

IRON CREEK METEORITE TOUR

WRITTEN BY FORREST HAGEN

LAYOUT/PHOTOS BY GENEVA BAST (HAGEN)

Unquestionably, the most significant spiritual object in Western Canadian aboriginal history was, and still is, “the Manitou Stone”, also known as the Iron Creek Meteorite. The first white explorer to be made aware of the object was Alexander Henry the Younger in 1810 (although no white man actually saw the “stone” until 1860) as he travelled through the Battle River watershed near present-day Hardisty, an hour East of LaPrairieaire.

My first exposure to the “Stone” began in my childhood years when my parents, whose passion for local history took our family on many excursions, including the Hardisty area. My second experience was on a bus tour lead by Heinz Pyszcck, now retired, but then Parkland Archaeologist with the Archaeological Survey of Alberta. The tour, which included Aboriginal Elders, began with a visit to a LaPrairieaire site, included a stop at the “Viking Ribstones”, and concluded in the Iron Creek area NW of Hardisty where the “Stone” is known to have rested.



Top: Photograph of Iron Creek Meteorite.

Bottom: “Straw Stack Hill”, one location the stone is speculated to have been located





Above: Viking Ribstones
Below: Victoria Crossing Settlement
Historic Site



Most recently, I was fortunate to have travelled extensively with Ken Favrholt while he conducted research of all available literary sources, for his paper “The Iron Stone” written for “Alberta’s History”.

New for 2020, LP Ecotours offers a two day tour tracing the origin and circuitous travels of this sacred object.

DAY ONE: MANITOU STONE TO MÉTIS CROSSING

Day 1 takes us to the area where the “stone” came to rest following its fall from the heavens, followed by a visit to the equally important “Viking Ribstones”.

Following a break for traditional Ukrainian lunch at Leonel’s Place in Vegreville, we move on to the National Historic Site at Victoria Crossing on the North Saskatchewan near Smokey Lake where the “Iron Stone” made its next stop in 1866.

We then make our way to nearby “Métis Crossing”, where we will overnight in Métis style trapper’s tents overlooking the river.

Left: Victoria Crossing Settlement
Provincial Historic Site

OVERNIGHT: COMFORT CAMPING AT MÉTIS CROSSING

Métis Crossing offers us 10 comfort camping accommodations. These include trappers tents with beds, a wood heater, and view of the river. Guests are asked to bring their own sleeping bags.

The newly opened "Gathering Centre" offers a cafe with everything from a quick lunch to a truly uniquely delightful dinner experience. Executive Chef Bill Alexander has created a Métis culinary experience to wow all of your senses, with a philosophy of land to table eating.

Métis Crossing sits on 512-acres of river lot titles from the original Métis settlers to this region in the late 1800's



Comfort camping at Métis Crossing

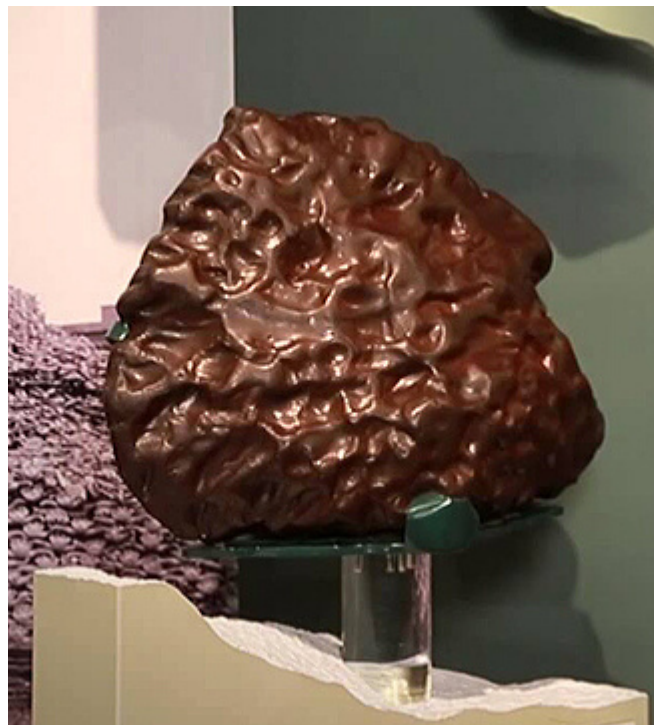


DAY TWO: ROYAL ALBERTA MUSEUM TO LA PRAIRIEAIRE

The following morning we make a 1.5 hour trip down Victoria Trail to Edmonton, to the RAM (Royal Alberta Museum) where the repatriated “Iron Stone” now resides, for a curated visit to the special pavilion where it is on display.

The pavilion in which the “stone” is exhibited is in a free admission area, but a full tour of the museum is optional.

Day 2 concludes with a number of fine dining possibilities in the Edmonton area, or returning to LaPrairieaire and your overnight stay in the refurbished 1976 Airstream or restored “Bunkhouse”.



Royal Alberta Museum in Edmonton, Alberta

Looking forward to the adventure!

Forrest Hagen



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La Prairieaire