PEMBINA RIVER CULTURAL RESOURCES
LITERATURE AND RECORDS SEARCH

by
FRED SCHNEIDER
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Department of Anthropology and Archaeology

University of North Dakota

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Introduction

The literature and records search was divided into two projects, a search for locations, records, and references to prehistoric sites and a search for similar information regarding historic sites and events in the project area. The project was directed by Dr. Fred Schneider, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology, University of North Dakota. The search for prehistoric cultural resources was conducted by John Logan, Research Assistant, Department of Anthropology and Archaeology. The historic cultural resources search was conducted by Colleen Oihus, graduate student in History, University of North Dakota, and by Nicholas Franke, State Archaeologist, North Dakota State Historical Society.

Soon after these individuals began their research it became apparent that few sites had been recorded or were mentioned in the literature in the project boundaries. Therefore, the research team was requested to provide a list of sites, references, records, etc. pertinent to the understanding of the prehistory and history of the general area.

The prehistoric sites search by Logan is presented first along with a list of references. Next is presented Mr. Franke's historic sites search and references. Ms. Oihus' contribution consists of a list of both specific and general references; those dealing with the towns of Neche and Pembina, Pembina County, and the Red River Valley region.

Prehistory

Initial searches for information were made in the North Dakota Archaeological Survey files at the University of North Dakota (a duplicate file is at the North Dakota State Historical Society), in a Bibliography of North Dakota Archaeology: 1966 (Anderson ms.), and in a Bibliography of Plains Archaeology (Wood ms.). Pembina County has received little attention from archaeologists, only one site, 32PM1, is recorded and numbered in the county. In the Survey files there are four site leads for Pembina County. These are sites visited, recorded, or mentioned in the literature many years ago, but which have never been verified, re-evaluated, or assigned site numbers. More than likely these sites have since been modified or destroyed by agricultural activities, artifact collectors, and floods. These sites are listed in Table 1.
One of the site leads is a mound (burial mound?) which is recorded at a location immediately south and west of Pembina and perhaps on the south bank of the Pembina River. The site, if indeed there is a site, may be in the project boundaries, but the location and description is too general to clearly indicate its relationship to the river.

The references included are those which would provide a good background for a general understanding of the prehistory of the area. There are no specific literature references to sites in Pembina County.

### TABLE 1

**PREHISTORIC SITES IN PEMBINA COUNTY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Records</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>32PM1 Village or campsite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 1/2, NW 1/4, Section 36, T159N, R51W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Site Leads</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 Mound (destroyed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N 1/2, Section 20, T159N, R56W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NW 1/4, NW 1/4, Section 35, T162N, R51W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3** Mound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NE 1/4, SW 1/4, Section 9, T163N, R51W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Village</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S 1/2, Section 18, T163N, R53W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

** Indicates site which may be in proposed project boundaries. W.P.A. indicates Works Progress Administration Records on file in the North Dakota State Historical Society.
PREHISTORIC ARCHAEOLOGICAL REFERENCES

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Pettipas, Leo F., Paleo-Indian Manifestations in Manitoba: Their Spatial and Temporal Relationships with the Campbell Strandline, M.A. Thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Manitoba.


Wood, W. Raymond, A bibliography of Plains Archaeology.
INVENTORY OF THE KNOWN
HISTORIC SITES AND DISTRICTS

by
Nicholas Franke

This report contains an incomplete inventory of the historic resources
within the project area - one mile on either side of the Pembina River
between Neche and Pembina, North Dakota. This stretch of the river passes
through the following Townships and Ranges:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Township</th>
<th>Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>164N</td>
<td>53W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163N</td>
<td>53W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163N</td>
<td>52W</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>163N</td>
<td>51W</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This information was compiled solely from documentary sources and is to be
considered only a preliminary and incomplete inventory of the historic re-
sources within the project area. A complete evaluation of the historic
resources along the Pembina River from Neche to the city of Pembina will
be possible only if a surface survey is undertaken to locate both reported
and unreported sites along the river.

