

# PRAIRIE FORUM

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**Ethnic Studies and Research in the Prairies**  
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# The Changing Family Farm on the Prairies

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**ABSTRACT.** The institution of the family farm on the Prairies has adapted successfully to numerous changes during the past forty years. Two little studied changes are the pooling of resources by farmers, and the development of farms with separated pieces which require travel by road to reach them. One-third of a sample of 997 farms in Manitoba involve sharing of farm resources on a regular basis by two or more farm operators. About half of these 320 farms are totally integrated through corporate or partnership agreements into single larger operating units, while the other half remain essentially independent but share several items on an agreed basis. Sharing is almost invariably between close family members who live in close proximity to each other. Sixty-two per cent of farms sampled comprise one or more separated pieces in addition to a farmstead piece. The number of pieces per farm tends to increase with increasing farm size, but layouts vary little from region to region or among ethnic groups as a whole. There are, however, important differences from the general patterns in areas of long-standing and almost exclusive Mennonite settlement.

## RESUME

L'institution de la ferme familiale des Prairies a réussi à s'adapter à de nombreux changements au cours des quarante dernières années. Deux de ces changements ont été peu étudiés: la mise en commun des ressources par les fermiers et l'avènement de la ferme à terres séparées auxquelles on n'accède que par routes. Le tiers des 997 fermes manitobaines échantillonnées révélait que deux fermiers ou plus partageaient leurs ressources régulièrement. Alors qu'environ la moitié de ces 320 fermes sont entièrement intégrées dans des unités simples d'opération par des ententes visant à constituer des sociétés ou des associations, l'autre moitié demeure essentiellement indépendante, bien que les fermiers s'entendent pour se prêter plusieurs choses. Cette assistance mutuelle se fait presque toujours entre les membres d'une même famille qui vivent à proximité. Soixante-deux pour cent des fermes échantillonnées comptent au moins une terre séparée, mis à part la terre initiale. Le nombre de terres séparées tend à s'accroître à mesure que les fermes grandissent, cependant la distribution ne varie presque pas d'une région à l'autre ou au sein de l'ensemble des groupes ethniques. Toutefois, il y a d'importantes différences qui émergent de cette constante dans les vieilles régions où le peuplement est presque exclusivement mennonite.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author is indebted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and University of Winnipeg for generous funding in support of the research for this paper. Thanks are given to the many farmers who provided information for the study, and to my wife Isobel, for her thoughtful comments regarding the project and continuing support throughout its duration. The encouragement given by F. Pannekoek, editor of the *Prairie Forum*, and the valuable comments of reviewers are also gratefully acknowledged.

During the past four decades, there has been a continuing trend towards fewer and larger farms on the prairies. This trend has been accompanied and partly caused by a progressive replacement of human and animal labour by machines, and by increasing costs relative to returns. The acquisition of additional land by surviving farmers appears to have been relatively easy until quite recently, as land prices were comparatively low and much land was being put up for sale by farmers leaving the land. In the past ten to fifteen years, however, expansion has become more difficult because of rapid increases in the price of land and other farm inputs, and greater competition for available land among the remaining farmers as well as nonfarming interests, including foreign investors.

The family farm has proved very resilient and adaptable in the face of these challenges, even though some traditional values or ideals

have had to be abandoned or modified in the process. Two important, but little studied, changes in the family farm are examined in this paper. One involves the ideal of the individually operated farm being relinquished in favour of the partial or total integration of these farms to form larger functioning units, in the anticipation that economies of scale and tax advantages will result. The other has been the necessity for many farmers to operate land separated, sometimes by considerable distances, from their farmstead, instead of having it all in one concentrated tract. These trends have been occurring throughout the prairies, but particular attention will be given to farms studied in detail by the author in Manitoba.

### **Sharing of Resources**

It is a truism that pioneer settlement of the prairie region could scarcely have taken place without a great deal of mutual co-operation and assistance among relatives and neighbours, and that this tradition is still much in evidence today. This mutual aid has been taken a step further on many Prairie farms in recent years. Some farmers have sacrificed their former economic and decision-making independence by totally pooling their farm resources with other farmers to form partnerships and corporations in the hope of reducing their overall costs. Others have remained essentially independent but share some resources on a regular basis with other farmers.

These forms of economic organization have increased greatly in importance in recent years and are now commonplace in the farming community and agricultural magazines, but very little attention has been given to them in academic studies. Perhaps the main reason for the lack of study has been the difficulty of identifying the nature and extent of resource sharing between farmers. Some information is provided by the quinquennial agricultural census of Canada, which added partnerships and corporations to its list of types of farm organization in 1971 (Table 1). These data are not as useful as they might be, however, because of failure to identify some types of sharing and changes in definition of others. For the 1971 census, census enumerators were to classify as partnerships only those operations involving pooling of resources by two or more farmers through written agreements. The census form filled out by farmers, however, merely asked for partnerships, and it would appear that verbal or implied as well as written ones were recorded. Moreover, the census does not reveal whether partnerships involved the total or only partial integration of the constituent farms. Partnerships were specifically defined on the 1976 census form as only those with written agreements. Farms operated by verbal partnership agreements, which are nonetheless real partnerships, were included in the individually operated category. This change in effective definition undoubtedly is responsible for the sharp

decline in partnerships between 1971 and 1976 (Table 1). Information on both written and unwritten partnerships was collected for the 1981 agricultural census and these data show an upward trend when compared with similar data collected in 1971. As previously, no information is, however, provided by the census concerning such items as the degree and type of sharing among partners, or whether the constituent farms in a partnership are treated as one or several census farms.<sup>1</sup>

**TABLE 1**

TYPES OF ORGANIZATION OF CENSUS FARMS  
IN THE PRAIRIE PROVINCES, 1971-1981

Type	Prairie Provinces			Manitoba		
	1971	1976	1981	1971	1976	1981
Individual <sup>1</sup>	91	91	87	91	92	87
Partnership	6	3	8	7	3	9
Incorporated	2	5	4	2	4	3
Other	1	1	1		1	1
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100

<sup>1</sup>Defined in 1976 and 1981 as "individual or family" to take into account the contribution of spouses and children to the running of a farm where there is, nevertheless, only one principal operator.

Source: Census of Canada.

Farms run as incorporated businesses, i.e. corporate farms, are easier to identify, because incorporation is a formal process and government records are kept of it. The number of corporate farms has increased rapidly since they were first recorded in the 1971 census, although a slight decline apparently occurred between 1976 and 1981 (Table 1).<sup>2</sup> The census does not, however, reveal whether such farms represent the resources of one or several farm operators. Nor does the census show how many farmers in the individually operated category share partially, but regularly, with other individual operators, yet do not consider themselves to be integrated to the extent of a full partnership.

The agricultural census, regardless of its shortcomings, does, by its very recognition of partnerships and corporations only in the last decade, indicate the recent proliferation of these forms of farm organization. In addition, census officials and field enumerators can scarcely be faulted for failing to identify or define accurately sharing arrangements which, in reality, form a continuum from occasional assistance between neighbours to total integration into larger units. An attempt

was made to elucidate these issues by examining a large sample of farms in Manitoba.

The information upon which this study is largely based was derived from questionnaires mailed to a sample of holders of Canadian Wheat Board delivery permits. The Wheat Board in Winnipeg made available a list of all the some 24,500 holders of grain delivery permits for the 1979-80 crop year, and a questionnaire was mailed to every fifth holder. A sample of almost 1,000 farms, encompassing a total of some 341,000 hectares (ha) and generally representative of farms in the main agricultural zone of Manitoba, was thus derived (Fig. 1).

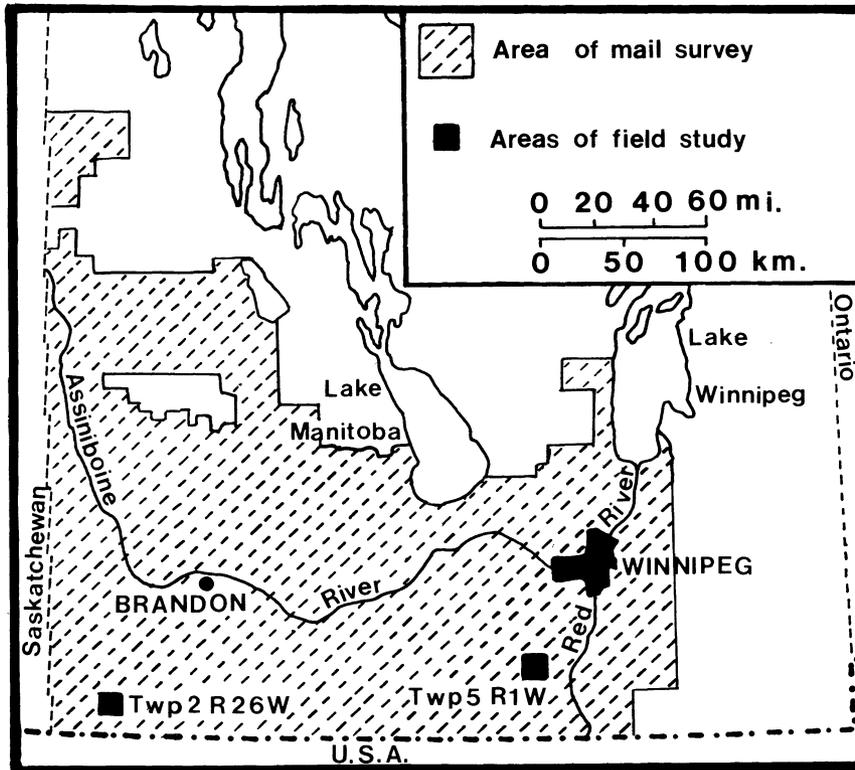


Figure 1—Area Surveyed by Mailed Questionnaire and Areas of Field Study.

In the questionnaire, and in this paper generally, a farm was defined as the integrated combination of land, labour, and equipment, used together under the supervision of one or more farmers in the production of farm products. Many farms thus defined comprise two or more Wheat Board permit holdings, because it is not uncommon for several people to take out a delivery permit on different parts of a single operating unit.<sup>3</sup>

Only the individual or individuals participating in the operation, including management decisions, of a farm on a regular basis, and owning or renting from others all or part of the assets of the farm, were considered to be farmers of that farm. Under this definition, a person, for example a son who worked regularly on his father's farm, would not be considered a farmer unless he also participated in management decisions and controlled at least part of the capital investment of that farm. In instances where both spouses owned or rented part of a farm's assets and both contributed to its day to day operation, only one was considered to be a farmer of it.

Basing the study on questionnaires mailed to a sample of Wheat Board permit holders does introduce bias and reliability problems to the study. It might have been better if all the farmers had been interviewed personally in the field, but this was impractical both in terms of the funds and time available. On the other hand, it was found during the field study of selected farms that farmers generally appeared less willing to spend the time or to divulge the amount of information that they had on the mailed questionnaires and follow-up letters seeking additional information and clarification of specific points.<sup>4</sup> This rather surprising result may have arisen because the field study was, of necessity, conducted during the spring and early summer when farmers were especially busy, while the questionnaire was mailed in mid-summer and the follow-up letters during the winter, when farmers had the time, and apparently the inclination, to give more complete information. That said, it is very likely that the sample is biased towards certain types of farmers, notably those who are willing to answer impersonal questionnaires and at the same time are able to understand the questions and respond to them in a meaningful way.

Use of only holders of Wheat Board delivery permits removed from the sample those farms on which no crops requiring delivery permits were grown, and farms which grew such crops, but did not intend to market them at an elevator. This choice of sample removed from the study intensive and extensive livestock farms and farms devoted entirely to special crops, such as sugar beets or commercial garden crops. Selection by this method was considered desirable, because it provided a sample of grain and mixed grain-livestock farms which are the predominant types in Manitoba and the prairies generally.

Of the 997 farms examined, 151, or about a seventh of the total, were jointly operated by two or more farmers (Table 2). These farmers pooled their resources and took management decision in such a way, that all the land rented or owned by each farmer was considered to be integrated into one larger operating unit. Thirty-two corporate farms were included, as well as 116 partnerships; most of the partnerships were arranged verbally, with no written agreement. There were, in

addition, three Hutterite colonies (Table 2). The remaining 846 farms were each run by one farmer, although in most cases the individual received assistance in the form of advice and labour from members of his immediate family who, however, were not considered as farmers in their own right according to the definition of a farmer used in the study. Of these 846, 169 were operated by individual farmers who shared on a regular basis with one or more other farmers, but were not fully integrated with them. These farmers were typed as "individuals who share," a type not differentiated from the "individual" category in the census (Tables 1 and 2). The remaining 677 farms were operated individually by farmers who shared little, if at all, with other farmers on a regular basis, and were classified as individually run farms (Table 2). Six of these farms were run as incorporated businesses.

**TABLE 2**

TYPES OF ORGANIZATION OF SAMPLE FARMS

Type of Organization	1980 Mailed Survey	
	Number of Farms	Percentage of Farms
Individual <sup>1</sup>	677	68
Individual sharing with others	169	17
Partnership	116	12
Incorporated	32	3
Hutterite Colony	3	—
Total	997	100

<sup>1</sup>Partnerships or corporate farms involving only a husband and wife combination or corporate farms operated by one individual are included in the individual category.

Source: Based on mailed questionnaire.

These data are generally comparable with the 1981 census for Manitoba, if differences in definition and number of categories are taken into account. The "individual" and "individual sharing with other" categories of the sample combined, without the six incorporated farms run by one individual, total 840, or about eighty-four per cent of the sample. This percentage is much the same as the "individual" category in the census, which includes both types of individually operated farms under the one umbrella (Tables 1 and 2). The census does not differentiate between corporate farms run by an individual and those run by several individuals working together, but the percentage for both the sample and census are generally in agreement. There is, however, a discrepancy between the sample and census with regard to partnerships, with the sample having a considerably higher proportion (Tables 1 and 2). This appears not to be caused by

major definitional differences, as in both instances written and unwritten (verbal) partnerships were included. It may, however, be related to how census enumerators actually classify partnerships in the field.<sup>5</sup> The higher percentage for the sample may also arise because only grain and mixed grain-livestock farms were considered, while the census gathers information for all types of farms, albeit according to their own definition of a farm.

Each of the type of sharing arrangement identified in this study has certain advantages and/or drawbacks. Total integration of the assets of two or more farmers to form larger units through incorporation and partnerships formalized in writing, perhaps with legal counsel, does provide tax advantages and eases the transfer of property from one generation to the next. It also can allow such items as machinery, equipment, and labour to be used more effectively without the need for more land to be purchased or rented; for seeds, feeds, and fertilizers to be bought in greater bulk at lower unit cost; and for greater amounts of credit to be made available. Formalized agreements of these types can, however, be a drawback in that, once entered into, they can be difficult and expensive to alter and they require a considerable degree of mutual co-operation and understanding among the operators.

