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FOLLOWING THE FUR TRADE DOWN THE RED *by Jillian Brown*




Historic architecture dots the banks of the Red River, echoing the heroic and arduous stories of Manitoba's fur trade and pioneer past. A visually stunning way to delve into this exciting era is on a summer's drive following the river north. Tour the many elegant edifices that are set against the backdrop of Canada's newest heritage river.

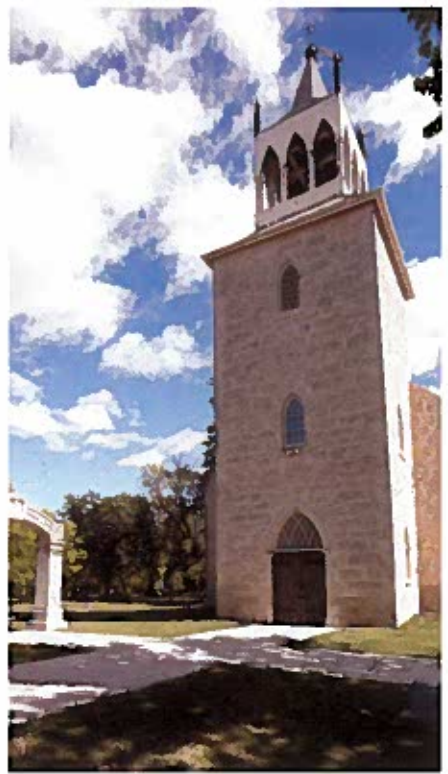
South of the city at **St. Norbert Provincial Heritage Park** is the rickety **Delorme House**, an excellent example of a Red River frame house. These were commonly used by buffalo-hunting Métis during the mid-1800s. On River Road, in the present-day neighbourhood of St. Vital, is **Riel House**, the family home of Louis Riel. The house is decorated to portray the days of mourning when Riel's body lay in state in the living room for two days. **Taché Avenue** runs parallel to the Red and is the location of the **St. Boniface Museum**, formerly the convent of the Grey Nuns. It is the oldest building in Winnipeg and the largest oak log structure in North America. Adjacent to the museum is the imposing facade of the Roman Byzantine-style **St. Boniface Cathedral**; all that remains after the parish burned to the ground (for the second time) in 1968. At a bend in the river on the edge of St. Boniface is **Fort Gibraltar**, a replica of the 1809 North West Company fur trade fort that helped control the pemmican trade.



Following **Main Street** out of town leads you to the scenic **River Road Heritage**, which winds along the west bank of the Red. **Scott House** is a shell of a structure that allows visitors to see how old stone buildings were constructed in the early Red River settlement. The well preserved **St. Andrews-on-the-Red Anglican Church and Cemetery** was built between 1845-49 for retired Hudson's Bay Company personnel. The church is the oldest stone church in Canada that is still used for public service. The cemetery houses some of the oldest headstones in Manitoba. Across the street at the rectory, museum exhibits on the main floor are based on the building's architecture, the missionaries and daily life in the settlement. **Captain Kennedy Museum and Tea House** is a stone house built on the banks of the river in 1866 by wealthy explorer and fur trader **Captain William Kennedy**. The last stop on River Road is the **St. Andrews Lock and Dam**, the largest curtain bridge-dam in the world. This architectural wonder was built at the turn of the century to increase trade along the Red by raising water levels higher than the inhibitive **Lister Rapids**.



Your tour ends at **Lower Fort Garry**, the oldest intact stone fort in North America. It served as an administrative and supply centre for the Hudson's Bay Company. Within the tall limestone wall is a collection of fur trade era buildings in which costumed interpreters re-enact life in the mid 19th century. 



PHOTOS COURTESY OF RIVERS WEST/BIHAN GOULD