



Duncan Niijmitchan (Twohearts)
 In a topee up near Rice Lake in 1864 Duncan Twohearts was born and grew up learning the keen bush skills of his people being of such a cut, he became a life long trapper with a main camp set up at Turtle Lake on the "Manigotagan" River, his waterway to many places which he knew like the deadwork of his moose skins.

One afternoon in 1910 after rice harvest, while putting around base camp, Twohearts saw two men coming up river. He recognized Alex. Spence, the trapper from "Big Rice Lake" but the other fellow, sort of tall, sharp-eyed and square-jawed, he had never seen before. Spence introduced the stranger. From this man Twohearts learned a new skill to add to his many others, that being to keep an eye open for a certain mineral.

A few days before Christmas, it is said, while on the trapline, Duncan and his son Jean-Baptiste ("The Great Wolf") stopped to make a fire and have some bannock and tea. Before hitting the trail again they noticed some scaled-off pieces of bedrock amongst the embers, not unusual, but strange was the stuff they could see in them. Duncan picked some samples and put them in a little blue denim bag for his late fall visitor who was at Manigotagan. The strange man got the message and Twohearts led him to the site.

Later he led other prospectors to the staking grounds. He also told them of a place where as a young boy he had gone with his father to dig out another kind of mineral, most which they used to make bullets, but in this often confusing land, the face of which changes to the human eye, with the passage of fires and regrowth, the lode was never rediscovered.

In 1912 Twohearts supplied moose meat to the hungry men working on the Gabrielle claim. They had come in winter over Pelletiers Trail and a summer way out had to be found. He showed them a way to the crooked and gnarled but nonetheless usable Wanigowig River and the Gabrielle Trail was out.

Though times were changing around him, Twohearts stuck to the life he was born to. In later years, the change of seasons he could feel and the return of the wild geese he could hear, but could see neither for he had turned blind. He retired to a little cabin at Manigotagan assisted by a small pension from the gold mine which sprung up near where he had made a camping years before. On Jan. 1, 1944 at Fort Alexander, the old trapper, known always as a peaceful quiet man, crossed over to a better trapping ground.



The Star Hotel
 This unique beauty of the Canadian Shield opened its doors for business as usual at Manigotagan on April 1, 1933 having been moved log by log from Long Lake where she operated for a couple of years before the Ogama Rockland Mine closed up. It was the second move for the old lady, built originally in the 30's to serve the booming community at Beresford Lake.



Donald J. Currie ("Dimosew-Inini")
 A pioneer of gold mine freighting, Don Currie was born at Stonewall, Manitoba on Nov. 15, 1887. During World War I he enlisted with the Canadian Army and went overseas in 1917 where by multitem he freighted artillery ammunition to the front, spent a winter in Flanders and was wounded in the battle of Cambrai. Shortly after his return home, Currie went to work for a Dominion Land Survey crew surveying mineral claims in the area including some staked by his brothers before the war. He arrived at Rice Lake on March 20, 1920 where he stopped to brew a pot of tea, beginning an attachment to the place which has lived on for over half a century. In his own words: "Nobody said hello to me when I came because there was no one here." He worked for a while timber cruising and as a game hunter for the Gold Pan Mine, later carrying supplies and mail for them as well as for the Central Manitoba Mine, north of Long Lake by freighter canoe on the Manigotagan River. But it is the Wanigowig River which has come to be associated with the name Currie. In the early 20's he canoe freighted up to Selkirk Landing and from there by horse into the old Poundmaker Mine. A prize possession was a birchbark canoe from "Hadj Luke" (Saxton Lake). About 1920 a portage trail had been cut from the Wanigowig to Quesnel Lake.

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The Bird-Manigotagan Waterways - Some 1200 Kilometres of wandering routes draining mostly from the Manitoba-Ontario boundary waters down to Lake Winnipeg through the Bird, Black, Manigotagan and Wanigowig Rivers plus many creeks trickling from lake to lake. These rivers are less turbulent than some further north but have their fair share of drops and old portage trails. For rugged wilderness it is equal to any other place. Caribou and the odd cougar are roaming here too. The landscapes flopping of hardwood is the earth's old bones coming through. Of early Peoples the archaeologists speak in terms of thousands of years back. Not to be shoved aside is the recent past. In 1910 someone found a valuable mineral in the rock; claims were staked and the fuse was lit.

