

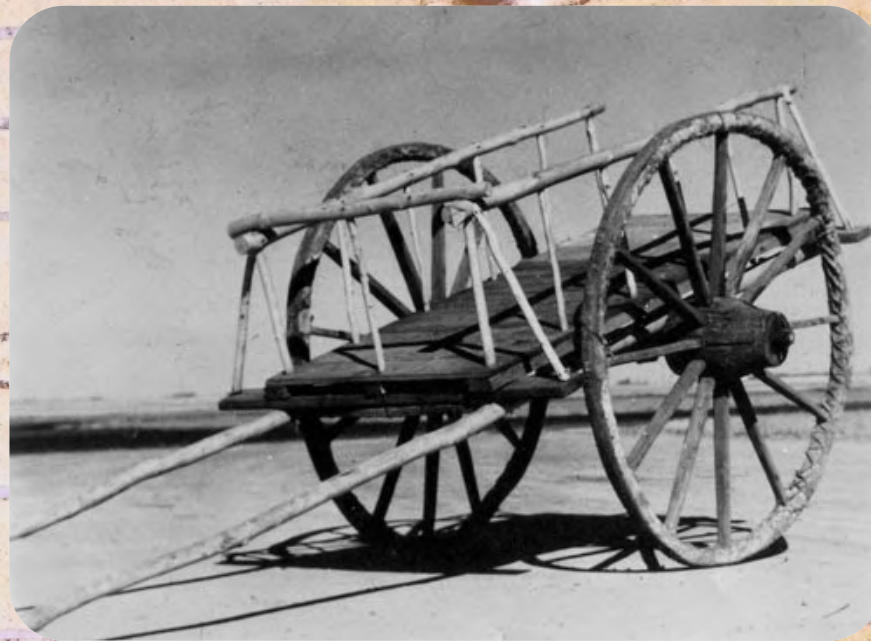
RED RIVER OXCART TRAILS

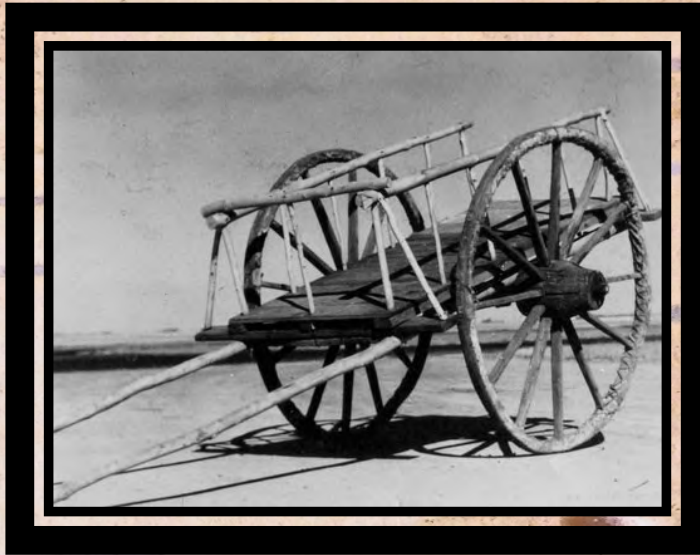
1820 - 1870

Reflections of and on

THE WOODS TRAIL

Ron Miles, Naturalist





THE WOODS TRAIL - 1840s -1870s

PILLAGER GAP

(traversing Minnesota's *Wadena, Todd,*
Crow Wing, Cass, & Morrison
counties)

