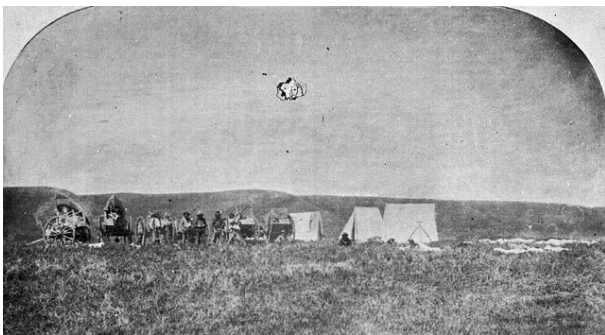


We're making camp on Antler River – up the Souris, near the 49th parallel. Good wood, water, grazing and shelter. Beautiful. But in truth, I'd rather have a bath and a proper bed!

I'm Hime. Humphery Hime. It's summer 1858. I'm 25 years old. Photography is my passion, but I end up doing more surveying. I complained once – and my boss called me 'pampered'. So, I just find opportunities. We're traveling as a scientific expedition under Henry Hind - deep into Rupert's Land. Tomorrow morning I'll get out the camera - as he'll be busy getting soil samples.

The prairie's exquisite. Especially before sunset - the light is horizontal, and the grass is dancing to a gentle breeze. Hind jumped on me earlier for taking a photo of endless prairie against an "uninteresting" flat horizon. He said I wasted a glass plate. Hmm! It's likely the first photo ever taken west of the Red. The vast beauty caught my eye. The financiers and farmers out east, I told him, will pour over that photo. It screams '**potential**' to cattle and grain people.



The photograph above, taken in 1859 is one of the first photos taken in southwestern Manitoba.

The business upper-ups of the Canada's sent us to assess the agricultural value of these lands. They're thinking Canada should purchase Rupert's Land. There's

talk of farming and the gold rush farther west - and - making sure the Americans don't take it all first.

Hudson's Bay officials still talk of how this land is wild, not fit for farming. I understand that. They've been focused on resources to be hunted and trapped – and, perhaps, protecting Indigenous ways. The NEW businessmen see only money. They expect farm exports will bring them huge profits. Like a train without brakes, I guess, and I'm on it.

Over the past two months, though, my camera has changed its focus. It used to TAKE images. I feel now like I'm **GIVING** images to the future - preserving natural prairie and its lifestyles. My eye was at first overwhelmed by the vastness. Sitting with our Anishinaabe scout, helped me to see it differently. He doesn't consider the prairie as wild or threatening. It's home.

I find my camera looks for connections now – between land and the people. The teepee, for example, makes such good sense in this windy country. And the canoe, so well suited for rivers and portaging. What's to become of this wealth?

Well, the Iroquois hands are setting up tents and teepees. I'll join them. There's a bison skull and a cart or two up there. A promising scene for my camera, perhaps.

David Neufeld adapted "Prairie Riches at Antler River" from a story written for Vantage Points 1.