It really banged! Hell bent from all over they came and the East Central Manitoba gold rush was on, chipping, staking and blasting got into high gear. Shafts were sunk and mines went into operation. Many called up right off the bat but others did well for a time and there was a grand old one which outlived them all, the San Antonio. Working the 1911 Rice Lake claims, the mine rolled into production in 1932 and continued into the late sixties. Beneath Bissett, to a depth of about a mile in pitch black darkness lie 15 now dormant shafts, endless tunnels and cavern-like slopes, a strange world of hardwood, rusty rails and weathered timbers. Gone for a while at least is the light of a miners lamp and the sound of footsteps. The San Antonio headframe presently stands as an obelisk to the precious metal spoken of in Genesis Chapter II.

Part of the "East Central Manitoba Gold Fields" are set aside within No. 13 Mining Provincial Park designated in 1976.

In nature everything is written but to gain some understanding its languages have to be learned.

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THE BIRD-MANIGOTAGAN WATERWAYS

Black River - In the 1700's early 1800's the Canadian voyagers used the name "Oiseau" for this river. "Rivière L'Oiseau" on S.T. Dawson's map of 1850 and "R. Oiseau" on Captain John Palliser's map of 1865.

Black River - "Black Rivulet" on David Thompson's map of 1813-14.

Manigotagan River - One autumn, a long time ago it is said, some hunters near the river were calling game with a birchbark horn. The answer they got back sounded awful. They figured the old bull moose had a real loud throat. Since that time the river has been called "Manigotagan" meaning "loud throat".

Wanigowig River - When a strong south wind blows for days, the water level at the south end of Lake Winnipeg drops speeding up the flow at the mouth of the river where it passes through a narrow slot of rock gate. When this happens a bit of whirlpool is created on the left side of the river. This once in a while phenomenon interested the early people who in their "tongue" called it "the river with a hole" or "hole river".

McArthur Generating Station - Portage on West side of Bonnet - 200 paces.

01-LAC DU BONNET

Major Sources of Reference: Currie, Donald, J., Bissett, Man. Dept. of National Defence (History Section), Ottawa, Ont. Guymond Doniface, Fort Alexander, Man. Laframboise, Mme J. Emile, Saint-Ferdinand, P.Q. LaFrance, E. George, Winnipeg, Man. Mackay, Alex M., Winnipeg, Man. Provincial Library and Archives, Winnipeg, Man. Provincial Mines Branch, Winnipeg, Man. Royal Canadian Mounted Police (History Section) Ottawa, Ont. "Oiseau" - former/unofficial name

01-LAC DU BONNET

Manigotagan around 1921 having come on Lake Winnipeg from somewhere and was Long Lake bound with all good intentions of doing some custom ore processing. Soon like the vessel had slid underneath and was fitted with a winch and pulley outfit up front. It carried another bucket, conical crusher, milling equipment and other tools of the trade. Behind the bow, a "Wanigowig" used as cork shock and downhouse for workers. When it came to rapids the alligator would take to the portage trail, dragging itself across by means of the winch, always with great difficulty it is said. Being so heavy, the powerful winch ripped out of the trees it was hoped to instead of pulling it along. So it was that a good "hard rock man" was needed to hand drill and set anchors in solid bedrock and Charlie Wynne was hired for the job. Somehow or other the alligator was hauled over spruce and pine trees that contraction crawled over fifteen obstacles until the cook, Ed Burk, packed it in and with him the rest of the crew left.

Todays "stone above" "The Streets Portage" at M139 on the south bank can be seen which is left of an entrepreneurs dream on board a crew of contented willows and other wild plants.

Manitoba Department of Natural Resources Parks Branch

CAUTION: This Canoe Route is to be used for general information; it is not a navigational chart. It was prepared in October of 1976, May of 1978, Summer 1977 & June 1979 and the information recorded, including information with respect to the volume and velocity of water, reflects only the conditions which existed at that time. Because of the constantly changing nature of the waterway, this Canoe Route should be referred to with extreme caution, and only in conjunction with topographical maps and other available data.

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Major E.A. Pelletier
 Ephrem Albert Pelletier was born January 21, 1880 at Saint-Ferdinand, Hebert, P.Q., the son of Pierre Arthur and Emma (nee Hoberge) Pelletier. Of his school days he is recalled as having been very bright, if at times difficult student. Joining the militia at an early age, Pelletier served as a lieutenant with the Royal Canadian Regiment in South Africa, receiving the Queens Medal.