- + *Context*
- + *Remnants*
- + *Resources*

Douglas A Birk

***+ named Pillager Gap, and defined it,
geologically and culturally***

+



OUR SENSE OF PLACE

- LAKE COUNTRY JOURNAL, September-October 2001



PILLAGER GAP
Gateway of the Ages

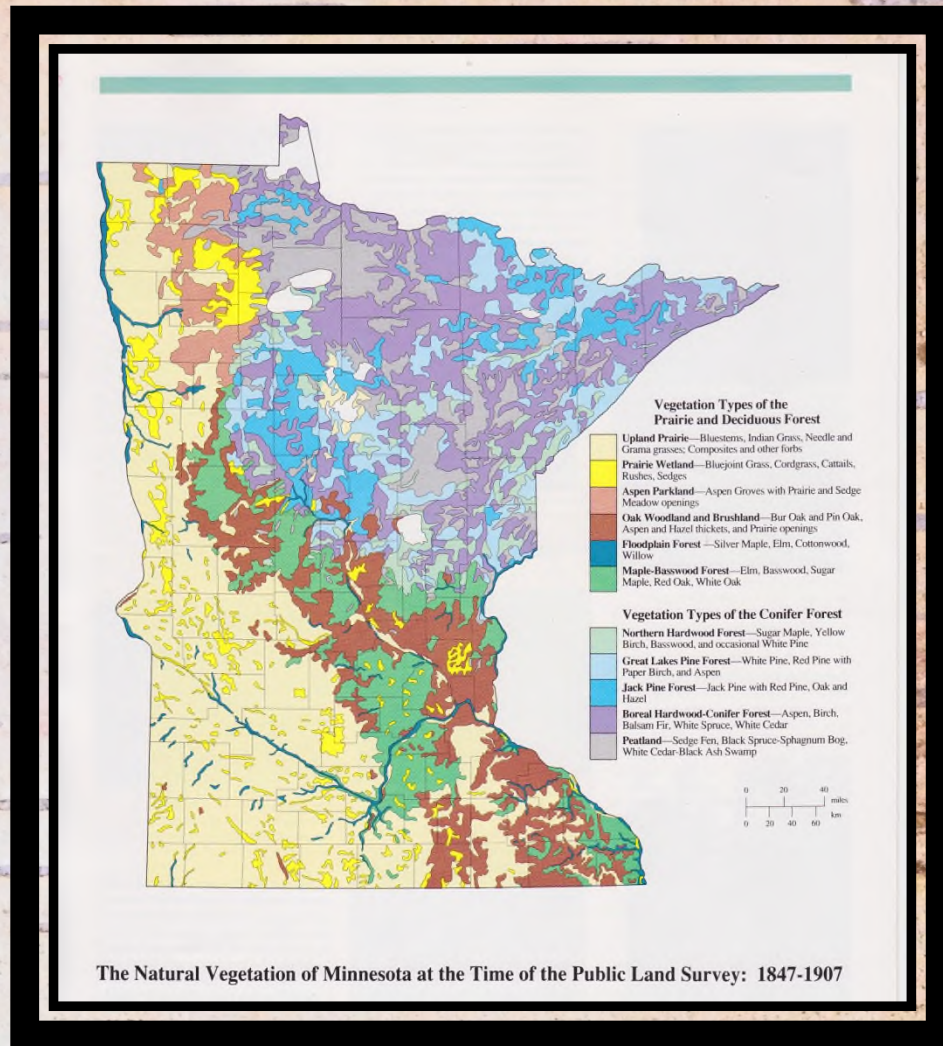
By DALE WILLIAMS, PHOTOGRAPHY BY CHIP BORKENHAGEN



***From PLEISTOCENE bare bones of
landscape...***



... came natural local communities.



