

Buffalo Hunting Trails from Red River: Calf Mountain, Buffalo Head or “Tete de Boeuf” and Star Mound Hill

Two Trails to Buffalo Country.

The eastern trail:

This trail left the Fort Garry / St. Norbert vicinity passing close to where Carman is now located, then ascending the escarpment of the plateau called the Pembina Hills (or Hair Hills in Alexander Henry's day)¹, and from there, southwesterly to a butte known as Calf Mountain in the south-east portion of Township 3-6, then south-westerly, crossing the Pembina River in 26-2-9-W of the 1st meridian and so on to Devils Lake, Dakota Territory and beyond to the Sheyenne River. Calf Mountain - Tete De Boeuf (Buffalo Head, Calf Mountain) was built by natives as a ritual meeting place, and was used to bury great men of their time. Calf Mountain is to the east of the Pembina River on the Little Pembina River (see map on last page). Indications are that their rituals were based on proximity to the highly advanced Mayan and Aztec culture of Mexico.

The western trail:

The old trail from Manitoba to Mandan country on the Missouri near the entry of the Knife River left Fort la Reine (Portage la Prairie) headed south past Calf Mountain (near Darlingford, Manitoba) past Star Mound (near Snowflake, Manitoba) to the west side of Turtle Mountain then south west to the Missouri.

Star Mound Hill, also called Nebogwawin Butte, was once an Aboriginal campsite and burial ground. It is located near Snowflake, Manitoba. A large buffalo rubbing stone is located there.

The R.M. of Pembina is situated on the U.S.A. boundary in the south central part of the province. Manitou, Darlingford and LaRiviere are the larger centres in the municipality along with other communities such, as Kingsley, Snowflake, Kaleida, Mowbray and Windygates. The Pembina River Valley, with its river and lakes, affords a rather unique

¹ The Pembina River originates north of La Riviere, Manitoba, flows southeast, and enters the United States northeast of Langdon, North Dakota. The Pembina River is described as taking its rise in the Rib-bone lakes, or Lac du Placotte, and along its course through the prairies its banks are well lined with large trees. From the international border, it flows southeast to Walhalla and east to Neche and Pembina, finally emptying into the Red River of the North. The scenic Pembina Hills, historically also known as the Hair Hills, Pembina Mountain, Pembina Mountains, Sainte Marie Mountains, or Saint Mary's Mountains, rise just to the west of Walhalla and extend to the international border. Various geological terms including cuestas, escarpment, and scarp, are used to describe the hills. The hills mark the boundary between the glacial Lake Agassiz plain (what we think of as the Red River Valley) and the Pembina Delta (where the ancient Pembina River flowed into Lake Agassiz). The river valley winding through the hills is known as the Pembina Gorge. The gorge was carved by the ancient Pembina River, which was much larger than the present-day Pembina River, as the ancient river carried meltwater from glacial Lake Souris in north-central North Dakota and southern Manitoba.

landmark for the R.M. of Pembina as it crosses from northwest to southeast. This valley was a long-time wintering spot for the Saulteaux/Ojibwa and their Metis kin.

In the year 1738 La Verendrye, his sons and a company of fifty came south from Fort la Reine to be the first white men, as far as is known, to set foot in the territory now known as southern Manitoba. They passed within 11 miles of Morden on their way to the Missouri River, camping overnight at Calf Mountain, one mile from Darlingford.



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