

In the days before the completion of the all-Canadian CPR route in 1885, most travelers coming west came via the Great lakes to Duluth, Minnesota. From there they could take the Northern Pacific either to a port on the Red River where they could take a riverboat, or a train to Emerson, or to Winnipeg.

Those heading for the southwest corner of Manitoba could land at Emerson and proceed by wagon or on foot along the Boundary Commission Trail. That involved a tough climb up the Pembina escarpment, a crossing of the Pembina River near Pilot Mound, and several other challenges, before that all-important visit to the Land Titles Office, conveniently located along the trail near "Old" Deloraine.

Prior to 1882 passengers arriving in Winnipeg could take one of the several steamboats that churned up and down the Assiniboine at a slow, and hopefully, steady pace. They would land near the mouth of the Souris River where the thriving town of Millford offered lodging and supplies. From there, after a somewhat exhausting climb out of the Souris Valley, or perhaps the equally exhausting experience of convincing oxen to climb that hill, Turtle Mountain could be seen in the distance. The end was in sight!

After regular train service arrived in Brandon in 1882, many chose to use that service. Brandon soon became the hub of settler activity. Supplies could be purchased including oxen or horses, and wagons. From Brandon well-established trails led

southwards, with the crossing of the Souris River being the main obstacle.

By 1881, services such as Sheppard's Ferry directly south of Brandon were operating. Sheppard's Ferry was a ferry that crossed the Souris River at Riverside, just east of where our Highway 10 crosses the Souris. An alternate route took one to the crossing at Souris City, a bustling community just south of where Wawanesa would later be located.

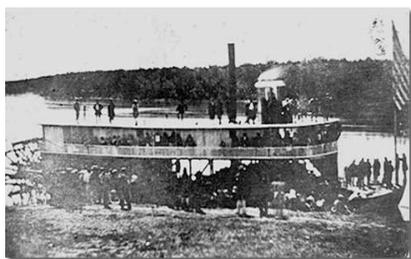
Stopping Houses were available along the route where one could get a meal, feed the oxen, and get a bed for the night.

But, as so many pioneers were about to learn... getting here was the easy part!

So, the next time you take a trip to Winnipeg or to the eastern side of the province, remember those who came before us traveled by ship, by trains, steamboats, ferry or by ox-cart, or on foot. Those with perseverance would travel by all six means, to homestead near to Turtle Mountain.

*Ships, Trains, and Ox carts was taken from Vantage Points 5; Vantage Points is a 6-book series that shares our rich history here in southwest Manitoba. Please learn about the Turtle Mountain Souris Plains Heritage Association at [vantagepoints.ca](http://vantagepoints.ca). All stories in this series are found at [vantagepoints.ca](http://vantagepoints.ca)*

*On behalf of TMSPPHA, I'm Betty Sawatzky*



*Anson Northrup ferry on the Red River*



*Treesbank Ferry*



*Train station near Arden, MB*



*Ox-carts at train station*