LATTER DAYS OF THE FUR TRADE

-From Birchbark Canoes to Wooden Oxcarts -

WHERE
TWO
WORLDS
MEET

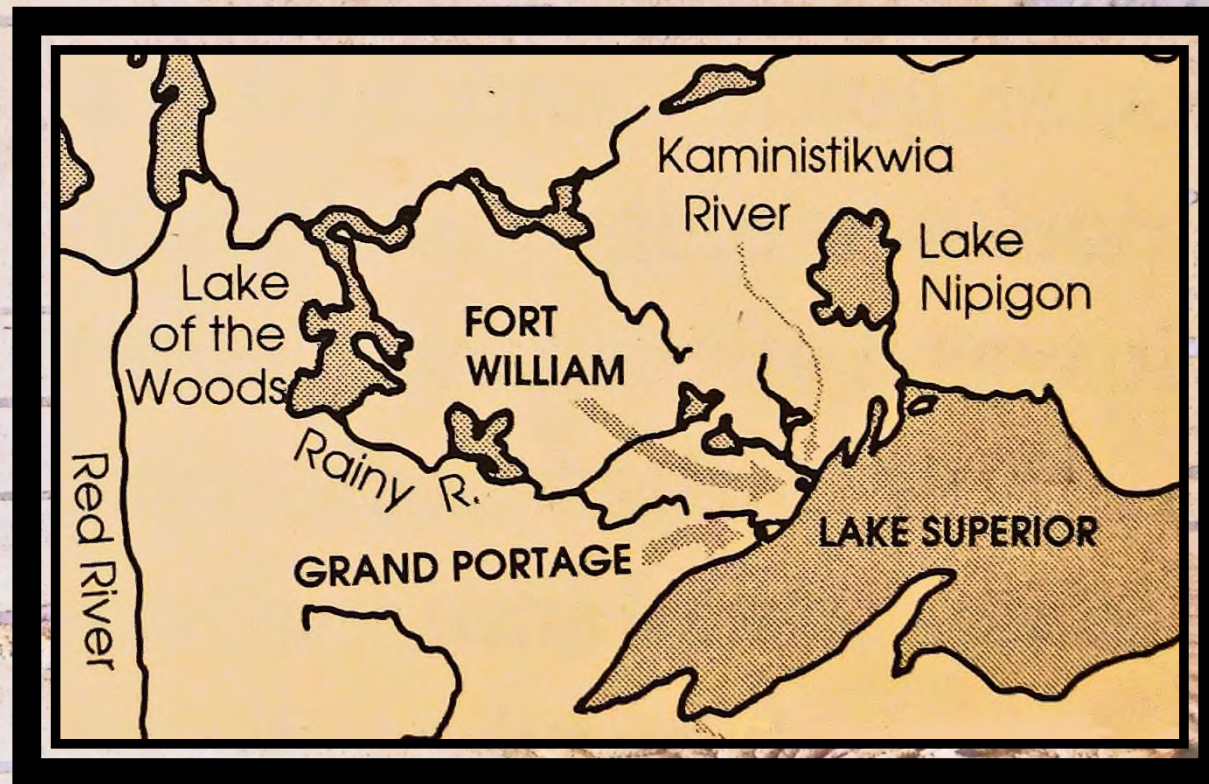
the great lakes
fur trade