Historic Outline

The earliest recorded European penetration of the Pembina River area
occurred in conjunction with the fur trade. In the late eighteenth and
early nineteenth century the North West Company, the X.Y. Company and the
Hudon's Bay Company built competing posts on the Red and Pembina Rivers.
The earliest of these was built in 1797 by Charles Chaboillez, a trader for
North West Company, at the confluence of the Pembina and Red Rivers. By
1800 when Alexander Henry, in charge of the Red River District of the North West Company, arrived at the Pembina River, Charboillez's post had been abandoned. Henry recorded several posts that were built on the Red and Pembina Rivers by him and his rivals. After an abortive attempt to establish a post on the Park River, Henry built one (1801) near Charboillez's old post. While on the Park River he had sent Lagasse to the Hair Hills (where the Pembina River leaves the Manitoba escarpment and flows into the Red River Valley) to build a small post. This was one of three posts Henry had built in this area. Henry also reported the accidental burning of a Hudson's Bay Company post on the Pembina River near present day Neche.

After Henry left the Pembian area in 1808 the information for the area becomes less complete. The merger of the North West and X.Y. Companies in 1804 left the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies the chief rivals in the fur trade.

In 1812 the first agricultural settlement was introduced into the Red River Valley with the founding of the Selkirk colony near present day Winnipeg. The first year of the colony proved to be extremely difficult, and the settlers established Fort Daer at the confluence of the Pembina and Red Rivers to more conveniently hunt the buffalo in the area.

The North West Company in competition with the Hudson's Bay Company solicited the aid of Metis trappers and hunters who worked as free agents. The Metis, who were of mixed Indian and European, mostly French, parentage had evolved a unique way of life and a separate ethnic identity. Buffalo hunting, for the production of pemmican for the fur trade, and fur trapping formed the economic and social basis of their way of life. Loose informal Metis settlements developed at the places where the Metis gathered to prepare for their biannual buffalo hunts. Major settlements were at the
mouth of the Pembina River and at the location where the Pembina River flows out of the Manitoba escarpment. Metis settlement patterns tended to copy those of the French with the homestead near the river and lands extending inland in a narrow strip. One settlement which became known as St. Joseph (present day Walhalla, North Dakota) was an important Metis center with trading posts and cabins along either side of the Pembina River.

After years of rivalry, the North West and Hudson's Bay Companies merged in 1821, establishing the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly in Western Canada. In the early 1840's the American Fur Company represented by Norman Kittson in partnership with Henry Hastings Sibley, established a post at Pembina to challenge the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly of the fur trade. Their plan was to divert furs from Hudson's Bay Company lands to their posts at Pembina and St. Joseph. The success of their plan depended on giving the Metis free traders, disgruntled with the Hudson's Bay Company's restrictive economic policies, an alternative market for their furs. Part of the plan came to include the establishment of communications with St. Paul via ox-cart routes enabling the traders to market their furs without being dependent on the Hudson's Bay Company. The efforts of the American fur traders were largely successful, resulting in the diversion of a large number of furs to American markets. The fur trade and the ox cart cartage provided a measure of economic prosperity for St. Joseph and Pembina.

The regular ox-cart brigades from Pembina county stimulated an interest at St. Paul in establishing better communications as a prelude to settlement of the Pembina area. In 1858, the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce offered a prize of $2,000 to whomever placed a steamboat on the Red River. The prize was won by Anson Northup who sailed a boat he named for himself from Fort
Abercrombie to Winnipeg in 1859. A stage and freight line was also operated between St. Cloud and the Red River to facilitate communications between St. Paul and the Red River Valley.

A hiatus in these efforts was caused by the Sioux War of 1862 and the American Civil War (1861-1865). By 1871, the Metis' national aspirations had been dashed by their failure, under Louis Riel, to establish their authority in Western Canada and by the loss of their economic base caused by the decline of the fur trade and the near extermination of the bison. The Metis population of the Pembina area declined sharply as many moved westward in the hopes of retaining their way-of-life.