Verbally arranged or implied partnerships have many of the economic advantages of more formal ones and, depending on one's point of view, allow more leeway for change, or lack the security and definition of responsibilities and liabilities spelled out in written agreements. Because they lack supporting documents, unwritten partnerships perhaps require even more mutual tolerance among partners than written ones.

Partly because of these potential problems, many operators prefer to remain in sole control over their land and resources, but nevertheless find it advantageous to share substantially with other individual operators on a regular basis. These individuals who share usually co-operate during peak work times, such as seeding, spraying, and harvest, when they use their machinery and equipment on each others' land. In some cases, they even jointly purchase some of the machinery and equipment, as well as farm inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and feeds, yet remain essentially independent.

All these types of sharing require that the farmers involved get along well on a day to day basis. It is therefore not surprising that almost all arrangements are among family members, and that most involve close relatives such as fathers and sons, or brothers (Table 3). This is as true for corporate farms as it is for the relatively loose sharing among individually operated farms.

Some two-thirds of corporate farms and partnerships involve a

TABLE 3

## SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS IN SHARED FARM OPERATIONS

Type of farm organization	Relationship of Farm Operators <sup>a</sup>					Total number of farms
	Number of farms operated by:					
	Close relatives <sup>b</sup>	Near relatives <sup>c</sup>	Close and near relatives	Friends	Other	
Corporate	24	3	4	1		32
Partnership	104	5	5	2		116
Individual sharing with others	147	7	10	3	2	169
Hutterite colony					3	3
Total number	275	15	19	6	5	320
Total percentage	86	5	6	2	1	100

<sup>a</sup> Husband-wife operators are not included in this table unless sharing with third parties.

<sup>b</sup> Close relatives are one or more of the following: father and/or mother, brother, sister, son, daughter, including father (mother)-son-grandson combinations.

<sup>c</sup> Near relatives are one or more of the following: uncle, nephew, cousin, grandfather, grandson, brother or sister-in-law, son or daughter-in-law, great uncle, and grand nephew.

Source: Based on mailed questionnaire.

single main farm headquarters, although frequently the operators live in separate dwellings on the same site or on different sites. Where two or more main headquarters are involved, they tend to be close to each other (Fig. 2), which provides ease of communication and movement

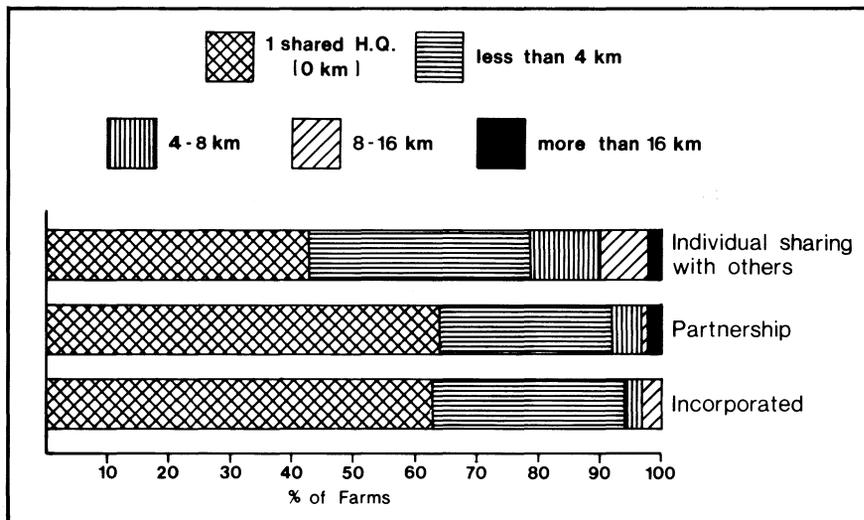


Figure 2—Road Distance between Headquarters in Shared Farm Operations.

of machinery and equipment. Presumably because of the lesser degree of sharing and hence communication involved, most individuals who share have their own headquarters, and these headquarters are somewhat farther apart than for corporations or partnerships.

In summary, about one-third of farms examined involve the sharing of resources by two or more farmers, and about half of these involve the total integration of assets into larger units operated by corporation or partnership. Sharing is almost always between close family members whose headquarters are at the same place or within 8 km of each other.

Several case studies should help illustrate these general points, and also show how the agricultural census is becoming increasingly inaccurate or misleading because of a failure to identify or clarify these increasingly common forms of farm organization.

Valley Farms Ltd. is a corporate farm near Brandon run by three farmers, George Wardle, his son David, and his son-in-law William Wright (Fig. 3).<sup>6</sup> George and David each live at different headquarter sites on the farm, while William Wright lives in Brandon. He will soon be moving, however, to an already established third headquarters on the farm (Fig. 3). Each of these three owns land in his own name, and rents it to the corporate entity, Valley Farms Ltd., which technically

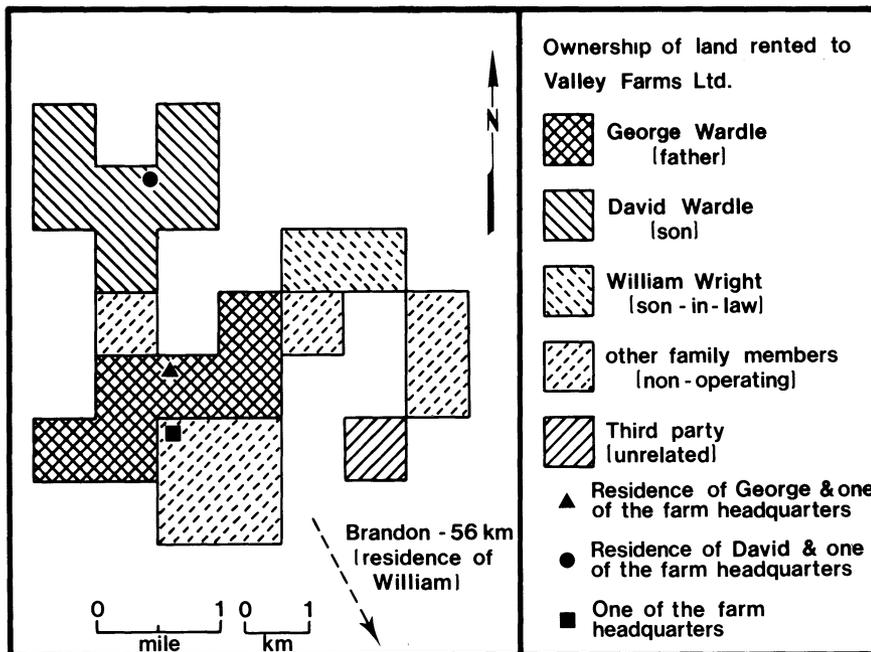


Figure 3—Valley Farms Ltd.—An Incorporated Family Farm.

runs the farm. Valley Farms also rents land from other family members, and from a third party (Fig. 3).

The entire unit is operated as one large integrated farm, and it is presented as such for census purposes. In other respects, however, the census is misleading. First, all the land is listed in the census as being rented, even though the operators themselves or their wives or other close relatives own the bulk of it. In addition, the census lists only one principal operator when there are, in reality, three main operators. In other cases, the census may list one real farm with one principal operator as several separate farms, each with a principal operator.

McKenzie Farms is a very large one in southwest Manitoba (Fig. 4). It is operated as a formal partnership, arranged with documents drawn up with legal counsel, between two brothers, John and Bob McKenzie, who operate the farm from a single headquarters, and live with their families in separate homes on the site of the headquarters. Legally, and for census purposes, the land operated by McKenzie Farms is rented, yet most of it is actually owned by John and Bob McKenzie or their wives. The situation is made more complex by the fact that John and Bob are both individually incorporated as Johnco and McFarmco. Another corporate entity, McKenzie Farms Ltd., whose shares are all owned by the two brothers and their families, also owns land and machinery which is rented to McKenzie Farms. Thus, McKenzie Farms rents land from John, Bob, their wives, Johnco, McFarmco and McKenzie Farms Ltd., not to mention their mother and step-father, as well as third parties (Fig. 4).

The Bernadette Farm is located on the Red River south of Winnipeg. It is operated as one integrated unit by verbal partnership between two brothers, Luc and Arthur, and their sons. Luc, Arthur, and Arthur's son Albert each owns land in his own name, and Luc and Arthur jointly own some land (Fig. 5). Luc "rents" a river lot to his son Marc. Each of these four lives separately, although the farm is run from two headquarters, one each at Luc's and Arthur's. The four partners work on each others' land as well as their own.

Luc and Arthur share profits and losses on the entire unit on a 50-50 basis. Luc then divides his share three ways, taking half for himself and giving one-quarter each to Marc and another son, Michel, who still lives at home. Arthur splits his 50 per cent equally with Albert. Although the farm is run by partnership as a single unit, four individually operated census farms were reported for the 1981 agricultural census.<sup>7</sup>

The Forbes Farms were difficult to classify. Cyril and Reginald live in their father Edwin's house, and use their own and his machinery and labour to operate their land (Fig. 6). Another son Don lives on Cyril's land, and he farms his land with the help of his two brothers and

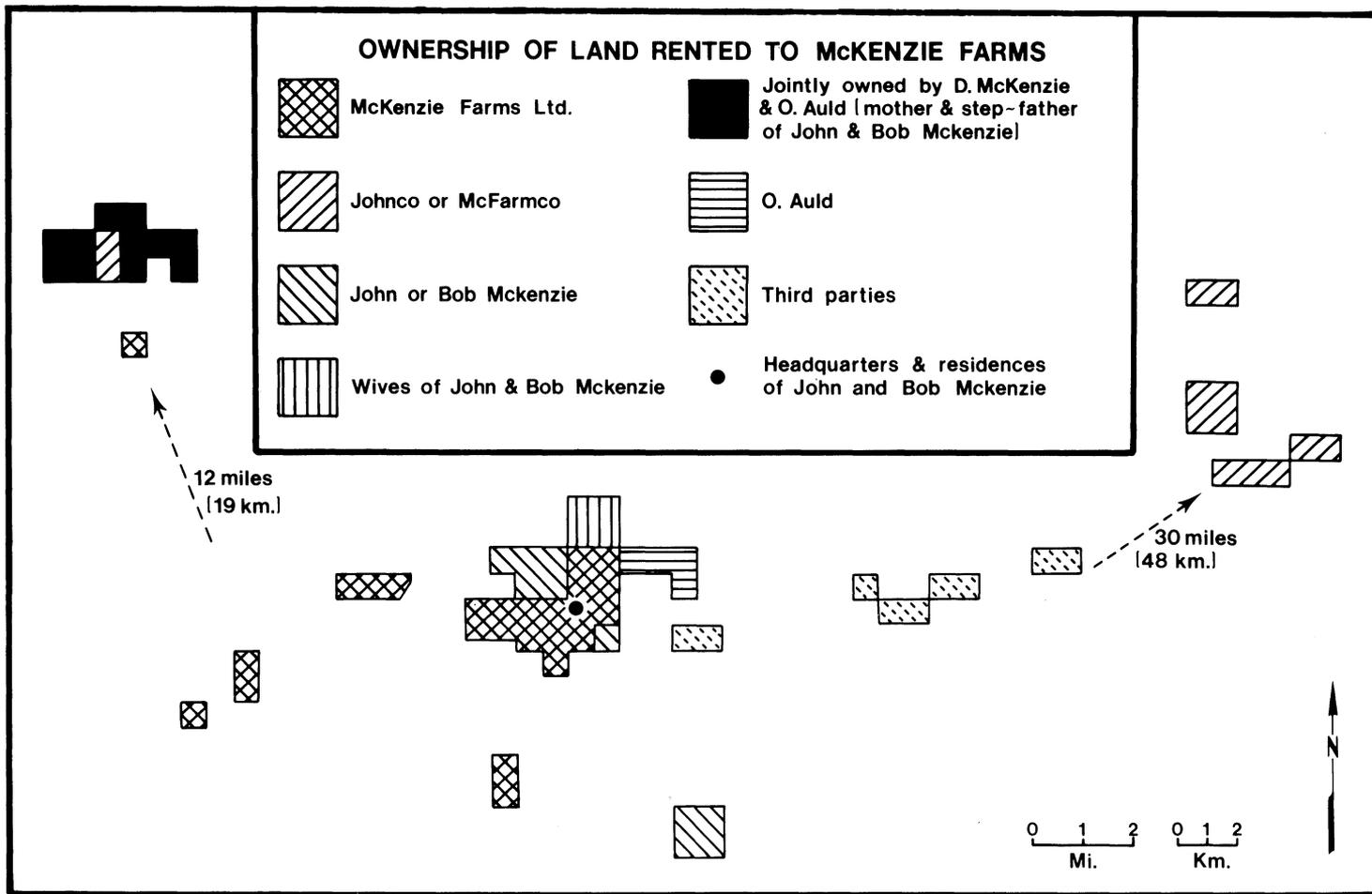


Figure 4—McKenzie Farms—A Farm Operated by Formal Partnership between Two Brothers.

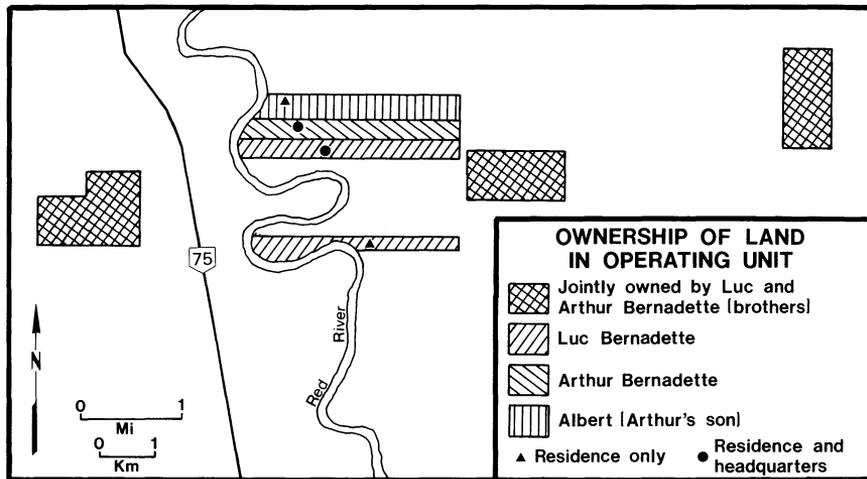


Figure 5—Bernadette Farm—A Verbal Partnership between Two Brothers and Their Sons: 4 Census Farms, But One Operating Unit.

father, and he, in turn, helps them. All four also jointly rent and operate some other land. The farms are therefore integrated to a considerable degree. Yet, Cyril, the only one of the family who received and returned a mailed questionnaire, was insistent that he and other family members took decisions independently, albeit after discussions among them, and hence I considered him as belonging to the “individual who share” category. Rather interestingly, at the time I contacted Cyril, he intimated that the family was contemplating the formation of a partnership which would integrate all the units into one larger farm.