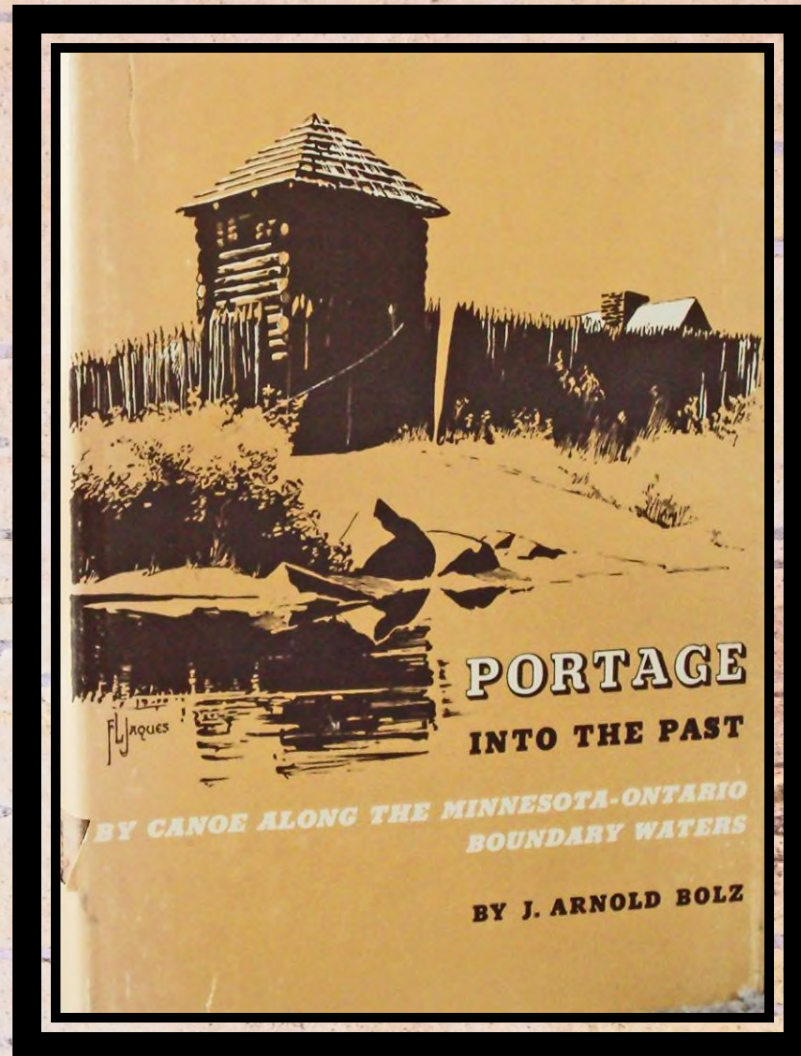
Tales of two emerging countries



Minnesota-Ontario: *an uncertain border*



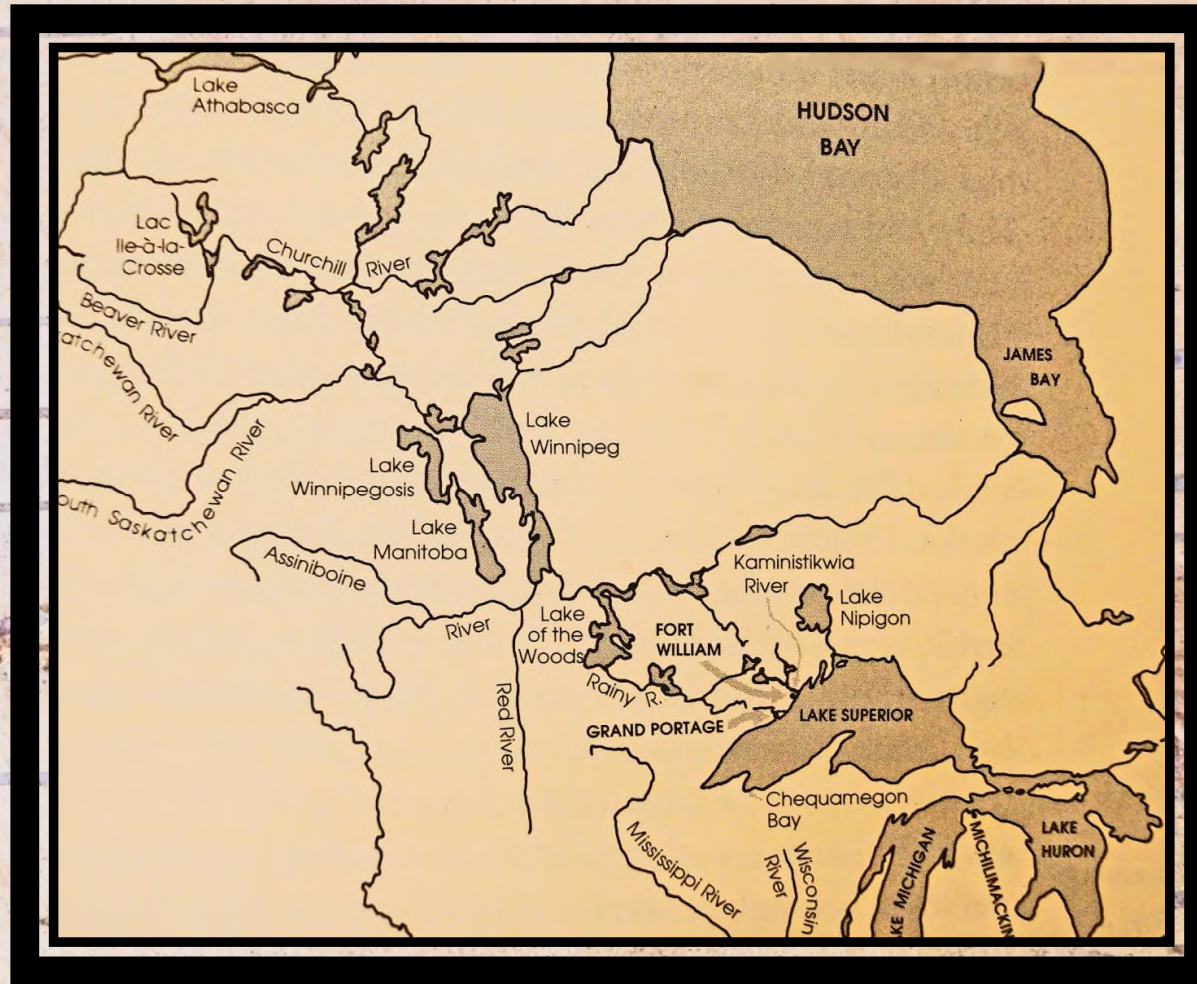