On Jan. 1, 1901 he was appointed an inspector in the North West Mounted Police and explored inland to locate the north. However, most of Pelletiers service was spent in establishing Canadian sovereignty and extending the forces authority to remote and largely unknown areas of the north. He led a number of long and arduous overland patrols, the most outstanding of which took place in 1903. Leaving from Athabasca Landing, Pelletier and three members of the force travelled down the Athabasca and Slave Rivers, across Great Slave Lake, eastward along the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers to Chesterfield, then south down the Bay to Churchill. This patrol covered 3,347 miles and took almost a year to complete. During the summer furlough he took a special course in geology and mineralogy at McGill University, York Factory, Manitoba.

He was called on to register the claims of the Gabrielle named after his cousin and childhood companion. He hired a good bushman and guide in the person of Alexander Meads, a prospector from northern Manitoba and when his request to be transferred to Norway House was turned down, he resigned from the Royal North West Mounted Police on June 1, 1910. His Mother commented that her son had caught gold fever.

He turned prospector, spending part of the summer searching around Norway House and down the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Arriving at Manigotagan, he staked claims, built a shack at the mouth of the river and explored inland to locate the Gabrielle. He turned prospector, spending part of the summer searching around Norway House and down the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Arriving at Manigotagan, he staked claims, built a shack at the mouth of the river and explored inland to locate the Gabrielle. He turned prospector, spending part of the summer searching around Norway House and down the east shore of Lake Winnipeg. Arriving at Manigotagan, he staked claims, built a shack at the mouth of the river and explored inland to locate the Gabrielle.

He returned to Rice Lake, doing more staking to complete the quit-work of claims and to work on proving up the discoveries. Two claims in geology and mineralogy at McGill University, York Factory, Manitoba. However, most of Pelletiers service was spent in establishing Canadian sovereignty and extending the forces authority to remote and largely unknown areas of the north. He led a number of long and arduous overland patrols, the most outstanding of which took place in 1903. Leaving from Athabasca Landing, Pelletier and three members of the force travelled down the Athabasca and Slave Rivers, across Great Slave Lake, eastward along the Hanbury and Thelon Rivers to Chesterfield, then south down the Bay to Churchill. This patrol covered 3,347 miles and took almost a year to complete. During the summer furlough he took a special course in geology and mineralogy at McGill University, York Factory, Manitoba.

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Charles (Charlie) Wynne
 Born at Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1888, "Charlie" came to Canada in the spring of his life, and met up with Angus McDonald who had made a stake at Cobalt. Together they ventured west to Winnipeg where in a week or two they saw a sign reading "Quartz Miners Wanted". Hired by Pelletier to sink a shaft on the Gabrielle claim, the latter insisted on a position which was to team to "Hole River" that took "Pelletiers Trail" arriving at Rice Lake on St. Patricks Day, 1912.

Of Pelletiers earlier exploits "Regina Saskatchewan wrote: "recognized as a hardy trapper and explorer, a good dog driver and an expert canoe man in difficult waters; and the Montreal Star" has acquired almost a world wide reputation for his lonely journeys through northern wilderness."

Wynne soon gained a reputation as a good canoe man and packer; in 1934 he packed 48 bags of high grade ore on his back through the woods of Charlie's 63 miles with 33 portages to a small stamp mill on the Goldfield claim where it was used to make the areas original gold brick. In the 20's he came freighted on the Manigotagan River for Central Manitoba Mine and Oro Grande. The pay was 160¢ per ton gross from Manigotagan to "Edmunds Cabin" at Long L.; it didn't matter if it was a crate of eggs or a case of dynamite and in the woods of Charlie's 63 miles with 33 portages plus line-ups. He put his mind and back to many tough country jobs, mining, prospecting, freighting, trapping, homesteading, the latter including trails to Beresford Lake, the Vanstone Mine and in later years the highway to Pine Falls. Recognized by the Manitoba Historical Society for his contribution to the history of mining engineering in Manitoba, Charlie Wynne never took off the time to retire and was active until a couple of days before his passing on Sept. 24, 1978. He now rests under the shadow of a great white spruce from the top of which on a windy day can be heard a hymn to the pioneer.

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