The Forbes farms illustrate the difficulties involved with attempts to place many of the sample farms into discrete categories. Each farm had to be examined in considerable detail to make what was necessarily often a subjective judgement. The categories of sharing presented here are nevertheless recognized by farmers themselves, and much time and thought is spent by them in deciding which is best for their particular circumstances.

Hutterite colonies, of which there were three in the sample, are a special, but increasingly important, type of communal sharing arrangement which has been discussed in considerable detail in previous studies.<sup>8</sup>

### Areal Layout

The trend for farmers to form corporations and partnerships has at least received official recognition in the agricultural census and has been examined in some academic studies, notably by agricultural economists and farm business advisers. Even less attention has, how-

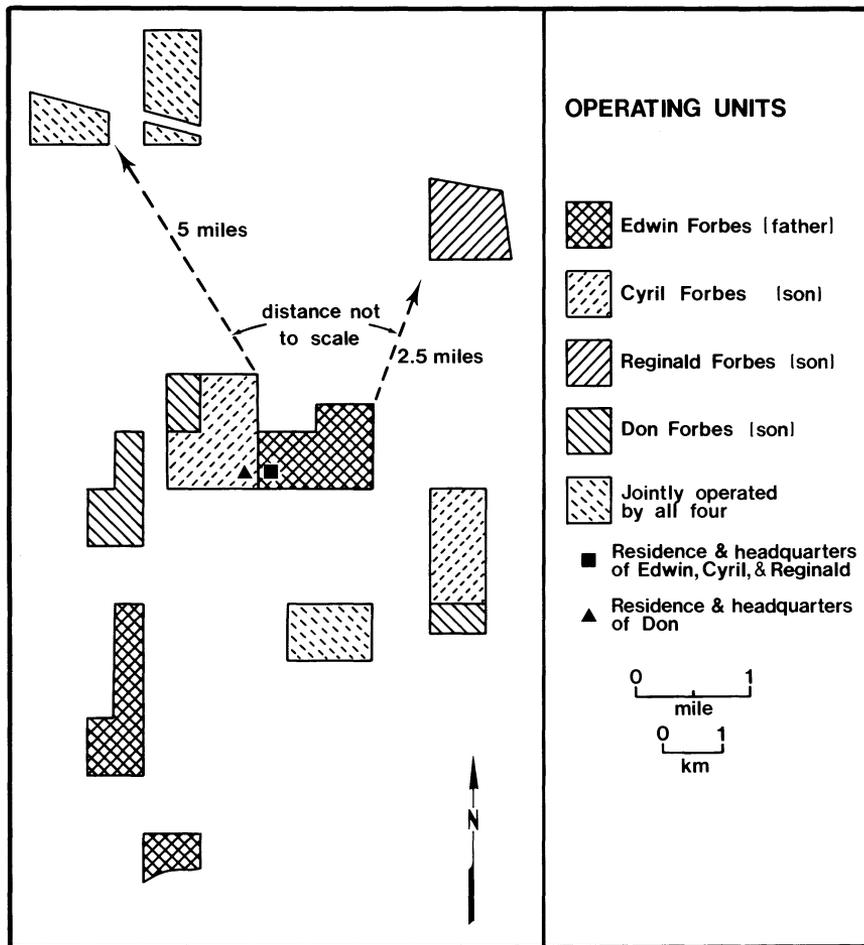


Figure 6—The Forbes Farms—Only Cyril participated directly in the sample survey, and he was classified as an individual who shared with close relatives.

ever, been given to recent changes in the areal layout of parts of individual prairie farms.<sup>9</sup>

The spatial organization of individual farms is of considerable importance to farmers themselves and to wider aspects of rural social and economic life. The way in which the parts of a farm are areally arranged, and the size and shape of the fields, affect the time and energy spent on travel and field work, wear and tear on machinery, intensity of land use, and the types of crops and livestock raised. Compact farms with large rectangular fields can reduce operating costs considerably compared with those comprising scattered, irregularly-shaped small fields. Scattering of parts of a farm over quite extensive areas can be deliberately done in an effort to acquire land of a particu-

lar type, and to use farm capital more efficiently, sometimes in different climatic zones. The layout of farms also affects the patterns of use of rural roads and services, from grain delivery points to fertilizer and chemical suppliers. The choice of a place of residence by a farmer is also partly dependent on the spatial arrangement of his holding.<sup>10</sup>

Farms in Canada's prairies and in areas with a similar settlement history and agriculture such as the midwest and plains regions of the United States, have until quite recently been stereotyped as consisting of single large blocks of land.<sup>11</sup> Recent studies, largely undertaken by geographers, have shown that this model is no longer valid, and that a majority of farms, particularly the more successful ones,<sup>12</sup> comprise one or more pieces separated from a farmstead piece where the farm residence or main headquarters is located. The term "fragmented" has been commonly used to describe such farms.

As used in the Old World, notably in Europe, fragmented farms are those which have been reduced to a size too small to be economically farmed or which consist of an excessive number of widely dispersed pieces, or both.<sup>13</sup> The term has, however, been transferred perhaps too hastily to different conditions in the New World, where it has been used to describe any farm which consists of more than one piece, regardless of the size of the pieces or their degree of dispersion. Certainly, the terms "fragment" or "fragmented farm" scarcely seem appropriate to describe farms in grain growing areas of the prairies and plains of North America where farms tend to be large and, if they comprise more than one piece, the pieces are generally sizeable and not excessively or widely scattered. In contrast, the adjectives separate or separated, when used to describe pieces of a farm, merely mean that the pieces exist by themselves apart from other pieces of the farm. The term separated is therefore used in this study to describe farms which comprise one or more pieces of land separated by intervening land, farmed or otherwise used by others, from the farmstead piece, defined here as the piece on which the main headquarters is located. Pieces on either side of major barriers to movement, such as rivers, railways, and main highways, but not local roads, are included in this term.

On the basis of the sample, the majority of Manitoba farms has a separated layout. Sixty-two per cent, or 619 of the 997 farms, are of this type. A similar situation would appear to exist in other parts of the prairies.<sup>14</sup>

The mean number of separated pieces on farms in the sample which have separated layouts is 2.0, the mean size of separated pieces is 103 ha, and the mean distance, weighted by size, of separated pieces from the farm headquarters is 6.6 km.<sup>15</sup> Three-quarters of separated farms have one or two separated pieces. More than five pieces is rare, with the maximum of fourteen occurring on the McKenzie farm (Table

4, Fig. 4). A large majority of pieces are within 8 km of the farm headquarters, and only eight per cent are more than 16 km away (Fig. 7).<sup>16</sup> Assuming that farm machinery and equipment can be moved at a rate of about 25 km an hour on rural roads, and allowing for time taken to put machinery into and take it out of transport position, a return journey of 8 km would take about an hour and one-half. This seems to be about the maximum time most farmers appear willing to spend on travel to reach separated pieces. Frequently, moreover, a farmer reduces the number of trips and travel time by leaving his machinery overnight at a separated piece if work requiring more than a day is necessary, or he moves it to other separated pieces, and only takes it home when work on the several pieces is done. In addition, some farmers arrange to use the machinery and equipment of another farmer who is closer to a separated piece than they are. Increasing fuel costs and wear and tear on machinery also contribute to the desire by farmers to have most of their separated land close to their farm headquarters.

TABLE 4

DISTRIBUTION OF SEPARATED FARMS BY  
NUMBER OF SEPARATED PIECES PER SEPARATED FARM

Separated Farms	Number of Separated Pieces per Separated Farm							Total
	1	2	3	4	5	6	more than 6	
Number of farms	277	184	78	40	17	11	12	619
Percentage of farms	45	30	12	6	3	2	2	100

Source: Based on mailed questionnaire.

A wide variety of physical, social, and economic factors has contributed towards the development of separated farms in Manitoba. Attempts by farmers to combine land of different qualities, such as land suitable for crops with land only good for grazing, has produced separated farms in some parts of Manitoba. Much of the study area, however, is characterized by broad expanses of quite homogeneous physical features and land uses, and it is only near the margins of markedly different regions that farmers seem to have deliberately built up separated farm holdings mainly for this reason.<sup>17</sup>

The incidence of separated farms might be expected to vary between farming types or regions, and this aspect was examined for farms in the sample. No statistically significant differences were apparent, probably because there is little variation among the types of farms

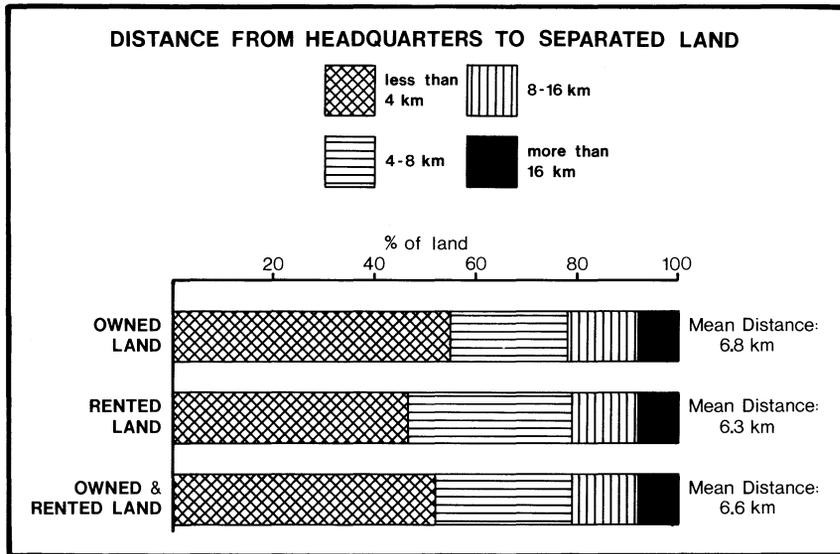


Figure 7— Road Distance from Farm Headquarters to Separated Land, Owned and Rented: Percentage Distribution by Distance Category.

and farming regions studied. Thus, the two dominant farm types in the sample are mixed crop and livestock farms and crop farms, with the main differences among regions being relatively small variations in the proportions of each type.

Studies have suggested that some of the agricultural variation in Manitoba is related to ethnic origin of the farmers.<sup>18</sup> Slight differences in the incidence of separation were found among the main ethnic groups for the study area as a whole. Some three-fifths of the farms have separated layouts in each of the British, Slavic, and German (non-Mennonite or Hutterite) groups, and the mean number of pieces per farm is between 2.1 and 2.3.<sup>19</sup> Some seventy per cent of Mennonite and French farms are separated units, with the mean number of pieces per farm being 2.6 and 2.3 respectively. In areas of long-standing and almost exclusive Mennonite settlement, however, three-quarters of Mennonite farms are separated, and the mean number of pieces per farm is 3.1. Such farms are found not only in the few remaining Mennonite farm villages in south-central Manitoba which have been studied by De Lisle, but also in nearby areas of dispersed Mennonite farmsteads, including township five, range one west (Fig. 1).<sup>20</sup>

Separated farm layouts can be an advantage in that they spread climatic risks, such as hail, drought, or flood, but only rarely do farmers in Manitoba deliberately set out to acquire separated pieces for this reason. Rather, it is cited by some farmers as being some compensation for the many drawbacks of separated farms which have arisen more out of necessity than design.

The most important factor responsible for separated farm units in Manitoba appears to be farm size. Generally, as farm size increases, the likelihood of a farmer assembling all his land into one piece decreases (Fig. 8). The number of separated pieces also tends to increase with farm size (Fig. 8).<sup>21</sup>

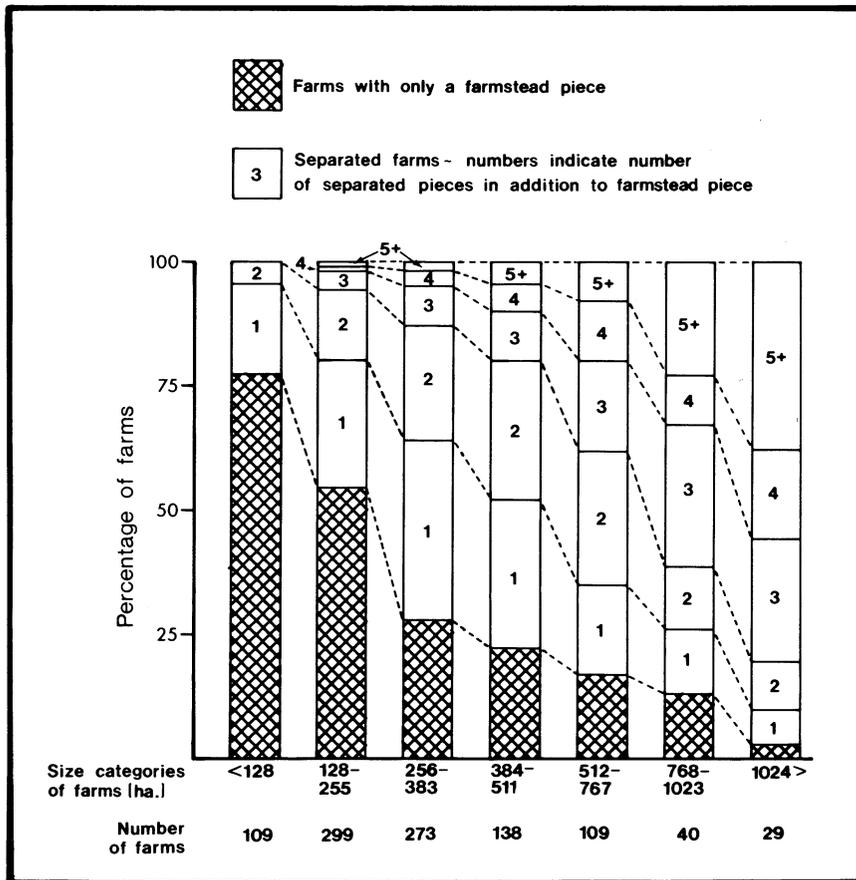


Figure 8—Separated Farms and Farm Size.