The Minnesota-Ontario Border



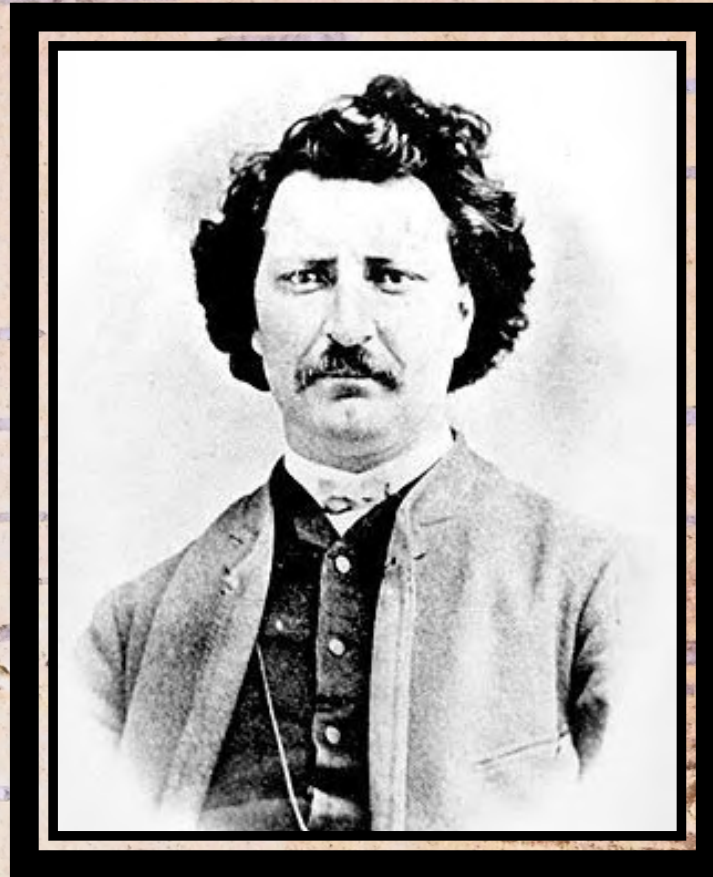
**Inland lakes' fur trade was first plied by
(ca.) 28-foot birchbark Conots du Nord.**



