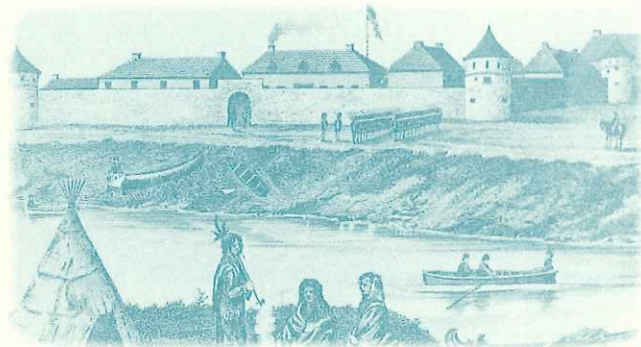
2. In the centre of the circle is a unique sculpture by Manitoba artist Marcel Gosselin. The heart of the sculpture is also Tyndall stone. Cut into the bronze outer shells of the sculpture are the shapes of tools used through the ages.



3. Just outside the circle, the story of The Meeting Place is etched upon the other bedrock of Manitoba—granite. Over the years, both these stones have been used extensively in many of Winnipeg's buildings and can be found in various forms: rough cut, smooth cut and polished.

4. Follow the path east, toward the Red River. Carvings of bison decorate the walls overlooking a riverside amphitheatre. This is the first flood level. When the river swells to this height it is "at bank".

5. A short stroll along the path to the north leads to an interpretive display explaining the seasonal activities of early Aboriginal peoples in the area. This walkway circles back to the park entrance. To continue the tour return to the amphitheatre.



6. The amphitheatre is a good place to photograph the facade of the St. Boniface Basilica and other historic buildings on the east bank of the river. From here it is easy to recognize the first major 'sight line' visually joining the green dome of the Union Station, through the National Historic Site, to the Basilica across the river. St. Boniface is the heart of Francophone Manitoba and the Cathedral a major symbol of French Canadian presence in Western Canada. Since the first mission chapel was built in 1818, six cathedrals have occupied this site, the last destroyed by fire in 1968.



7. Today a new cathedral stands but the facade of the old Basilica remains one of Winnipeg's most striking landmarks.

Not far from the Basilica, hidden from view here by trees, is the oldest building in Manitoba: the Grey Nuns Convent (1846), now the St. Boniface Museum. Its oak log construction is typical Red River style. The grave of Métis leader Louis Riel, the founder of Manitoba, is in the nearby cemetery. A monument to La Verendrye can also be found on the east side of the river.



*A walking tour of historic St. Boniface is recommended and guidebooks are available.*



8. Wildlife fleeing a prairie fire are depicted around the apron of the amphitheatre near the waters edge. To view this, take the stairs to the left or follow the ramp on the right. The Riverwalk can be followed SOUTH to The Forks Market. Paddlewheel riverboats may be seen docked to the NORTH. To continue with the historical tour return to the top of the amphitheatre.

9. Now, follow the upper path to the south, an historic rail building and a small children's playground area lie ahead.

10. The B & B Building was established by the Northern Pacific and Manitoba Railways in 1889 as the Engine House and repair shops. It had a blacksmith's shop, repair shops and originally there was also a roundhouse. (A roundhouse had a huge turntable used for turning the engines and other cars around). In the 1920's

this roundhouse was known at the Winnipeg Joint Terminal Roundhouse and was described as a "standard second class Northern Pacific Roundhouse". Today, the B & B Building remains the oldest standing rail facility of its type in western Canada. It has been beautifully restored and is now home to the Manitoba Children's Museum. The term 'B & B' referred to 'Boiler and Brake' but in later years it stood for 'Bridges and Buildings'.

Although the old railway building endures, many other significant structures stood in this area. In 1991 archaeological excavations uncovered portions of Fort Gibraltar I, a wooden palisaded structure erected and occupied by the North West Company in 1810. It was dismantled and replaced by Fort Gibraltar II in 1817, and when the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies amalgamated.

In 1821 the first Fort Garry was established. At least three Fort Garry's are known to have been built on the site. Proceed along the path to the Commemorative Node.



11. At the Commemorative Node, consider the history of this place. This was the nerve centre of the fur trade for half a century. The crests of the fur trade companies are etched in the stone, among them the shield of the Hudson's Bay Company with its curious motto "Pro Pelle Cutem" believed to mean "skin for a skin".

12. The four storey building is the Johnston Terminal. A sturdy brick and heavy timber structure erected between 1928 and 1932 by a newly amalgamated Canadian National Railway, the Johnston Terminal is a typical warehouse similar to those found throughout Winnipeg's Exchange District. It was one of the largest warehouses in the city and one of the few in Manitoba that was finished on all sides. The southeast corner of the building was notched to accommodate the turning radius of rail cars that stopped along its east wall.



