



Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

Two present day photographs of the Fort Dufferin site. The picture above shows the Red River approach from Winnipeg. The site is marked by a cairn (see arrow).

The land between the Red and the Pembinas had often been traversed before the arrival of the Mennonites. The Selkirk settlers had crossed it again and again on their buffalo hunting expeditions into the Pembina Hills. In 1875 it was still being crossed by large numbers of English settlers from Ontario on their way westward to the rolling country beyond the Pembina Hills community of Mountain City.⁶ Western settlers considered it the most undesirable land imaginable — as far as they were concerned it was truly the land nobody wanted. In 1878 a historian commented, “Canadians and others, who settled in the province, rejected the lands now occupied by the Mennonites, owing to the scarcity of timber.”⁷

The first Mennonites to settle in Manitoba had also chosen a location with more immediate access to wood. In 1875, a year after



Photo courtesy Dennis Fast.

The picture on the right shows the same site looking south towards Emerson. Note the cairn in the foreground beside former highway 14 and also the old clearing. The Red River is on the left. Pembina, North Dakota, is faintly visible in the upper right hand corner.