The relationship between farm size and separation is largely responsible for variations in the proportion of separated farms among different types of farm organization. Most corporate farms and all partnerships involve the pooled resources of two or more farm operators, and therefore they are considerably larger and more likely to have separated layouts than individually operated farms. The 148 corporations and partnerships in the sample have a mean size of 580 ha, and three-quarters are separated units. The 846 individually operated farms have, however, a mean size of 288 ha, and only 59 per cent are

separated. The greater incidence of separation among jointly operated farms also arises because most of the operators once farmed on their own and, when they joined together to form a larger operating unit, the formerly individually operated units were, and still are, separated from each other.

The tendency for the degree of separation to increase with increasing farm size found among the sample farms at the present time also presumably operated in the past. This, combined with the trend towards larger farms in Manitoba and the prairies generally over the past forty years, undoubtedly is the main reason why farms are more likely to be separated now than they were before rapid expansion took place.<sup>22</sup> The increases in farm size which have taken place not only make it less likely that a farmer can assemble all his land into one large piece, but also the very mechanization which has contributed to the increases in size allows farmers to travel more easily and quickly along rural roads to reach separated pieces.

#### *Farm Layouts in Two Townships*

There were only slight differences in the degree of separation among farms operated by different ethnic groups in the sample as a whole. However, in the only sizeable tract in the study area long dominated by the second largest group, the Mennonites, farms appeared to be smaller, yet more separated in layout, than would be expected from the overall tendencies of the sample. One township was chosen for field study from this area, and it was compared with a township dominated by the main ethnic group, the British.

Eighty per cent of the farms in township five, range one west have separated layouts, and the mean number of separated pieces per separated farm is three. Many pieces are smaller than quarter sections (Fig. 9). This relatively high degree of separation is not the result of large farms; the mean farm size is 290 ha compared with 336 ha for the sample as a whole. Nor is it accounted for by attempts by farmers to combine land of different physical qualities. The township and surrounding area are located on the almost featureless Red River Clay Plain, which is about as homogeneous a physical area as can be found anywhere. With few exceptions, farmers rely on grains and oilseeds for most of their farm income, with pigs and poultry being the only livestock.

Separated farms comprising relatively small pieces have been produced by cultural factors associated with Mennonite farmers who have been predominant in this and nearby areas of southern Manitoba for three to six generations. Large families of five to fifteen children over several generations, combined with Mennonite emphasis on the rural way of life and their tradition of gifting or willing part of the farm

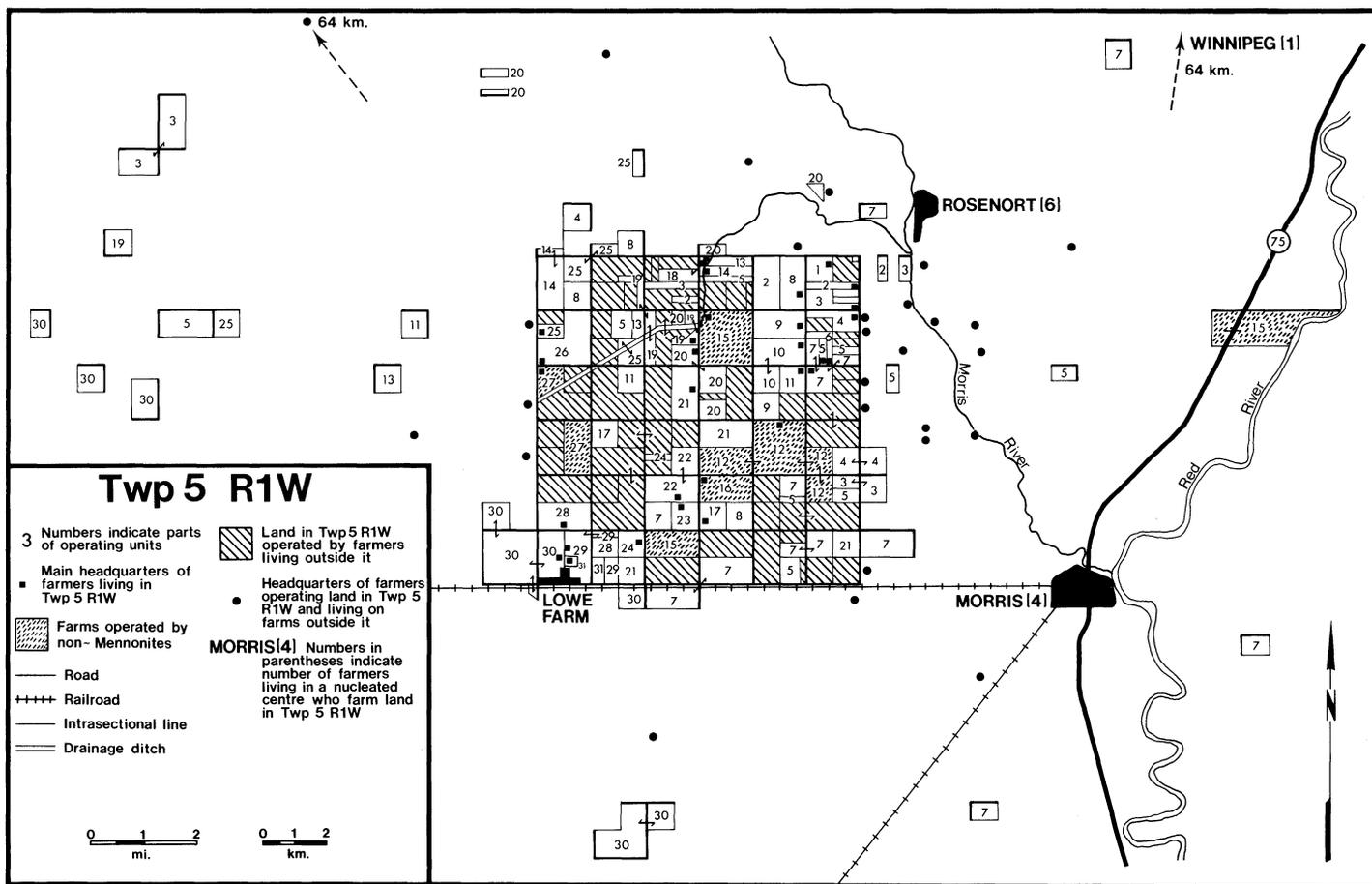


Figure 9—Township 5, Range 1 West. Many of these Mennonite farms comprise relatively small and numerous pieces.

to each child, has led to subdivided properties in the township (Fig. 9). When coupled with relatively recent increases in farm size, this has led to the high degree of separation and relatively small pieces found today on many farms, some of which could be considered fragmented in the traditional sense (Fig. 9).

Some farmers in the township have been able to put together viable farms from the generally small pieces available locally, but this is difficult to do because land in the township is also eagerly sought after by Mennonite farmers nearby, particularly in the even more densely settled township to the east (Fig. 9). Many farmers have therefore acquired land to the west and north in traditionally British areas, where land has been more readily available at less cost and in larger tracts (Fig. 9).

During interviews, many farmers in the township understandably complained of having to practice "jackrabbit" farming, a graphic local term to describe the "jumping" or "hopping" required to farm numerous scattered pieces. Indeed, the farmers, without exception, said that, given the choice, they would prefer to have all their land assembled into one large piece.

There are exceptions to these patterns in the township, notably among the few non-Mennonite farmers. Their farms tend to be larger in size and less separated, with individual separated pieces themselves being large. The fact that these non-Mennonite families have also been in the township for several generations reinforces the view that ethnic differences are the main ones responsible for farm layouts in this area.

Township two, range twenty-six west appears to be more representative of the layout of Manitoba farms as a whole than township five, range one west (Fig. 10). Partly because of a drier climate, farming is more extensive than in township five, range one west, with grain and oilseeds being the mainstays. Most of the land is cropped, with the remainder being used for grazing of fodder for beef cattle.

Farmers of British origin, many of whom are third to fifth generation descendants of original settlers, predominate. There is a sizeable minority of generally assimilated second and third generation Belgian farmers. Family sizes have been and are considerably smaller than among Mennonites, and a smaller proportion of children have remained in farming. Expansion of farms has been relatively easy to achieve, as is indicated by the many large farms with only a farmstead piece, and farms comprising only one or two sizeable separated pieces in addition to a farmstead piece (Fig. 10). The subdivision of quarter sections, so common in township five, range one west, is a rarity here (Fig. 9 and 10), as it is throughout most of the prairies.

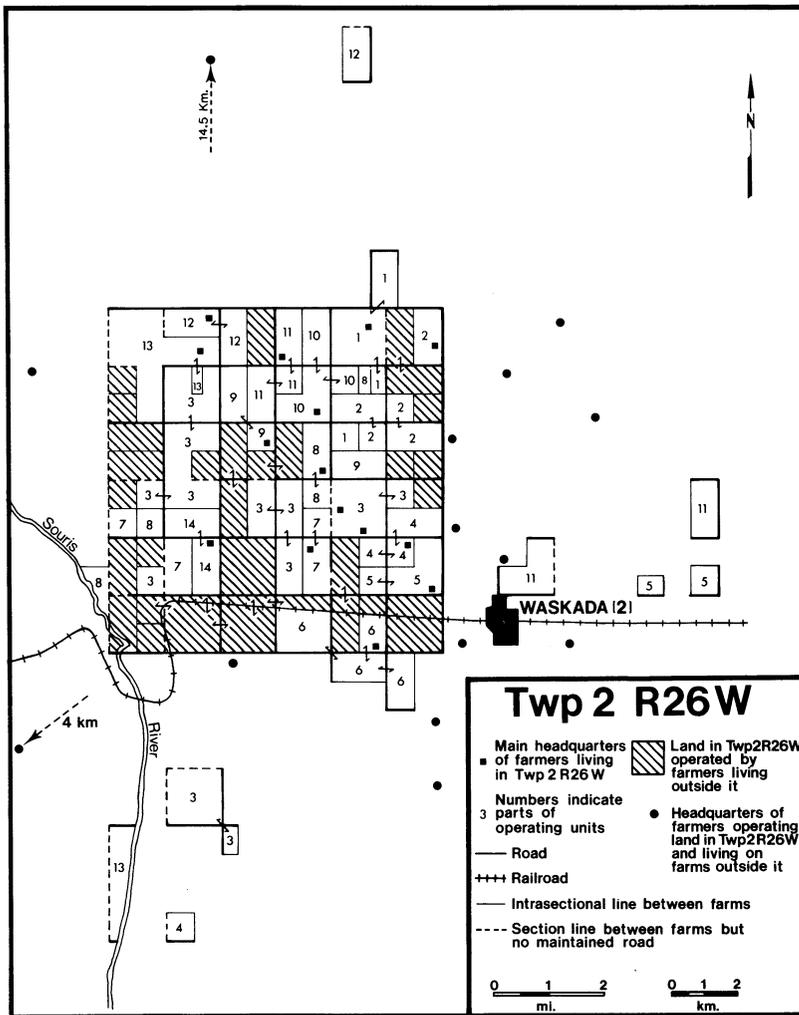


Figure 10—Township 2, Range 26 West. Large and generally compact farms characterize this area of mainly British ethnic origin.

## Conclusion

Two relatively neglected recent changes in the prairie family farm have been examined in this paper. It has been shown that the sharing of resources among farmers is more common than census figures indicate, and that most sharing involves family members living in close proximity. Current and anticipated economic trends make it likely that the partial or total integration of farms will continue and intensify.

The majority of farms sampled have a layout composed of several pieces. The incidence of separation appears to be most closely linked with farm size, with the number of pieces increasing with farm size. The other possible influences seem to be of little consequence. The main exception is that farms tend to be smaller and comprise more pieces in areas of concentrated and long-standing Mennonite settlement. Generally, however, there is a high degree of uniformity in the layout of grain and mixed farms throughout southern Manitoba. If the tendency for farms in Manitoba and the prairies generally to become larger in size continues, through the formation of partnerships and corporations or otherwise, it can be expected that the degree of separation in layouts will also increase. Whether the additional operating costs associated with this trend will become a significant burden on the family farm is open to question.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> The official view in Ottawa is that full partnerships are treated as one census farm. At the field level in Manitoba, however, it would appear that the constituent farms in many partnerships, especially unwritten ones, are treated as separate census farms.
- <sup>2</sup> It is important to note that only corporations actually engaged in farming, and not those merely owning farm land as an investment i.e. nonfarming corporations, are examined by the census and in this paper.
- <sup>3</sup> It is estimated that the 997 farms in the sample represent between 1,200 and 1,300 permit holdings. See, W. J. Carlyle, "Farm Layouts in Manitoba," forthcoming in *The Canadian Geographer*, 27 (1983), for further discussion of the questionnaire and details of the sample.
- <sup>4</sup> Some 430 follow-up letters were sent and all but twelve were returned. The letters sent out were handwritten, which was done deliberately in the hope that the "personal touch" would elicit a greater response rate than a formal typed letter. This approach seems to have been successful, although the fact that the letters were sent to people who had already answered the original questionnaire was undoubtedly a factor in the high response rate.
- <sup>5</sup> See also notes 1 and 7 for reasons why the proportion of partnerships is lower in the census than in the study sample.
- <sup>6</sup> The real names of farmers are not used in this paper to protect their anonymity. The farms, however, are real, and were selected from among the sample.
- <sup>7</sup> The Bernadette farm is but one example among many in the sample where several farms are listed for census purposes for what, in reality, is a fully integrated operating unit run by partnership. It is also interesting to note that five Wheat Board permits are taken out on the Bernadette farm.
- <sup>8</sup> See, for example, J. Ryan, *The Agricultural Economy of Manitoba Hutterite Colonies*, Carleton Library, No. 101 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977); and Hansgeorg Schlichtmann, "Saskatchewan Rural Settlements after 1930: Problems and Observations," in John Rogge (ed.), *The Prairies and Plains: Prospects for the 80s* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Geographical Studies, 7, 1981), 45-64.
- <sup>9</sup> The main studies of the areal layout of farms in the prairies are: Gordon K. Willis, "Farm Fragmentation in Southeastern Alberta: The Hilda-Schuler District," unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Alberta, 1980; David de Garis De Lisle, "The Spatial Organization and Intensity of Agriculture in the Mennonite Villages of Southern Manitoba," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, McGill University, 1974; A. H. Sahir, "Residential Patterns of Wheat Farmers in Southern Saskatchewan—A Case Study," unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1973; and Alexander H. Paul, "Reflections on Rural Roads and Changes in the Spatial Organization of the Canadian Prairies," paper presented to the Symposium on Rural Geography, Institute of British Geographers, Annual Meeting, 1976. Important studies done elsewhere in similar agricultural settings are: Everett G. Smith, Jr., "Fragmented Farms in the United States," *Annals, Association of American Geographers*, 65 (1975), 58-70; John Fraser Hart, *The Look of the Land* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1975), 84-98; M. D. Sublett, *Farmers on the Road* Chicago: University of Chicago Press, (1975); M. J. Lintner, "Distance as a Farm Management Problem," unpublished M.A. thesis, Kansas State University, 1974; Ron Hill and Derek L. Smith, "Farm Fragmentation on Western Eyre Peninsula, South Australia," *Australian Geographical*