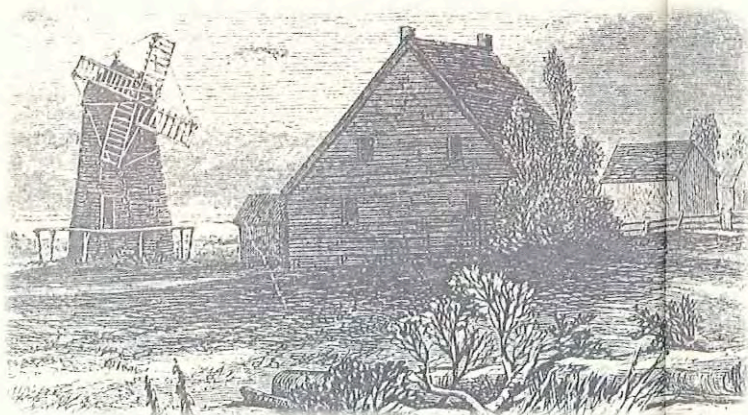


13. The grassy plateau to the WEST is the Archaeological Preserve, an area rich in heritage resources that has been set aside for future archaeological excavation. Thus, the past will continue to be discovered and recovered. The rim of the Preserve is planted with Tall Grass Prairie species.



The Preserve is a good place to reflect upon the ancient occupants of this site. The remains of their campfires that burned so brightly 6,000 years ago, lie 6 metres (20 feet) beneath your feet. A major campsite, discovered at a depth of 3 metres, provided artifacts that show that various groups returned here regularly to trade, hunt and fish 3,000 years ago. After the development of pottery making about 2,000 years ago, these groups became identifiable by the style and decoration of their clay pots. The descendants of these early peoples were on the site when the Europeans arrived, early in the 18th century.

Windmills were increasingly prominent features in the Red River settlement as wheat was grown in ever expanding areas. These were replaced by a steam driven grist and flour mill operated from 1874 to 1907 by the Hudson's Bay Company here, near the mouth of the Assiniboine River. During the 1992 Public Archaeology Program digs, a portion of the mill's pilings, of local oak, were uncovered.



14. Pause at the top of the ramp leading to the confluence of the rivers. The difference in colour of the waters meeting at the junction can be seen from this spot, and is especially distinct in the spring. This is a result of the different types of soil the rivers flow through, their depth and speed.

From here it can also be seen that the South Point is higher ground. This naturally safeguarded the point from many of the floods that inundated the north bank and it remained more heavily treed than the flood plains. When he arrived in 1738, La Verendrye noted it was the location the Aboriginal preferred for their encampments.

The South Point has long been a favoured fishing spot and, even today, chances are you will see someone with a line in



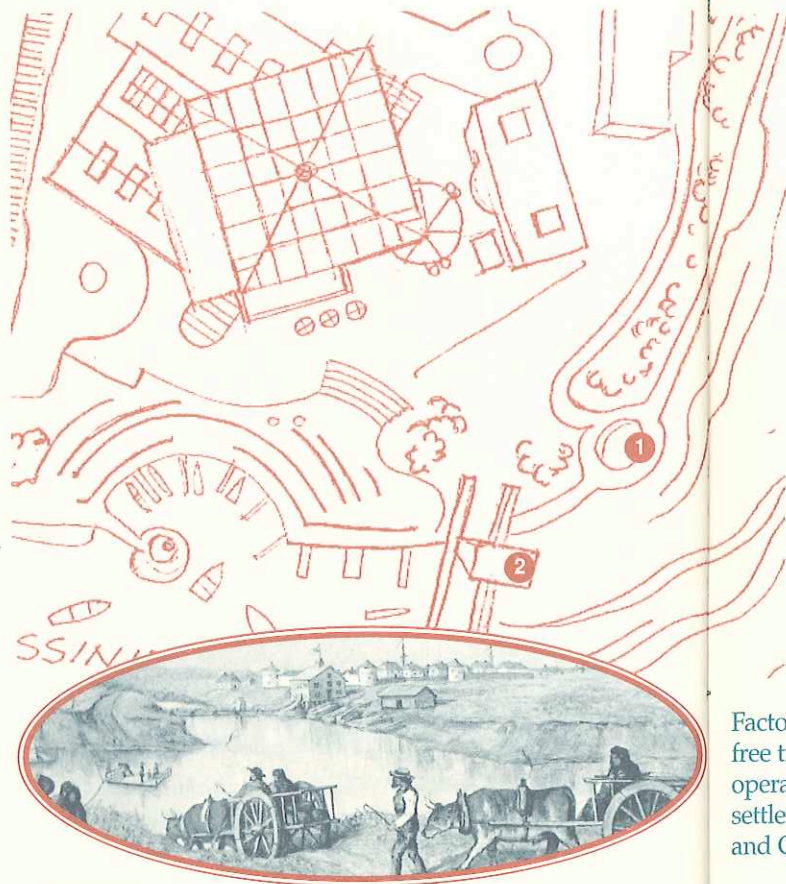
the water. These rivers teemed with fish a century ago. Early diarists frequently referred to the abundance of sturgeon, catfish (in 1880 the Pacific Hotel on Main Street included catfish on the menu as Red River Salmon), pike, goldeye, sauger, pickerel and fresh water drum (Red River bass). Over hundreds of years, groups of Natives gathered here to hunt, fish and follow the bison herds as they migrated north and west across the Prairies. This was the original 'Meeting Place'.