“Westward Ho,” The French: Montreal to Lake Athabaska



**The “meti” and Selkirk Colony
*at the headwaters of the Red River***



Two Countries, One Red River



An unique and comprehensive history

S T R A N G E



E M P I R E

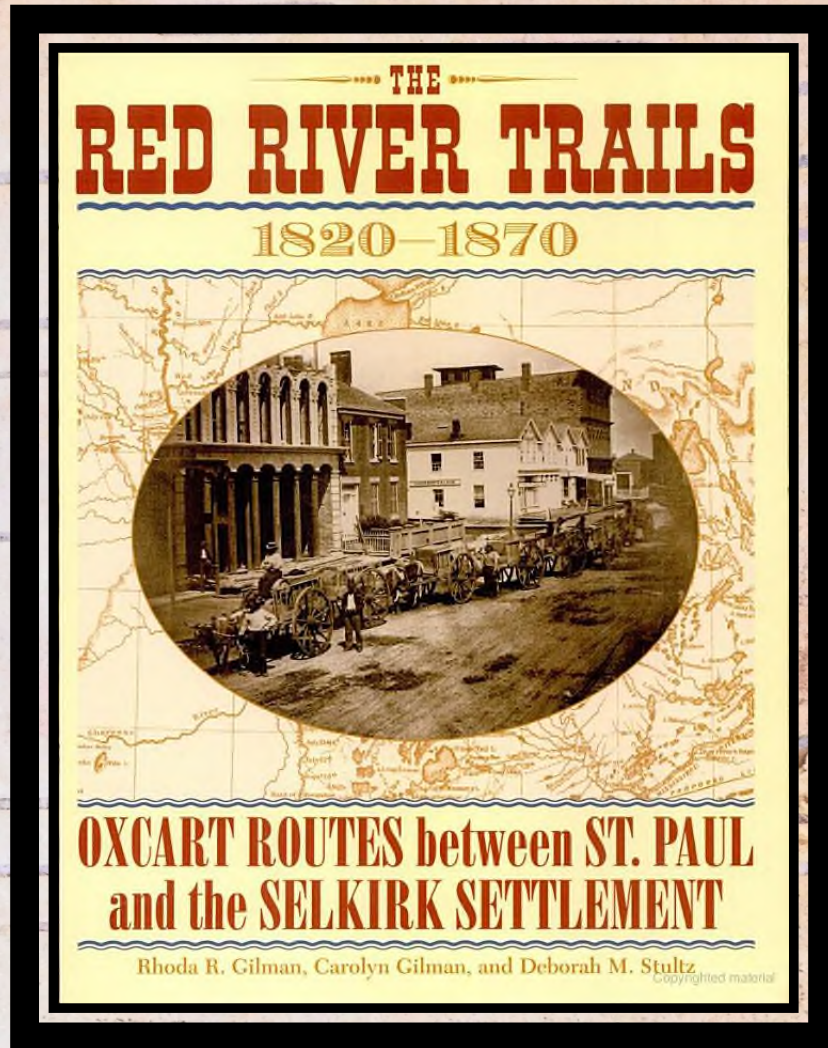
Joseph Kinsey Howard

The story of Louis Riel, the Métis people, and their
struggle for a homeland on the plains of
the United States-Canada border

The Red River Oxcart Trails 1820 - 1870



The Primary History Reference:



Red River Carts in St. Paul

GEMS OF MINNESOTA SCENERY.



RED RIVER OX CARTS.

No.

Published by WHITNEY'S GALLERY, St. Paul, Minn.

REMNANTS

*Onsite opportunities for
experience*

History for the future

- **DEDICATED PUBLIC LANDS**
- ***Camp Ripley***
- ***Pillager State Forest***
- ***State, County. & Local parks***