- Studies*, 15 (1977), 158–173; E. Dayal, “Fragmented Farms in the Wheat Belt of New South Wales,” in Warren Moran et al. (eds.), *New Zealand Geographical Society Conference Series*, No. 10 (1979), 261–64; and W. B. Johnston, “The Fragmentation of Farmland in Canterbury,” in M. McAskill (ed.), *Land and Livelihood* (Christchurch: New Zealand Geographical Society, 1962), 203–23.
- <sup>10</sup> Walter M. Kollmorgen and George F. Jenks, “Suitcase Farming in Sully County, South Dakota,” *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, 48 (1958), 27–40; and Walter M. Kollmorgen and George F. Jenks, “Sidewalk Farming in Toole County, Montana, and Traill County, North Dakota,” *Annals*, Association of American Geographers, 48 (1958), 209–31.
- <sup>11</sup> See, for example, David Grigg, *The Harsh Lands* (London: MacMillan (undated, circa 1965)), 139; and Raleigh Barlowe, *Land Resource Economics* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall Inc., 1958), 259.
- <sup>12</sup> Smith, *op. cit.*
- <sup>13</sup> R. L. King and S. Burton, *An Introduction to the Geography of Land Fragmentation and Consolidation* (Leicester University, Department of Geography, Occasional Paper 8, 1981), 1–2.
- <sup>14</sup> Willis, *op. cit.*, 169; and Sahir, *op. cit.*, 80. Willis uses the term “detached parcels” in much the same way as “separated pieces” is used in this study.
- <sup>15</sup> Distances between farmlands and separated pieces are the shortest road distances to the nearest point of a separated piece, as measured on municipal highway maps of a scale 1:63,360.
- <sup>16</sup> Remarkably similar results regarding the frequency distribution of separated pieces were found among the farms studied by Sahir, *op. cit.*, 80. Willis’s detached parcels are distributed according to distance much the same as in this study, and the frequency distribution of parcels is also similar. See Willis, *op. cit.*, 135–40.
- <sup>17</sup> Many of the sizeable tracts of nonarable land scattered through the cultivated parts of the study area have been formed into community pastures run by the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration. Nearby farmers summer their cattle on the pastures on a per head basis. This type of pasture land was not considered part of individual farm units in the sample. If it had been, the amount of separation because of combining different types of land and land uses would have increased.
- <sup>18</sup> See, for example, D. Todd and J. S. Brierley, “Ethnicity and the Rural Economy: Illustrations from Southern Manitoba, 1961–1971,” *The Canadian Geographer*, 21 (1977), J. S. Brierley and D. Todd, “Agricultural and Urban Interaction in Southern Manitoba: A Canonical Analysis,” *Canadian Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 26 (1978), 43–54; and J. Ryan, *The Agricultural Economy of Manitoba Hutterite Colonies* (Ottawa: McClelland and Stewart, Carleton Library No. 101, 1977).
- <sup>19</sup> The distribution of farm operators in the sample by ethnic origin is: British—48%, Mennonite—17%, Slavic—10%, German—5%, French—4%, and other origins—16%. Mennonites and Hutterites, some of whom consider themselves German by ethnic origin, were treated separately and not as part of the German group.
- <sup>20</sup> De Lisle, *op. cit.*
- <sup>21</sup> A similar tendency for the degree of separation to increase with increasing farm size is reported by Sahir, *op. cit.*, 80; but Willis, *op. cit.*, 136 found no statistical correlation between the number of parcels and an increase in farm size.
- <sup>22</sup> This statement is based on examination of *Cummins Rural Directory Maps* (Winnipeg: Cummins Map Company, 1923). These maps show names of occupants of farm land in southern Manitoba in the early 1920s.



## W. M. Graham: Indian Agent Extraordinaire

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**ABSTRACT.** W. M. Graham was one of the best known officials in the Department of Indian Affairs in his day. In the early decades of the twentieth century he rose to prominence in Western Canada as a result of his success in leading the native people to "civilization" and agriculture. His dedication to government aims was matched by his personal ambition and he sought ultimately to occupy the position of Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs as a fitting climax to his career. This paper examines Graham's rise in the Indian service in the context of prevailing federal policy.

### RESUME

W. M. Graham était un des officiels le plus reconnu de son jour dans le Département des Affaires Indiennes. Au début du vingtième siècle, à cause de son succès dans la direction du peuple Amérindien vers "la civilisation" et l'agriculture, sa renommée s'est répandue à l'ouest du Canada. Son dévouement aux buts du gouvernement équivalait son ambition personnelle. Comme le haut point de sa carrière il cherchait d'atteindre la position de Député Surintendant Général des Affaires Indiennes. Cette thèse étudie le progrès de M. Graham dans le service du gouvernement dans le contexte de la politique fédérale de son temps.

The first consolidated Indian Act of 1876 and the subsequent growth in the federal Department of Indian Affairs resulted in increasing bureaucratic control of the lives of Canada's native population. Special legislation, which was repressive and restrictive in character, underlined the fact that they were denied full citizenship and were treated as a conquered people.

The Indian Department was the responsibility of the Minister of the Interior until 1936. However, effective administration and policy-making usually lay in the hands of the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs—in most instances a career civil servant. This was a tradition that was firmly established during the tenure of L. Van-koughnet, Deputy Superintendent from 1874 to 1893.

Indian policy was very much inspired by the assumptions of nineteenth century evangelical religion, cultural imperialism, and laissez-faire economics. The Indians were to be led to "civilization"—which meant that they were expected to abandon their own traditions for the trappings of European culture, including Christianity. They were also to become economically self-sufficient—hopefully by the adoption of agriculture—so that they would no longer be a burden on the public purse. The triumph of Bible and plough would be followed by "amalgamation" with the rest of the population and the eventual disappearance of the Indians as a separate people.<sup>1</sup> The reserve system, while apparently insulating the native population from society at large, was a step towards this ultimate destiny. It was perceived as a transitional phase during which Indians still required the paternal guidance of church and state.

Efficiency and economy were always prime considerations in

Indian administration. And they acquired even greater significance when Clifford Sifton became Laurier's Minister of the Interior in 1896. Among his first acts of office was a far reaching re-organization of the Department of Indian Affairs which was accompanied by budget and staff cuts.<sup>2</sup> It was in the west, in particular, where treaties had committed the government to regular if not substantial, financial obligations, that measures of economy were most effected. Here Sifton tended to dispense with incompetent officials while granting greater responsibility to those who showed initiative.<sup>3</sup>

Conspicuous in the latter category was a young Department employee named William Morris Graham. A man of considerable ability and relentless ambition, he was to rise quickly in the Indian Affairs bureaucracy and to become its leading figure in Western Canada for several decades. W. M. Graham was born in Ottawea on 11 January 1867 and joined the Department of Indian Affairs in December 1885 as a clerk in the Moose Mountain agency in the old North West Territories. His performance was deemed satisfactory by his superiors and in March 1895 he was transferred to the Indian Commissioner's office in Regina. In the autumn of the following year an unexpected opportunity arose for the ambitious young clerk. In the absence of the agent at File Hills, Graham was sent there to act in his place.<sup>4</sup> After proving himself, he was recommended for appointment as agent by the Indian Commissioner for Manitoba and the North West Territories in June 1897 at a salary of \$900 per annum. His appointment became effective on 13 July of that year.<sup>5</sup> The satisfactory completion of his period of probation in December 1899 brought his annual salary to \$1000.

Further opportunities for advancement waited. In February 1901, the Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton, decided to dispense with the services of J. A. Mitchell, agent at Muscowpetung, and amalgamate that agency with File Hills. The united agency would be known as Qu'Appelle and it would be placed in the hands of Graham, who had not only discharged his duties satisfactorily, but had "shown particular ability in leading the Indians to become self-supporting." His salary would be increased to \$1200 on 1 March 1901 as a consequence of these added responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

Graham lost little time in making plans for his new domain. Obviously aware of the moves that were afoot, he wrote to Sifton on 4 February with a list of suggestions which he felt were vital to the successful amalgamation of the agencies. Among his proposals was that a sum of money be appropriated for the purpose of enabling young graduates of Indian residential schools to commence farming on the reserves. Headquarters evidently concurred and on 2 March, J. D. McLean, Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, informed David Laird, Indian Commissioner at Winnipeg, that Graham's pro-

posals were to be adopted and that the agent would be given \$1500, when sanctioned by parliament, in order to help young Indians adopt agriculture.<sup>7</sup>

This led directly to one of Graham's most interesting projects—an experiment in radical social engineering known as the File Hills colony. Residential schools were viewed by both secular and ecclesiastical authorities as the great crucibles which would enable young Indians to shed their ancestral ways. But a major fear of missionaries and government officials was that native boys and girls upon graduation would return to their parents losing those painfully acquired advances in civilization and Christianization. Graham established his colony to prevent this “retrogression.”

The File Hills colony was a farming settlement made up of carefully selected boys and girls who had graduated from residential schools in the area. Graham was involved in the selection of the colonists and was assisted in this task by the principals of the File Hills Boarding School and the Lebret Industrial School. The young Indians were married off and settled in houses equipped with appropriate effects. They were also assigned tracts of land which they were expected to farm. On the Peepeekisis reserve 19,000 acres were granted by the government for that purpose.

The entire experiment was carefully supervised by Graham. There was to be no contact between the colonists and the older Indians who adhered to the traditional culture. And social interaction among the colonists themselves was closely monitored to prevent any lapse into tribal ways. For example, visits between households were strictly limited. Pow-wows, dances or any other form of native ceremony considered “a hindrance to progress” were forbidden.<sup>8</sup>

The objective of the colony was to produce a group of Indians who had internalized the whiteman's religion and culture and who were self-sufficient farmers. The economic aims were advanced not only by the activities of departmental farming instructors, but also by the deliberate fostering of the work ethic. Competition among the colonists was encouraged by an annual exhibit at which prizes were awarded for achievements in grain growing, cattle breeding, cooking and sewing. Competitive sports also helped to promote individualism and provided alternative non traditional recreation. A brass band served a similar purpose.

In 1907 Graham wrote a report on the File Hills experiment. Its success in preventing ex-pupils “regression” was in his opinion, “phenomenal.” At that stage there were twenty young families in the colony producing good crops and raising their children in the English language. One of the colonists, Fred Dieter, had even hired white men as farm help.<sup>9</sup> From the perspective of its objectives, the colony was

undoubtedly a success. In fact it became a *cause célèbre* of its day. Earl Grey, when he was Governor-General of Canada, paid it an annual visit and donated a shield which was presented to the farmer producing the best crop of the year.<sup>10</sup>

In 1903 the *Winnipeg Telegram* described the Indians of Qu'Appelle agency as the "most prosperous" of the time and attributed that "satisfactory state of affairs" to the work of Graham. The newspaper was particularly impressed with the ex-pupil colony which meant that graduates from the residential schools "do not lapse into their old habits as is often the case on other reservations where they return to the parental teepee, take up their old habits, and soon forget any good they have learned at school." Moreover, at Qu'Appelle the Indians were self-supporting and the ration system was abolished.<sup>11</sup>

There was also recognition of Graham's work from abroad. In 1914 F. H. Abbott, Secretary of the Board of Indian Commissioners in the United States, made a study of Indian administration in Canada and in his report reserved special praise for the File Hills experiment:

"At File Hills near Balcarres, on the Grand Trunk Railroad, in the Province of Saskatchewan, is a small reserve, where I found an illustration of Indian administration which approaches nearest to the perfect ideal I have seen whether in the United States or in Canada. This agency is distinguished particularly because of a Colony of ex-pupils from Canadian schools, which has developed into a unique Indian community. The methods of the Canadian government in dealing with the ex-pupils in this colony, as well as its methods of dealing with the old Indians on the same reserve, I shall present in detail as the best illustration I can give of the simplicity and efficiency of the Canadian system."<sup>12</sup>

Graham's success at Qu'Appelle did not go unnoticed in Ottawa and he was promoted to the position of Inspector of Indian Agencies for the South Saskatchewan Inspectorate in February 1904.<sup>13</sup>

One of the greatest obstacles to the successful accomplishment of Indian Affairs policy aims at this time was the persistence of native rituals which centred on dancing. The sundance and similar customs had both sacred and social roles in the plains Indian culture. According to Jacqueline Gresko, they also served as mechanisms of resistance to the religious and cultural assimilation which threatened them at the hands of schools, missionaries and government agents.<sup>14</sup> The most vehement opponents of the dances were the churches, both Catholic and Protestant. It was the "heathen" or "pagan" features of these gatherings which aroused the most ecclesiastical wrath and the missionaries waged a tireless campaign for their suppression. The state generally concurred with missionary sentiment and an amendment to the Indian Act outlawed the dances. Patrols by the North-West Mounted Police attempted to ensure prohibition. But petitions to Ottawa by Indian groups in the first decade of the twentieth century

secured some relaxation of the ban. The Indians, who in some instances had hired lawyers to present their case, argued that they too should be allowed days of sport and recreation.<sup>15</sup>

Ottawa's uncharacteristic permissiveness on the question of dancing was prompted not only by the Indian protests, but also by reports filtering in from some agents in the field that seemed to suggest that the traditional gatherings were relatively harmless, especially, when shorn of their torture elements. However, no such toleration was evident in Graham's case. Throughout his career in the west, he waged a constant campaign against the practice which he regarded as an unmitigated evil. In 1898, when agent at File Hills, he informed the Commissioner in Winnipeg that he had heard of plans to hold a sun dance on one of the reserves in June. But he had gone around warning the Indians that the department "would not tolerate" such an event. It never took place.<sup>16</sup>

Graham remained a strong advocate of the suppression of the dances even when headquarters became less adamant on the issue. In February 1909 he wrote to Department Secretary J. D. McLean criticizing the notion that dances should be permitted under certain circumstances. Not only would such activities "demoralize" the Indians, but they would waste time better spent on agricultural pursuits. Later in the same year he wrote again to McLean complaining that the department was not diligent enough in stamping out dancing. And he reiterated the economic argument: "Every minute of the summer is so important to farmers."<sup>17</sup>

A similar correspondence took place in the summer of 1911 and illustrated Graham's growing exasperation with his superiors. On this occasion Graham complained to McLean that a delegation of the Pasqua band had recently returned from Ottawa under the impression that they were permitted to revive the circle dance. He felt that the department's attempt to merely discourage the dance was insufficient and a firm prohibition was necessary. After all, that particular ritual involved painting the almost nude bodies of the male participants! And there was the additional danger that it would cause the cultural relapse of his graduate farming colonists. Graham deplored the ambiguous attitude of headquarters and suggested that chiefs who allowed dancing on their reserves should be deposed from office. McLean responded that the department was not prepared to take those measures.<sup>18</sup>

If Graham was rebuffed on this issue it was certainly not the end of his influence. When Arthur Meighen, who was related to Graham's wife, became Minister of the Interior under Robert Borden in 1917, it opened the door to further opportunities. The creator of the File Hills colony came forward once more with another grand design. In a letter to Meighen in January 1918 he outlined a plan to increase food production in order to assist with the war effort. It involved the

efficient use of "idle" Indian lands for that purpose. Graham claimed that in the South Saskatchewan Inspectorate there were 340,000 acres of pasture land of which only about 120,000 acres were being used by the Indians. The proper use of those lands could raise cattle production to three times the existing level. And just think what could be accomplished by the maximum utilization of Indian lands all over the prairies?<sup>19</sup>

This project, known as the "greater production" scheme, won official approval and in February Graham was appointed Commissioner for Greater Production for the provinces of Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. A sum of \$362,000 was granted to Indian Affairs from the War Appropriation for the purposes of administering the scheme.<sup>20</sup> But Indian lands could not be expropriated for any purpose, however worthy or patriotic, without the consent of the band members involved. To overcome this obstacle an amendment to the Indian Act was quickly passed in the spring of 1918 making such consent unnecessary. The confiscation of reserve lands was then a simple matter.