Except for the presence of the railways, the South Point has remained largely undisturbed through the ages.

15. Proceed down the ramp to the edge of the river.



## At The River's Edge



1. Here at the edge of the river modern pictograms adorn the concrete wall. Vertical lines represent the Buffalo Grass of the tall grass prairie. The earth, the sky and the water are also symbolized.

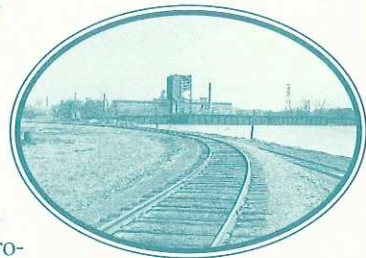
Natural vegetation can be seen along the rivers' edges. Scrub oak, willow, tall grasses and other plants protect the steep slopes from erosion.

Until the construction of the first bridge in 1880, carts could only cross the river by ferry. Try to imagine the ropes that were strung over the Red River to the South Point to allow the flat-bottomed scows to be pulled across from St. Boniface. From the Point, a pontoon bridge spanned the

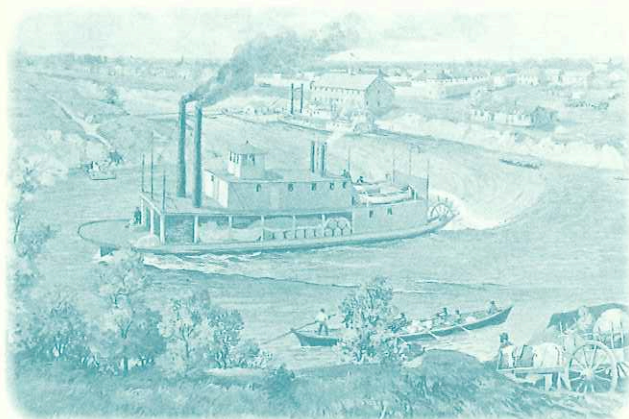
Assiniboine in front of the Hudson's Bay warehouse. Eventually steamboats would nose in to the bank near this bridge.



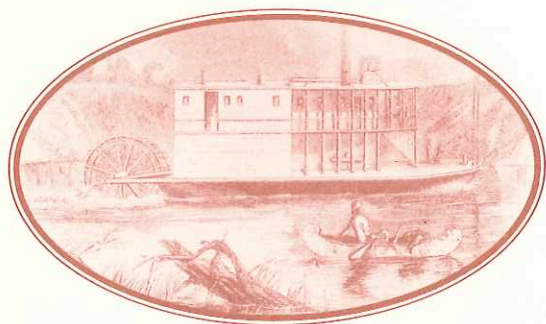
2. Turn WEST along the Riverwalk and pass beneath the old rail bridge with its massive concrete counterweight. Built in 1888 by the Grand Trunk Pacific and Manitoba Railway, this bridge has survived many ice jams on the river. Also referred to as the Low Line, it provided access to the East Yards for trains leaving the Main Line tracks. The counterweight raised the bridge to allow vessels to sail up the Assiniboine River.



Until the arrival of the rails, it was the rivers and the trails that brought people and merchandise to The Forks. Before the steamboats began bringing supplies from the United States, great York boat brigades made the annual trek here from York Factory on Hudson Bay in the north. From the south, free traders provided stiff competition to river traffic, operating as many as 600 Red River carts between the settlement and St. Paul, Minnesota along the Pembina and Crow Wing Trails.