By 1871 the agricultural settlement of the Red River Valley by Americans was progressing at an accelerated pace. In that year, the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad reached the Red River at Breckenridge, and the Northern Pacific Railroad reached Moorhead. Additional steamboats were put on the river, and the stage line was extended from Georgetown to Pembina and Winnipeg. The land around Pembina had been surveyed by Moses K. Armstrong beginning in 1867, and the Federal Land Office was opened at Pembina in 1872. Between the opening of the Federal Land Office and 1889, the year North Dakota became a state, the Pembina area became organized and settled by farmers who took land in units surveyed according to the congressional survey. The subsequent history of the Pembina area revolves around the political, cultural and social changes brought about by the new settlers in the region.

**Historic Sites**

The documentary sources indicate that a number of historic sites exist within the project area. In Pembina alone Chaboillez's post (1797), Henry's post (1801), Fort Daer (1812), and Fort Pembina (1863) were reported to be
near the mouth of the Pembina River. Sites from the early city of Pembina still may have sufficient integrity as to be disturbed by construction. The shores of the Pembina River with its concentration of wood and game attracted both settlers and travelers. The remains of camp sites and permanent Metis cabins may be found along the river as well as remnants of the ox-cart trails and later farmsteads. At Neche the sources note the burned Hudson's Bay trading post and "Smuggler's Point", an area reported to be rich in local history.

With the exception of a small number of historic sites the precise location and condition of the historic sites within the project area cannot be determined without a surface survey to locate and evaluate the historic resources along the river.
## KNOWN HISTORIC SITES ALONG THE PEMBINA RIVER FROM NECHE TO PEMBINA, NORTH DAKOTA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Documentary Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. North West Company fur trading post (1797-1798)</td>
<td>South side of the Pembina River at its confluence with the Red River</td>
<td>Coues, 1897:79-80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. North West Company fur trading post (1801)</td>
<td>100 paces north of the Pembina River and 100 paces west of the Red River</td>
<td>Coues, 1897:181-182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. X.Y. Company fur trading post (1801)</td>
<td>An unspecified distance below the North West Company fur trading post on the Pembina River</td>
<td>Coues, 1897:188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fort Daer (1812)</td>
<td>North side of Pembina River at its confluence with the Red River</td>
<td>Coues, 1897:81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Dumoulin Historic Site (1818)</td>
<td>Sec. 33, T164N, R51W</td>
<td>Files of State Historical Society of North Dakota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Fort Pembina (1870)</td>
<td>NW&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt;, NE&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt;, Sec. 16, and SW&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt;, SE&lt;sub&gt;4&lt;/sub&gt;, Sec. 9, T163N, R51W</td>
<td>Ensign and Co., 1893:97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Fort Pembina Military Reservation (1870)</td>
<td>Sec's. 16, 17, and 18, T163N, R51W and Sec. 15 west of the Red River</td>
<td>Ensign and Co., 1893:97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The City of Pembina</td>
<td>At the confluence of the Pembina and the Red Rivers</td>
<td>Arnold, 1917</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
14. School (ca. 1908-1917)  
   SW¼, NW¼, Sec. 5, T163N, R52W  
   Hixson and Co., N.D.:  

15. Hudson's Bay Post  
   On the Pembina River near Neche  
   Coues, 1897:190
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Hennessy, William B., History of North Dakota, (Bismarck Tribune.) 1910


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The literature and records search was divided into two projects, a search for locations, records, and references to prehistoric sites and a search for similar information regarding historic sites and events within the project area— one mile on either side of the Pembina River between Neche and Pembina, North Dakota. Few sites had been recorded or mentioned in the literature, therefore, a list of sites, references and records pertinent to the understanding of the prehistory and history of the general area is provided.
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