There were two aspects to the greater production scheme. One involved the leasing of Indian lands to white farmers, and 255,000 acres were leased in this way. The other involved the establishment of greater production farms on Indian land. These were directed by the department's agents employing Indian labour and the most modern machinery. These curious experiments in state agricultural entrepreneurship were set up at the Blood, Blackfoot, Muscowpetung, Crooked Lakes and Assiniboine reserves and occupied a total area of 20,448 acres.<sup>21</sup>

The farms were not without their problems. It was certainly a misfortune that the winter of 1919-20 was particularly severe in Alberta resulting in considerable livestock losses to both Indians and whites. In some cases up to forty per cent of herds perished. While the scheme could not be held responsible for the vicissitudes of climate, it seems that the losses incurred aggravated an already unsatisfactory situation from the native point of view.

The Blood Indians of southern Alberta were especially agrieved by some of the outcomes of Graham's plan. On 31 May 1920 they presented a memorandum to the department outlining their complaints. The Commissioner was obliged to reply in detail.<sup>22</sup> The Blood's pointed out that on 30 May 1918 about 4,800 acres of their reserve had been taken for the creation of a greater production farm. Indian labour was used on the farm, and so was Indian farm machinery which had been virtually commandeered by the agent at great inconvenience.

The Indians complained about gross mismanagement of the government farm, as well as official highhandedness. They disclosed that a wheat crop had been left unfenced during the summer of 1919

and that cattle and horses had destroyed most of it. Graham admitted that this had happened but blamed it on the slow delivery of fencing materials by a railway company.

There were further instances of incompetence. In September 1918, for example, a mixed herd of cattle had been sold for \$44,000. The Indians were told that their share of the profit would be \$50 per head of cattle. But some of this money was subsequently used to purchase more cattle which were later sold at \$20 a head—a considerable loss. Graham did not deny the accusation but suggested that the local agent, who had since been fired, was to blame.

The litany of complaints by the Blood Indians was a lengthy one and while Graham attempted to dismiss most of their allegations as being either exaggerated or absurd, he admitted to some mismanagement.<sup>23</sup> Nor were the financial returns all that impressive. A statement submitted by Graham to Deputy-Superintendent General Duncan C. Scott on 26 March 1921 gave the following figures:<sup>24</sup>

Summary of receipts and expenditures  
re: Greater Production Farms, 23 March 1921

Amount advanced from war appropriation . . . . .	\$362,000.00
Revenue from sales as of 28 February 1921 . . . . .	<u>\$576,192.07</u>
Total . . . . .	\$938,192.07
Expenditure . . . . .	<u>\$826,838.94</u>
Balance on hand . . . . .	\$111,353.13

Even after three years of operation, total expenditure far exceeded the revenue from sales. And the balance on hand was less than one-third of the initial investment from the war appropriation. As a business venture the government farms had been less than a resounding success.

Of course Graham continued to defend the project and hoped that the farms could continue even when their original *raison d'être* had disappeared. If they made little sense financially, they at least served the function of providing for Indians supervised experience in agriculture. But the department did not concur and in February 1922 Deputy Superintendent Scott informed Graham that there could “scarcely be further justification” for the continuation of the experiment. The farm machinery should be sold and the policy of securing the surrender and arranging for the sale of “idle” Indian lands should be pursued.<sup>25</sup> Much of the reserve lands that had been leased to white farmers under the other aspect of the greater production scheme had by that time been turned over to the Soldier Settlement Board.

The greater production farms were consequently phased out in the 1920s. It was a blow to Graham but he at least had the compensation of being promoted to Indian Commissioner for the prairie provinces at an annual salary of \$4,800 in July 1920 when his friend and patron Arthur

Meighen was Prime Minister.<sup>26</sup> However, the demise of his scheme was regarded by the commissioner as an example of unwarranted interference by headquarters in his domain. Such intrusions were far too frequent for his liking and they were often both frustrating and embarrassing.

An incident which further illustrates Graham's dilemma occurred in 1924-25. Part of the Blackfoot Reserve in Alberta that had been surrendered in 1911 had not been sold, but then been leased to white farmers. The department occasionally attempted to sell such lands and in 1924 Graham was instructed by headquarters to so dispose of some of the Blackfoot properties. In November of that year an Alberta farmer by the name of W. M. Lyle arrived in the Regina office and arranged to purchase 3¼ sections of the land in question at the "upset price" (the minimum price set by the department). Ottawa approved of the sale and Lyle made his downpayment and received receipts. Some of the land in question was already under lease and the department approved of the rentals being assigned to the new owner.

However, when the lessees of the land, the Thorssen brothers, discovered the sale, they offered Indian Affairs six dollars more per acre for the property than Lyle had paid. It seems that the Thorssens had already purchased Indian land and were at the time in arrears with their payments. In spite of that, headquarters instructed Graham to cancel the arrangement with Lyle and to accept the higher offer. The Commissioner was angered by this interference and argued, reasonably enough, that the original contract should be upheld. Heated correspondence on the question ensued between Ottawa and Regina throughout the spring of 1925. Graham could make no headway with the arguments he advanced and actually discovered that some officials in headquarters believed he had deliberately undervalued the Blackfoot lands in return for bribes from prospective purchasers. He wrote to Interior Minister Charles Stewart complaining that he seemed to have lost the confidence of the department and that his actions were "viewed with suspicion." It was only the fear of adverse publicity that prevented him from taking legal action against his accusers.<sup>27</sup>

This was but one of many instances in which Graham was overruled or snubbed by his superiors. It suggested a growing alienation between the Commissioner in Regina and the Ottawa bureaucrats. Graham himself was hardly blameless in all of this. His relentless ambition, his determination to be the final authority on policy development and implementation in the west, and his almost paranoid sensitivity to criticism were well known. In fact his relationship with Duncan C. Scott, who was Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs from 1913 until 1932, was particularly tempestuous. As early as 1914 Scott was promising Interior Minister W. J. Roche that he would attempt to ensure that his future correspondence with Graham would

“be void of offence so far as possible.” However, he explained that Graham “cannot be written to as we would write to a different inspector, but our directions must be expressed with as much care as if we were diplomatists addressing a foreign power.”<sup>28</sup>

Part of the problem was that Graham strongly resented Scott’s success and coveted the position of Deputy Superintendent for himself. The pinnacle of the bureaucracy would have proven an appropriate culmination to such an illustrious career in the Indian service. And the Commissioner’s expectation of this ultimate elevation was not without foundation. Political patronage was by no means an extinct custom at the time and Graham was blessed with a connection of impeccable pedigree. His wife, Violette, was a sister of Arthur Meighen’s wife’s step-father. Though perhaps a relationship that was somewhat odd, she was regarded in the family as Meighen’s aunt and in her correspondence with him (in which she addressed Meighen as “Dear Arthur”), she signed herself “Aunt Vi.” The two were obviously on intimate personal terms. In fact Meighen acceded to a request by Violette Graham to address the Canadian Women’s Club in Regina (of which she was president) on a western visit in 1922.<sup>29</sup> Alice Tye provided a further connection with the Conservative leader. Tye served as Graham’s secretary for almost three decades. She was also a cousin of Violette Graham and was related to Meighen with whom she corresponded frequently.

Both women were keenly interested in the advancement of Graham’s career and shared his hope that he would one day occupy the top rung on the Indian Affairs ladder. The relationship with Meighen was seen as the key to this ultimate promotion. Unfortunately for the Graham faction, McKenzie King’s Liberals held the reins of power throughout most of the 1920s, except for one brief interlude in 1926 when Meighen attempted to form a government. This debacle ended with Meighen losing his seat in the Commons and retiring from politics to pursue a career in business. His relations with the new party leader, R. B. Bennett, were not amicable. In fact both men were old rivals and had been known to quarrel bitterly in public. But Meighen still had many friends in politics and when the Conservatives returned to power in 1930, he could not be ignored. The great depression had dulled the lustre of his business ventures and when Bennett offered him a Senate appointment with the cabinet post of government leader in that chamber early in 1932, he accepted. Even though he was only fifty-eight at the time, he had acquired the status of party elder statesman and might be expected to wield some influence with the Prime Minister.<sup>30</sup>

What was particularly auspicious was that Deputy Superintendent Scott was likely to retire in 1932 upon reaching the age of seventy, although this was by no means a foregone conclusion. Graham would

be sixty-five in that year and could look forward to five years in Ottawa as department head—a fitting reward for a life devoted to the service. And were it not for the scandal that marred his reputation on the eve of Scott's retirement, the dream might indeed have been realized. The Antapa shooting club affair was the incident which ultimately sealed his fate.<sup>31</sup>

In 1924 the Antapa shooting club of Regina, of which Graham was a member, attempted to secure a lease for duck hunting purposes to Antapa Point, part of the Pasqua Indian reserve. A document was drawn up offering the sum of \$150 per annum to the band for these rights and it was submitted to Indian Affairs headquarters in Ottawa for approval. But in January 1925 D. C. Scott returned the proposed lease to Graham explaining that it was not properly executed as the Indians had not agreed to the terms.

In the following year a rival claim to the property was made. In that instance, local politician D. H. McDonald brought forward an offer of \$550 per annum for shooting privileges, and in a meeting with the Pasqua band won their approval. However, Ottawa refused to sanction the agreement on the grounds that McDonald represented a group of New York millionaires. And shortly afterwards Scott wrote to E. B. Jonah, who represented the Antapa club, enclosing a copy of the McDonald agreement and suggesting that the club draw up a similar document and obtain the signature of a majority of voting band members.<sup>32</sup>

A new Antapa lease which raised the rental to \$550 was subsequently put together. But such were the connections of club members that it was considered unnecessary to secure band approval. The document was forwarded to Ottawa and on this occasion the lease was granted, to be effective 14 January 1928. This was not an unusual course of action as departmental high-handedness with Indian land has a well-established lineage. As the Minister of the Interior at the time, Charles Stewart, explained:

It is the practice of the department whenever possible and within reason to act in accordance with the wishes of the members of the band, but, in this case it was felt that in the general interest an exception should be made.<sup>33</sup>

This unconvincing apology was followed by refusal to seriously entertain the objections of the Indians to the agreement. Scott wrote to Chief Ben Pasqua in February 1931 in the following manner:

It has been decided that this lease is of decided advantage to your band and sufficient reason has not at any time been advanced which, in our estimation, would justify cancellation.<sup>34</sup>

The department's authoritarianism was only part of the problem in this complex affair. Clause 6 of the Antapa club's lease harboured

the embryo of far greater controversy. It read as follows:

It is further agreed that the lessee shall not nor will sell or permit or suffer to be sold on the said premises any spirituous liquors, ale, beer, or any intoxicating liquors whatever, except to members of the said club.<sup>35</sup>

Even though prohibition had met its unmourned demise some years earlier, public phobia about the availability of alcohol was still a concern. And the association between Indians and alcohol was even more contentious. In fact, the Indian Act forbade taking liquor onto reservations. Yet here was a lease, secured for a privileged club through the influence of a leading government official, which seemed to allow liquor on Indian land. The Antapa club house, it should be pointed out, was located on private property. However, access to it was by a road that crossed the reserve. The lease seemed to suggest that liquor could be taken to the club, thereby crossing Indian land. It was also sufficiently ambiguous to allow members to take liquor to the reserve property leased for hunting purposes. Undoubtedly, the situation was one rife with potential controversy.

It might never have entered the public domain but for the intervention of J. S. Woodsworth, MP for Winnipeg North Centre. The MP had been apprised of the situation by P. N. B. Galwey-Foley, a Saskatchewan resident who was highly critical of the government's Indian policy. On 4 May 1931 Woodsworth asked a series of questions in the House of Commons regarding the Antapa lease and requested a copy of the document and all related correspondence. With this information in his hands he exposed the sordid details of the affair in the House on 13 July. In Woodsworth's opinion Graham was the villain of the piece:

I would charge this: that there has been a series of misrepresentations by the department; that Commissioner Graham, a member of the Antapa club, through misrepresentative, managed to secure the refusal of the lease to one party, and to secure the lease for the club of which he was a member. I think that is a matter which requires departmental action. I know this cannot be settled today, but I have taken this occasion to lay it before the house, and I think the minister would be well advised to consider the statement that his own commissioner, a public official, who is a member of the club, has managed to secure these privileges through misrepresentation of the general situation.

I have already pointed out that the clause with regard to liquor violates the terms of the Indian Act, a copy of which I have under my hand and which I can read if necessary. The lease is illegal as being granted without the consent of the band and undoubtedly the whole transaction constitutes a grievance which the Indians feel deeply.<sup>36</sup>

These accusations were mainly directed at the previous regime. The events that Woodsworth related had taken place when the Liberals

were in power and, after all, the Winnipeg socialist was a well-known critic of corruption in King's administration. Nonetheless, Prime Minister R. B. Bennett took a particular interest in the case. While leader of the opposition he had been critical of Indian administration in the west. Patronage was rife in the system according to the reports he had received. It is certainly possible that his opinions were influenced by letters such as the one addressed to him in May 1930 from Regina building contractor J. Mayoh. Mayoh disclosed that Graham was known locally as the "Kaiser of the West." The Commissioner was a job holder who knew nothing of Indians even after more than forty years in the service. He generally avoided reserves, except for File Hills, his special project, where he was wont to dispense supplies lavishly. In fact, his advancement in the department had been largely due to the connection with Arthur Meighen.<sup>37</sup> These accusations were likely exaggerated but they introduced Bennett to the negative features of Graham's activities and led him to greet with some scepticism the representations he received on behalf of the Commissioner when the question of Scott's replacement arose.