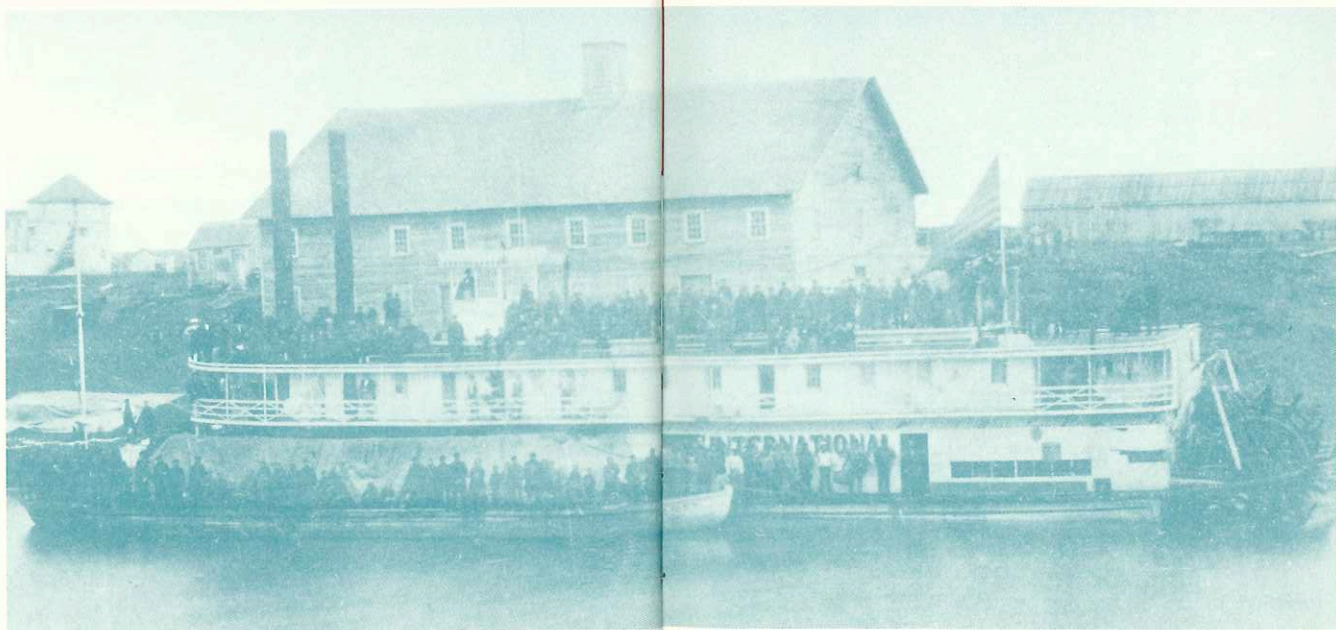
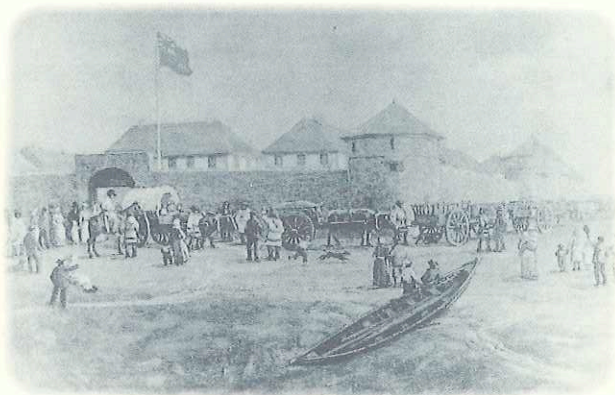


On Friday, June 10, 1859, the community was surprised by the arrival of the 'Anson Northup', a stern-wheel riverboat built on the Mississippi and dragged over the snow the previous winter to be launched into the Red River. This was the first steamboat to arrive at Upper Fort Garry and its Captain won the \$2,000 prize offered by the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce to the first individual or company to put a steamer on the Red. St. Paul was the northern terminus of the Mississippi and its docks were crowded with paddle-wheelers. The Red River soon came to be known as the "Mississippi of the North".

Later vessels, such as "The International", brought many immigrants here, including the first Icelanders and Mennonites. They were accepted into the country through immigration sheds built in 1872.


These provided the most primitive of accommodations and were located along the river bank.

Until 1878, the Hudson's Bay Company held a monopoly over river traffic on the Red and all steamboats docked at Upper Fort Garry. The Forks remained an important distribution point as goods for the settlement were unloaded here before being transported to town by cart.





## Of Ports and Forts

 Continue along the Riverwalk to The Forks Historic Port. The Port is a natural performance amphitheatre and recreation area in all seasons. The Forks Public Market can be seen at the top on The Plaza.