- **PRIVATE STEWARDSHIP**
- ****Crow Wing Agency***
- ***Your own backyard(?)***

OLD WADENA COUNTY PARK

+ *The WOODS TRAIL on the Crow Wing River*



CROW WING STATE PARK

***+ Where the WOODS TRAIL crossed the
Mississippi River***



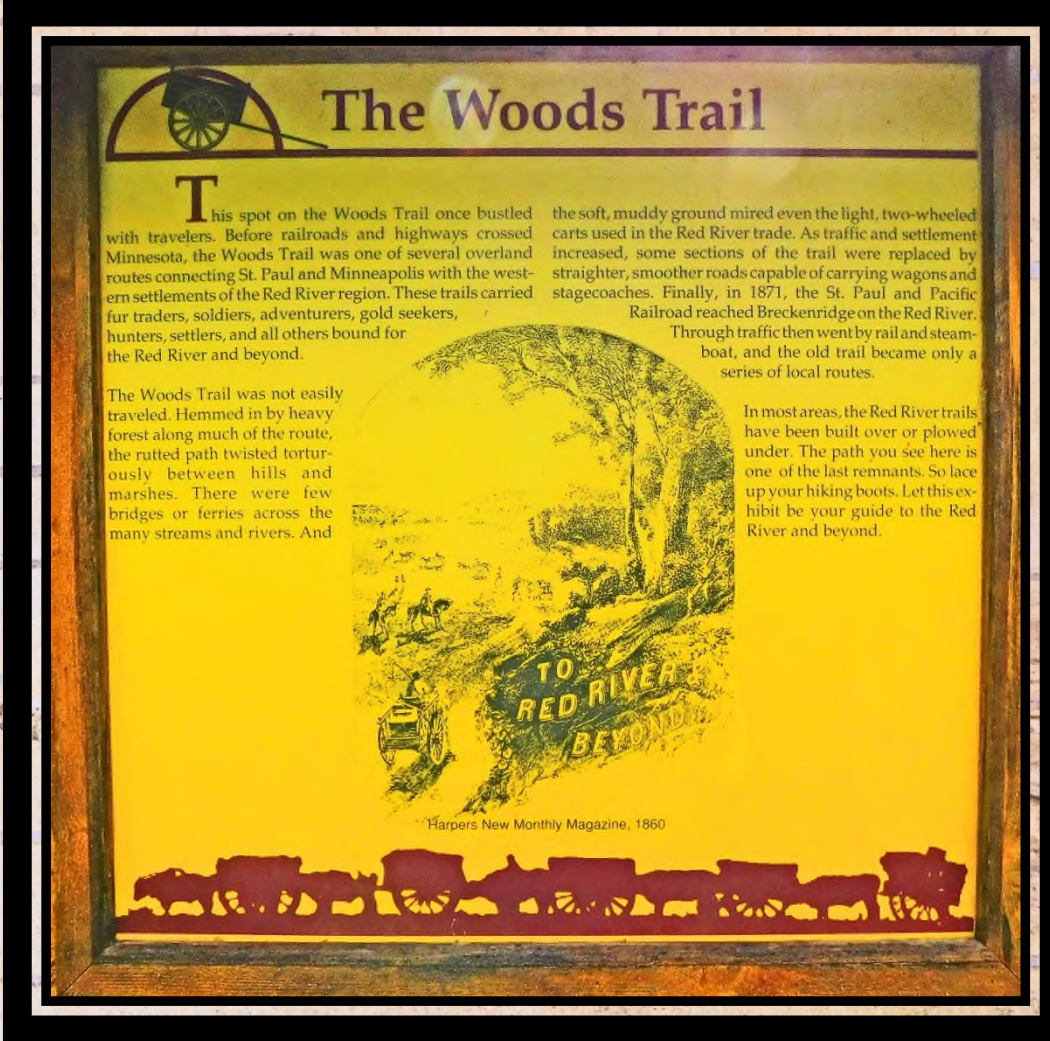
+ a Minnesota Historic District



+ RED RIVER TRAILS *interpretive kiosk*



+ **WOODS TRAIL** *history plainly told, onsite*



The Woods Trail

This spot on the Woods Trail once bustled with travelers. Before railroads and highways crossed Minnesota, the Woods Trail was one of several overland routes connecting St. Paul and Minneapolis with the western settlements of the Red River region. These trails carried fur traders, soldiers, adventurers, gold seekers, hunters, settlers, and all others bound for the Red River and beyond.