1. The Port is located where riverboats nosed into the bank to unload their goods for the Hudson's Bay warehouse and



Upper Fort Garry. For more than 150 years, the action of the river undercutting the bank caused it to slump. This slump-

ing is what made the area so suitable for the shallow draft riverboats. In later years the bank failure was further aggravated by rail activity. In order to maintain level ground, the railways added 'fill', usually cinders. This added weight and, in turn, pushed the bank farther into the river. This area was also the site of City of Winnipeg Dump #1 in the early 1900's.

The Forks Historic Port is a dedication to the rich heritage of the rivers, but is also a necessary construction, stabilizing the bank and protecting the valuable heritage resources known to occupy the Archaeological Preserve.

2. At the entrance to the Port are two large stone cairns. These form the beginning of The Wall Through Time. Follow the ramp on the EAST side of the Port. The history of The Forks from



the Ice Age to the current century is presented along the climb to The Plaza level through interpretive panels and engraved granite plaques.

3. The Wall Through Time, constructed of Tyndall, granite and glazed tiles, was a gift to the community by the Union of Bricklayers and



Allied Craftsmen in honour of their 100th anniversary in 1992. All the stone, materials, equipment and labour required for construction of the Wall were donated.

4. On The Plaza Market level is The Forks Pavilion, a small open use area in summer and a skate changing facility in winter with a huge hearth and fireplace. Access to the Archaeological Preserve is provided beside The Pavilion.





5. This Plaza has seen many changes over the centuries. Once a flood plain and hunting ground, it became the site of Forts and settlements, working rail yards, and finally the space for public enjoyment it is today.

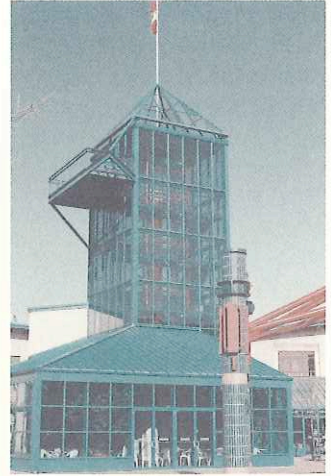
Construction of the stone fort, Upper Fort Garry, began on this shore in 1835. Fort Garry was the primary location for retail trade and headquarters of the Hudson's Bay Company's Northern Department. It served as the commercial and administrative centre of the prairies for almost 50 years. Main Street and rail tracks now run through the centre of the area the Fort occupied. By 1882 most of Upper Fort Garry had been demolished. One grand gate remains to the north, across Main Street and is well worth a visit.

A courthouse was also located here. Two trials were closely watched: one, a scandalous adultery charge, the Foss/Pelly affair, drew especially large crowds. The other, the trial of the Métis trader, John Sayer, was very important because the verdict was misunderstood to be an acquittal. This emboldened Louis Riel Sr., father of Louis Riel, and other free traders to believe that the monopoly of the Hudson's Bay Company had been broken.

In 1894, a grandstand and horse racing track were opened here and called Fort Garry Park. Rail activities dominated the balance of the site.

The grandstand burned in the fall of 1906 and two years later construction began on the Union Station.

6. As you stroll across The Plaza note the amber tiles marking the pillars. The lower band marks the height of the waters during the famous 1950 flood. Many local citizen's remember this flood and it was pronounced "the most devastating of all time" in newspapers across the nation. This statement lacked considerable accuracy, as can be seen by the upper band of tiles marking the height of flood waters of 1826. That year, the rivers swept away most of what existed at The Forks, forcing the settlers to flee. It was reported that in one day alone the waters rose 3 metres (10 feet). Nearly every building in the Red River Colony was destroyed and losses were heavy.



Today, the Red River Floodway diverts spring flooding around the city and here, at The Forks, the waters rise over the Riverwalk but not much further. The summer of 1993 saw high water at The Forks for the first time in decades.





## Further Touring

Walking tours in other downtown areas are recommended, including:



Upper Fort Garry Gate on Main Street across from the Union Station, west of The Forks;



Historic St. Boniface, across the Red River from The Forks to the east;



West, along the Riverwalk to the Legislature and south through Osborne Village;



Winnipeg's historic commercial district, The Exchange, northwest from The Forks and Portage and Main.

## Acknowledgements

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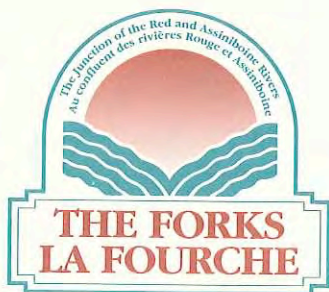
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