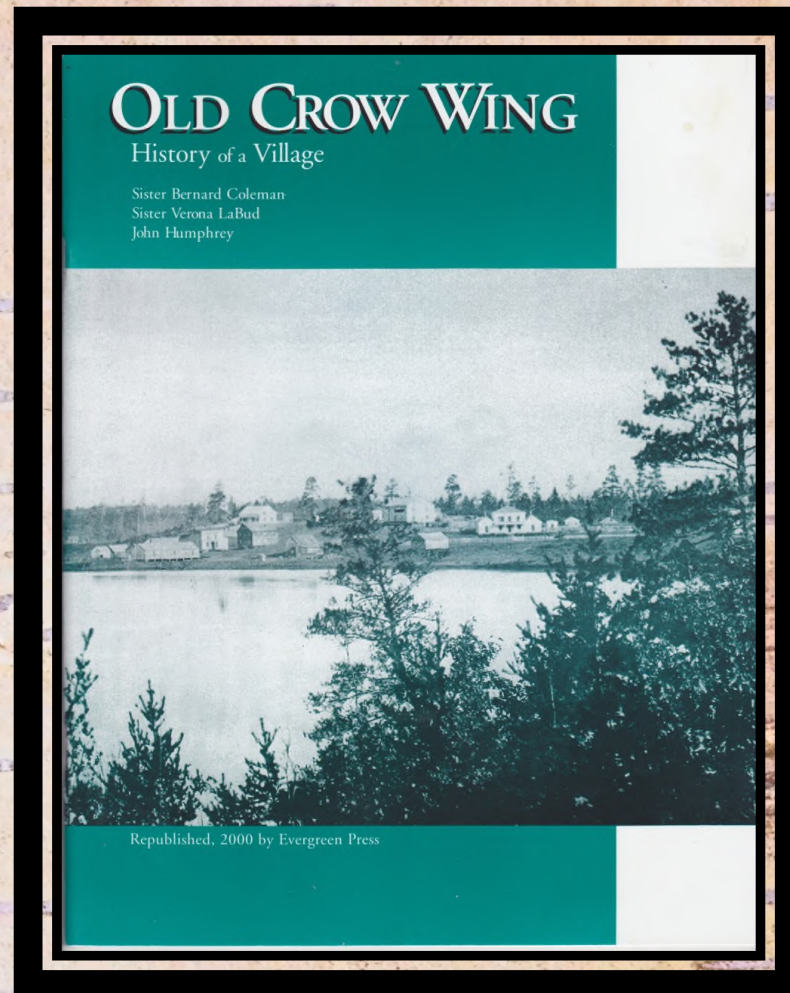
The Woods Trail was not easily traveled. Hemmed in by heavy forest along much of the route, the rutted path twisted tortuously between hills and marshes. There were few bridges or ferries across the many streams and rivers. And

the soft, muddy ground mired even the light, two-wheeled carts used in the Red River trade. As traffic and settlement increased, some sections of the trail were replaced by straighter, smoother roads capable of carrying wagons and stagecoaches. Finally, in 1871, the St. Paul and Pacific Railroad reached Breckenridge on the Red River. Through traffic then went by rail and steamboat, and the old trail became only a series of local routes.

In most areas, the Red River trails have been built over or plowed under. The path you see here is one of the last remnants. So lace up your hiking boots. Let this exhibit be your guide to the Red River and beyond.

Harpers New Monthly Magazine, 1860

History of a once-thriving settlement:



Belle Prairie Mission

+ Established on the WOODS TRAIL in 1852



+ **Belle Prairie, a place of many “firsts.”**



**"My principle prayer has been
to know the will of God and
my only resolution to do it."**

Mother Mary Ignatius

MOTHER MARY IGNATIUS (ELIZABETH) HAYES

1823 - 1894

FOUNDRESS

**SITE OF FOUNDATION OF THE
MISSIONARY FRANCISCAN SISTERS
OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

Belle Prairie Mission History



The First Cross



1852 - 2000

Belle Prairie Park

+ *Experience the natural and cultural stories*



***“Ecotone”* - where two natural
Ecosystems meet**



Resources:

PLACES TO WHET YOUR INTEREST

- *Pembina State Museum (North Dakota)*
- *Wadena Historical Museum*
- *Pillager History Building (at fairgrounds)*
- *Crow Wing County Museum (Brainerd)*
- *Humphrey Center For American Indian Studies (CLC)*
- *Mille Lacs Museum (Minnesota Historical Society)*
- *Douglas Birk Research Library (St. Cloud State University)*
- *Lakeland Public Television – i.e., “Common Ground”*
- *Camp Ripley Museum*
- *Maps from Trygg Land Office (Ely)*
- *Minnesota History Center (St. Paul)*

***Another word of THANKS to our
sponsors:***

+ Pillager Public Schools

Sue Van Hal , Community Connection

+ Sylvan Township, Cass County

Dave Johnson, Planning Commissioner



BONUS GEO-POLITICAL SLIDE



(OPINIONATED)