Graham's most vigorous and persistent promoter was his long-serving secretary, Alice Tye. She took the initiative in advancing his claim to the Deputy Superintency in January 1932 in letters addressed to the Prime Minister. She argued that the Commissioner deserved the position. In her opinion Scott was "fonder of Arts and Letters than of Indians" while Graham was "fonder of Indians than of Arts and Letters."<sup>38</sup> She urged the Prime Minister to permit Graham to plead his own case as forces "near the centre of the wheels" were conspiring not only to block his appointment, but to force his early retirement. This was the first of many indications from the Regina faction that it believed that Scott was deliberately attempting to sabotage Graham's career.

Bennett's reply was far from reassuring. He commended Tye for her loyalty to Graham, but was obviously less than happy with the Commissioner's role in the Antapa affair:

That you desire to help Mr. Graham is comprehensible; that he deserves to be helped is incomprehensible. During the last session of parliament the allegation that he was a member of a club, the members of which, with his knowledge, were carrying liquor across the Indian Reserve, caused the government much embarrassment, and I have seen no adequate explanation of the fact.<sup>39</sup>

Graham was evidently shocked at the Prime Minister's response to his secretary's representations. He contacted his friends in the Antapa club and appealed for their support. Membership of the club was drawn from the local elite—lawyers, judges, businessmen and so forth—people whose opinions were calculated to carry some weight in Ottawa. As a consequence of Graham's request several letters from

Regina dignitaries were sent to Bennett in February exonerating the Commissioner from any blame in the affair. Some of the correspondents attempted to blame Scott for what had happened as he had signed the lease containing the liquor clause.

The Prime Minister was initially sceptical at what appeared to be an orchestrated campaign. However, he was obviously impressed when one of Graham's supporters turned out to be Sir Frederick W. G. Haultain, Chief Justice of the Saskatchewan Court of Appeal and the former chairman of the North-West Executive Committee in the days of territorial administration in the west. Like the others, Haultain argued that the Commissioner had not been involved in the lease negotiations and he expressed surprise at Scott's acquiescence in such an agreement in view of prevailing liquor laws.<sup>40</sup> Bennett replied that "so far as Mr. Graham is concerned the explanation apparently affords a complete answer to any complaints that may be made against him."<sup>41</sup>

Meanwhile Graham had protested his own innocence to the Prime Minister. He insisted that the lease negotiations had taken place between department officials in Ottawa and club members without his personal involvement. He had been unaware of the liquor clause until he had received a telegram from Scott on 15 July 1931 (by a strange co-incidence two days after Woodsworth's speech in the Commons) proposing its deletion from the lease.<sup>42</sup> Graham's complete innocence on the liquor question is implausible. He must have been aware that alcohol was consumed regularly at the Antapa club premises, a fact that was frankly admitted by several of the members that wrote to Ottawa on his behalf. It seems that both he and Scott had blundered. In Graham's case it was probably his arrogant assumption that he could bend the rules to his liking in his own domain. As for Scott, he was likely guilty of an uncharacteristic oversight in not carefully reading the contents of a document prior to its approval.

It is possible that the letters from Regina may have partly rehabilitated Graham's reputation in the Prime Minister's eyes. However, the whiff of scandal was a poor omen of things to come. If their hopes were to be realized the Commissioner's wife and secretary quickly realized that the Meighen card was the one to be played.

Violette Graham wrote to Meighen on 30 January urging him to intercede with Bennett on behalf of her husband. The family had hoped that the Commissioner's "wonderful record" would be recognized with the Conservatives back in power and that he would get the promotion he deserved. Mrs. Graham was convinced that the entire Antapa affair and the hostility evident in the Prime Minister's recent letter to Alice Tye was the sinister work of Duncan C. Scott who had always had "an uncanny ability to make Bill (Graham) appear in a wrong light." She felt that the Deputy Superintendent was manoeuvring mischievously

behind the scenes to prevent her husband's promotion. It made her sick that "a sneak like Scott" could put that over.<sup>43</sup>

Alice Tye was equally convinced of a Scott conspiracy and the necessity to invoke Meighen's aid. She wrote twice to the former Conservative leader at the beginning of February appealing for his intervention. She even accused the Deputy Superintendent of deliberately inserting the liquor clause in the Antapa lease in order to discredit Graham! Now that Meighen was in the Senate, he could surely make certain that justice was done. "We know that Scott would do anything to keep cousin Bill from being Deputy, and it may be too late now to counteract his influence—I hope not."<sup>44</sup>

And at the same time, Graham received news that suggested Scott was indeed working against him. On 3 February the Deputy Superintendent wired, ordering him to close the Muscowpetung greater production farm and to discharge all staff. This was the surviving remnant of Graham's grandiose scheme of 1918 and its enforced demise was perhaps a portent of his own fate. He protested against Scott's orders, explaining the difficulty of selling stock during the depression and so forth, but to no avail. Scott was adamant and further instructions arrived demanding the immediate sale of the farm regardless of the arrangements that would have to be made.<sup>45</sup> This was depressing news for Graham and he too felt obliged to take up his case with Meighen, protesting Scott's attitude and outlining the agricultural progress he had made with the Indians.<sup>46</sup>

Senator Meighen was willing to help his despairing friends and impressed on the Prime Minister that Graham had been "for many years the best man in the Indian service" and wouldn't dream of tolerating violations of liquor regulations.<sup>47</sup>

But the news arriving in Regina continued to be bad. A rumour, apparently well-founded, that the Regina office was to be closed was the cause of particular alarm and Tye's letters to Meighen began to take on an increasingly despairing tone. The Senator had also heard of the proposed closing but was reluctant to interfere too much with another man's portfolio.<sup>48</sup>

Worse was to come. On 16 March the newspapers announced the imminent retirement of D. C. Scott. Graham was prominent among the list of his possible successors but it was believed his age was against him and that he would be superannuated. Both Tye and Violette Graham felt that "Bill" could serve the department for at least another five years. Hysterical phone calls and letters to Meighen followed in which, predictably enough, Scott was blamed for this turn of events.<sup>49</sup>

On this occasion Meighen took up the matter with Interior Minister Thomas G. Murphy and even showed him Mrs. Graham's letter with the accusations against Scott. On 22 March Murphy informed the

Senator that the office of the Commissioner of Indian Affairs at Regina would be closing on the last day of the month—by a strange coincidence the same date as Scott's retirement. Graham would also be retired on that occasion at an annual pension of \$4,200, and the work of the office would be divided among three inspectors. Murphy insisted that the decision to close the office was entirely his. He assured Meighen that Scott had always "spoken well of Mr. Graham's ability as a businessman" although the Minister was aware that the relations between the two men "were not of the best."<sup>50</sup>

Graham took his enforced retirement badly. Bitter and disillusioned, he took the advice of his doctor and spent a few months vacation in England during the summer of 1932. Upon his return in September he met Meighen in Toronto and complained again of Scott—"a most impractical man" who had never given him any assistance "in carrying on a most difficult work."<sup>51</sup>

Graham had been living in a house owned by Indian Affairs in Regina for some years. He considered the rent, \$100 per month, excessive and before embarking on his overseas trip had inquired if he might now be entitled to the accommodation rent free or perhaps at a nominal sum. A. S. Williams, the department's legal clerk who was acting as Deputy Superintendent until Scott's permanent successor was chosen, not only judged this request inappropriate, but felt that the house should be vacated to make way for another department official. This discouraging news awaited Graham when he arrived back in Regina. On this occasion Meighen refused to intercede on his behalf in view of the rebuffs he had received in the past.<sup>52</sup>

It was with this final humiliating blow that W. M. Graham receded into the oblivion of retirement. A career which had begun with so much promise was thus brought abruptly to an end at the very moment when its crowning achievement seemed so elusively within grasp.

It is improbable that many Indians regretted his fall. Among the many testimonials to his abilities and achievements that arrived in Ottawa during those crucial months of 1932, there were none from the native population. The Indians had been merely pawns in the grandiose schemes with which Graham attempted to enhance his reputation and advance his career. In his moments of crisis, they were not there to raise a helping hand.

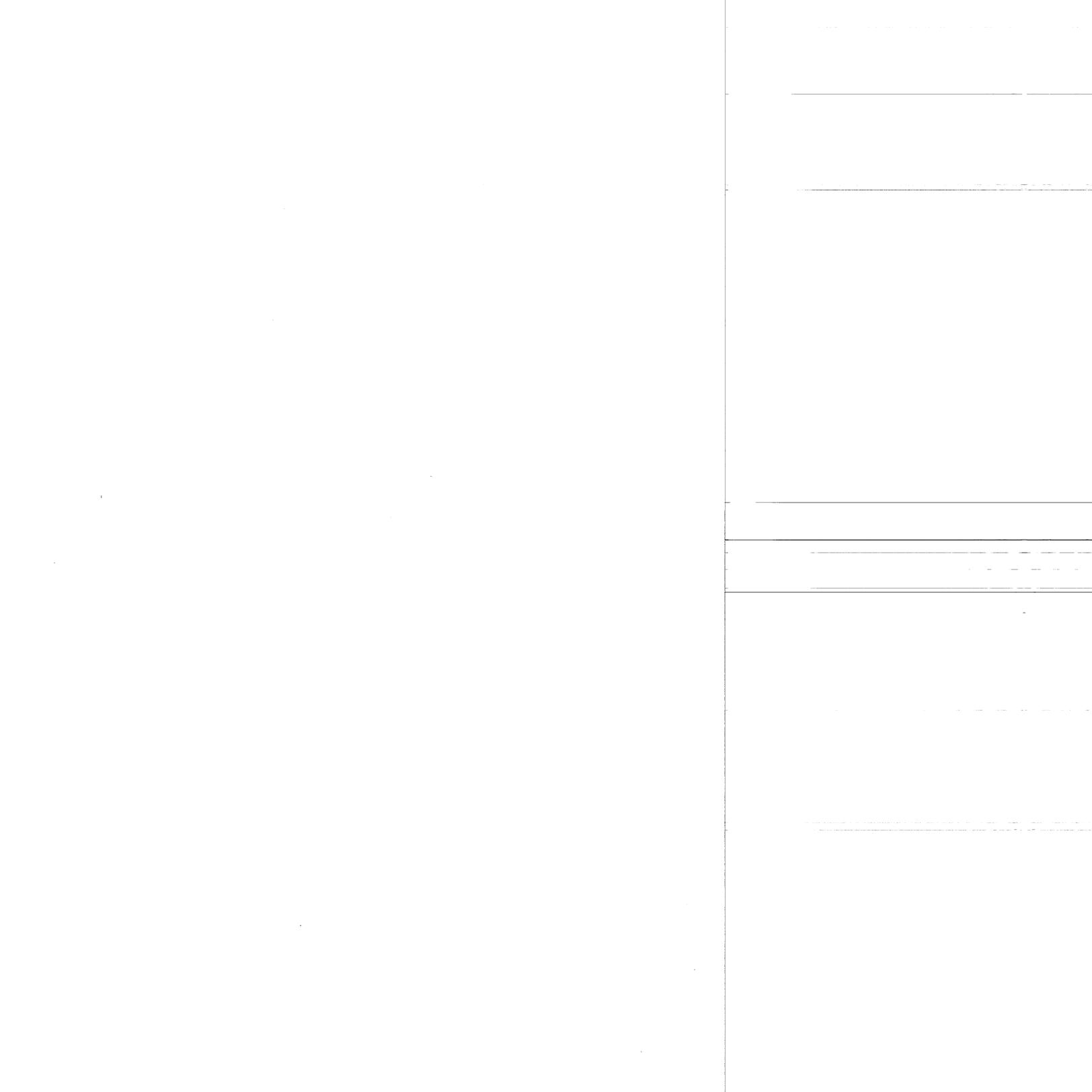
Graham should not be selected for particular condemnation in that regard. The agents, inspectors, and commissioners who directed the lives of Indians at the behest of the federal government were invariably dedicated to the organization's objectives and to their own worldly comfort, rather than to the expressed wishes of those whom they professed to serve. And Graham was the quintessential organiza-

tion man. His determination and dedication, while undoubtedly inspired by career considerations, were also indicative of his faith in the ultimate wisdom of federal policy. He shared the belief of many of his contemporaries that the government knew what was best for the Indians. If the Indians themselves happened to disagree, it was regrettable, but hardly grounds in itself for compromise. As mere wards of the state, the native people could not reasonably expect their opinions to be considered.

#### NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> This view was expressed on a number of occasions by Deputy Superintendent D. C. Scott.
- <sup>2</sup> D. J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton and Canadian Indian Administration, 1896-1905," *Prairie Forum*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (1977), p. 129.
- <sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.
- <sup>4</sup> Public Archives of Canada, RG10 (Records of Department of Indian Affairs), Vol. 3908, file 107, 241.
- <sup>5</sup> PAC, R. B. Bennett Papers (MG26,K), Indian Affairs file D-200, memo D. C. Scott to T. Murphy, 15 March 1932.
- <sup>6</sup> PAC, RG10, Vol. 3878, file 91,839-7.
- <sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>8</sup> Eleanor Brass, "The File Hills Ex-Pupil Colony," *Saskatchewan History*, Vol. 6 (1953), p. 67.
- <sup>9</sup> Jacqueline Gresko, "White 'Rites' and Indian 'Rites': Indian Education and Native Responses in the West, 1870-1910," in A. W. Rasporich (ed.), *Western Canada: Past and Present*, (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), p. 175.
- <sup>10</sup> Brass, *op. cit.*, p. 68.
- <sup>11</sup> *Winnipeg Telegram*, 25 April 1903.
- <sup>12</sup> PAC, Bennett Papers, Indian Affairs file D-200.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>14</sup> Gresko, *op. cit.*, p. 175.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.
- <sup>16</sup> PAC, RF10, Vol. 3825, file 60,511-1, W. Graham to D. Laird, 4 August 1898.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, file 60,511-2, W. Graham to J. D. McLean, 14 August 1909.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, file 60,511-3, W. Graham to J. D. McLean, 24 July 1911; McLean to Graham, 9 August 1911.
- <sup>19</sup> PAC, Arthur Meighen Papers, series 1, Vol. 4, 2223.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>21</sup> PAC, RF10, vol. 4069, file 427,063, D. C. Scott to A. Meighen, 28 February 1919.
- <sup>22</sup> PAC, Meighen Papers, series 2, vol. 31, 17702, A. Meighen to J. Lougheed, 31 January 1921.
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 17692.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 017710.
- <sup>25</sup> PAC, RG10, vol. 4069, file 427,063, D. C. Scott to W. Graham, 22 February 1922.
- <sup>26</sup> PAC, Bennett Papers, Indian Affairs file D-200, memo D. C. Scott to T. Murphy, 15 March 1932.
- <sup>27</sup> PAC, Meighen Papers, series 3, vol. 98, 56097-56104.
- <sup>28</sup> PAC, RG10, vol. 4070, file 427,063-A, D. C. Scott to W. J. Roche, 7 February 1914.
- <sup>29</sup> PAC, Meighen Papers, series 3, vol. 110, 63799, A. Meighen to V. Graham, 4 September 1922.
- <sup>30</sup> John English, *Arthur Meighen*, (Don Mills: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1977), pp. 46-48.
- <sup>31</sup> The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Bennett McCardle in bringing this incident to his attention.
- <sup>32</sup> *Debates of the House of Commons*, (Vol. CXC for the period 1875-1931) Vol. IV, 1931, pp. 3674-3677. These details were divulged in the speech by J. S. Woodsworth, 13 July.
- <sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3677.
- <sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3674.
- <sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3678.
- <sup>37</sup> PAC, Bennett Papers, Indian Affairs file D-200, J. Mayoh to R. B. Bennett, 31 May 1930.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, W. M. Graham file D-207-G, A. Tye to R. B. Bennett, 13 January 1932.
- <sup>39</sup> PAC, Meighen Papers, series 5, vol. 159, 97542, R. B. Bennett to A. Tye, 25 January 1932.
- <sup>40</sup> PAC, Bennett Papers, W. M. Graham file D-207-G, F. W. G. Haultain to R. B. Bennett, 11 February 1932.
- <sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, R. B. Bennett to F. W. G. Haultain, 15 February 1932.
- <sup>42</sup> PAC, Meighen Papers, series 5, vol. 159, 97533, W. Graham to R. B. Bennett, 2 February 1932.

- <sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 97526, V. Graham to A. Meighen, 30 January 1932.  
<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 97545, A. Tye to A. Meighen, 5 February 1932.  
<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 97543, 97544, 97549, 97570, correspondence between W. Graham and D. C. Scott, February 1932.  
<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 97567, W. Graham to A. Meighen, 29 February 1932.  
<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 97553, A. Meighen to R. B. Bennett, 18 February 1932.  
<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 97558, 97571, 97577, correspondence between A. Tye and A. Meighen, February March 1932.  
<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, 97585, V. Graham to A. Meighen, 18 March 1932.  
<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 97591-2, T. G. Murphy to A. Meighen, 22 and 29 March 1932.  
<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 97598, W. Graham to A. Meighen, 3 October 1932.  
<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 97599, A. Meighen to W. Graham, 14 October 1932.



## Residential Buildings in Calgary, 1905–1914

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**ABSTRACT.** In the decade preceding the Great War, Calgary's population multiplied more than sixfold from approximately 12,500 to 80,000. Because of accelerating demographic pressure, the demand for accommodation in the city constantly outstripped the supply. In this paper a number of aspects of residential buildings from the period 1905–1914 will be discussed. By focussing on major contrasts evident in Calgary's residential architecture, some insight will be gained into the socio-economic profile of the emerging urban community as well as into the evolution of the built environment.

### RESUME

Pendant les dix années qui ont précédé la première guerre mondiale, la population de Calgary a sextuplé, pour passer de 12.500 à 80.000 habitants. A cause de la poussée démographique accrue, la demande de logement dans Calgary, dépassait toujours l'offre. Nous discuterons ici de plusieurs aspects spécifiques aux constructions résidentielles érigées entre 1905 et 1914. En nous concentrant sur les principaux contrastes qui sont évidents dans l'architecture résidentielle de Calgary, nous aurons un aperçu du profil socio-économique d'une communauté urbaine naissante, et de l'évolution de son urbanisme.

One could easily have walked across Calgary in a couple of short hours in 1905, but by 1914 the city had at least doubled in size with the incorporation of several villages and vast stretches of surrounding prairie within its limits. Extensive as was the geographic expansion of Calgary, increases in the local population were of even greater significance. In the decade preceding the Great War, Calgary's population multiplied more than sixfold, from approximately 12,500 to 80,000. Entrepreneurs, lured by the seemingly infinite economic potential of the region, poured their capital resources and experience into the development of business, industry and real estate. Following their lead, workers came in droves as opportunities for employment rapidly multiplied. Thousands more were drawn to the city to supply necessary goods and services. The net result was the transformation of Calgary from a raw frontier community into an energetic regional metropolis, a progressive centre of trade and commerce, industry, transportation, and administration.<sup>1</sup>

Because of accelerating demographic pressure, the demand for accommodation in the city constantly outstripped the supply. In no previous era had there ever been a surplus of dwellings; consequently, newly-arrived settlers were faced with a serious housing shortage at the beginning of the decade. Those who had a great deal of money, or access to it, had little difficulty in finding homes. Many, in fact, took advantage of land and labour prices, which were low by eastern Canadian and British standards, to build enormous estates. But those without capital, by far the vast majority of local residents, were hard hit by the lack of houses either for sale or for rent at an affordable price, and were forced to live in tents and shacks. After 1908, however, the availability of mortgage and loan money on easy terms, together with

slowly rising wages for labour, tended to ameliorate the situation. Easy terms of purchase and financing enabled many to acquire their own homes. At the same time, the opening of new subdivisions in the city flooded the real estate market with inexpensive land which helped, for a short period, to keep residential lots within the means of a large percentage of the working-class population. Calgary consequently experienced a dramatic surge in residential building. Between 1909 and 1913, the period that the boom was in full swing, a total of 10,456 building permits were issued in the city; of that number, an estimated 7,747 were for residences (see Table 1). Dwelling construction thus not only met a pressing need in the community, but also gave employment to thousands of Calgary tradesmen, and helped immensely in sustaining buoyant conditions in the local economy.

In this paper, a number of aspects of residential buildings from the period 1905 to 1914 will be discussed. It is hoped that, by focussing on major contrasts evident in Calgary's residential architecture, some insight will be gained into the socio-economic profile of the emerging urban community as well as into the evolution of the built environment. First, the homes of Calgary's entrepreneurial elite will be examined in terms of their exterior styling and situation, cultural association and social significance within the community. A few representative structures have been selected for careful scrutiny in this category. Second, the dwellings of Calgary's working-class population will be considered. Although these buildings cannot be thought of as monuments of domestic architecture, they are nevertheless important statements of certain attitudes, preferences, and above all, economic realities which shaped the lives of Calgary workingmen and their families. Third, and in conjunction with working-class housing, the rise in popularity of apartment buildings will be outlined. Whereas apartments were initially the privilege of the middle and upper classes, they became a common form of accommodation for workers after 1912 when immigration to the city reached a peak, and in spite of some opposition to them by city officials.

### *Residences of the Local Entrepreneurial and Professional Elite*

The expansion of railway lines across the western plains injected new vitality into the city of Calgary. A wildly growing market for goods and services opened new doors for local entrepreneurs; wholesaling, retailing, manufacturing, construction and real estate speculation consequently flourished. The upshot of this prairie boom was that the city experienced an era of unprecedented prosperity prior to World War 1. While the effects of this new-found opulence were spread across the entire city, the bulk was concentrated in the hands of a few individuals.<sup>2</sup> Entrepreneurs and professionals such as William Roper Hull, A. E. Cross, James Lougheed, Pat Burns, T. J. S. Skinner, W. H.

Cushing and James Walker benefitted greatly on account of their early arrival and their unceasing toil in establishing successful business ventures in Calgary. Others including Fred C. Lowes, Alex and H.N. Sereth, E. H. Crandell, William Tregillus, O. S. Chapin, John Hextall and R. B. Bennett were relative latecomers to the city, but were able to rise in prominence as well during the boom years through sheer aggressiveness, business acumen and their good fortune.<sup>3</sup> Together, these men constituted a dynamic elite. Their wealth, political prowess and social influence was manifest throughout the city in diverse real estate holdings, commercial and industrial undertakings as well as in the personal indulgence of their life-styles.

The most extravagant expression of the ascendancy of this group was in their homes. Generally speaking, Calgary's men of means had risen quickly from humbler ranks; the novelty of their wealth and achievement thus shone through intensely in the confident, flamboyant spirit of their domestic architecture. So, too, did their ardent desire for public recognition.<sup>4</sup> The construction of pretentious, romantically styled mansions which called forth the admiration of each passerby fulfilled this need. Moreover, careful craftsmanship, rich decoration both inside and out, and aesthetic location on verdant grounds suggested a level of luxury and comfort beyond the means of most people.

Another notable characteristic of these homes was their architectural boldness. Rugged, massive qualities symbolized the power and affluence of Calgary's *nouveaux riches*. This effect, achieved largely through the use of local sandstone, brick and half-timbered motifs, lent an air of solidity to the urban residential environment. As well as providing a traditional, rooted setting where new generations of society's leaders could be nurtured, these lavish homes earned the city an excellent reputation elsewhere. *Construction*, a professional journal published in Toronto for architects and builders in Canada, reported to a national audience that Calgary mansions were clear evidence of the permanent nature of the centre's prosperity and the abiding faith of its citizens in continued progress.

In residence architecture, we are safe in saying that Calgary has more high-class, elaborate and expensive homes than any city between Winnipeg and the coast. This indicates two things: first, that there is much wealth in Calgary, and second, that the importance of the city as a centre has attracted to it some very able architects.<sup>5</sup>

Calgary's prestigious dwellings aptly expressed the thriving conditions of the age. Many were built before 1905, however, signaling the early dominance of the entrepreneurial and managerial classes.<sup>6</sup> William Pearce's lofty estate, for example, was built in 1889 and remained one of the finest structures in the region for years.<sup>7</sup> Another picturesque residence was that erected for Senator James Lougheed in 1892,

and nobly referred to as “Beaulieu.” One of the grandest sandstone villas in the city, it was asymmetrical in plan and essentially Italianate in massing, with heavy, rock-faced masonry walls, round-arched windows and classical detailing throughout.<sup>8</sup> Inside, the decor was equally impressive: Italian marble, Spanish mahogany, antique furniture from England and an elaborate use of stained glass presented a setting that was sufficiently dignified for entertaining even members of the royal family.<sup>9</sup> Just a stone’s throw away was the mansion of Patrick Burns. Built in 1901 on a design created by architect Francis M. Rattenbury of Victoria,<sup>10</sup> the building was a fine example of the latest in Edwardian domestic styling. Symmetrical, steeply pitched gables, ornate carvings in the sandstone and a wide carriage round at the entrance gave it the appearance of an English country estate. It was a remarkably handsome structure, incontrovertible evidence of the wealth, power and resourcefulness of Burns who, through his own personal ambition, was able to rise from abject poverty to the top of perhaps the greatest financial empire in western Canada. Other impressive dwellings were erected in this early period by D. W. Marsh, A. E. Cross, Peter Prince, L. H. Doll, Thomas Underwood, Dr. T. H. Blow, and W. B. Barwis. Viewed collectively, these buildings enshrined the achievement of status of Calgary’s social and economic leaders, and became notable landmarks in the emerging metropolis.<sup>11</sup>

After 1905, the number of illustrious homes in the city proliferated. The opening of the Mount Royal subdivision by the C.P.R. in this period, as well as Sunalta, Elbow Park, Elboya, Glencoe, and Bowness, coincided with Calgary’s most frantic economic development and provided new enclaves for the growing population of capitalists and professionals. The result was that the landscape rapidly became dotted with beautiful and commodious dwellings. In 1912 alone, 343 residences worth over \$4,000 each were built in the city.<sup>12</sup> Since it would be impossible to present an exhaustive survey of these structures, a few representative examples will be carefully examined below.

William Roper Hull’s magnificent estate was built in the same year that Alberta became a province. Located in the heart of the city’s Street West, it was an imposing sight (see Fig. 1). The building was organized on a square plan, and the structural components were sandstone and brick, thereby giving it a massive appearance. It rose in strong relief against its extensive grounds which covered an impressive twenty-two city lots.<sup>13</sup> In front of the main facade, well-kept gardens were embroidered with colourful flowers. To one side, a cluster of young spruce trees artistically arranged along the estate boundary complemented this adornment. In the back, the lawn was meticulously laid out in gently rolling terraces, providing ample space for the enjoyment of outdoor activities.<sup>14</sup> Roper Hull reportedly entertained



Figure 1—Residence of William Roper Hull.  
Source: GAI, Photo Archives.

large crowds at extravagant garden parties and engaged in such leisurely pastimes as lawn-bowling, croquet and tennis.<sup>15</sup>

William Roper Hull was one of the most distinguished leaders of Calgary business and society. Originally a rancher, he made his fortune before 1900 in the meat-packing business.<sup>16</sup> He bought and sold numerous large ranches in southern Alberta,<sup>17</sup> and later concentrated his capital investments in local industry and real estate.<sup>18</sup> Among the buildings he owned in Calgary were the Hull Block, later sold to and renamed after Pat Burns, the Hull Opera House, the Victoria Block, the Alberta Block, the Albion Block and the Grain Exchange Building.<sup>19</sup> The Roper Hull mansion, “Langmore” as it was called, thus came to symbolize with all its splendid features the achievement and economic potency of its owner.

Designed by Calgary architects Hodgson and Bates,<sup>20</sup> the house cost \$12,000 to construct and an additional \$3,000 to furnish.<sup>21</sup> It included two full stories, an attic level and a basement. The walls were brick, presumably load bearing,<sup>22</sup> while sandstone was used as a foundation material and in decorative flourish—quoins, piers, lintels and vousoirs—which emphasized the quality of strength in the building. Two boldly projecting bays exposed in all stories of the front facade also enhanced this effect in their tower-like appearance. Both the front and back verandahs were built in two stories with these members of the leisured class. Other fascinating forms and lines were evident at the

roof level and further embellished the ornate character of the house.<sup>23</sup>

William Roper Hull's home was an eclectic composition which combined numerous Classical Revival elements with the traditional character of an English country house. The result was a well proportioned and pleasing structure with a powerful sense of individualism which, interestingly, was very much the vogue in British upper-class circles at the time.<sup>24</sup> The appearance of such a building in Calgary is therefore evidence of the impact of Edwardian metropolitan culture in the far reaches of the Dominion of Canada.

Like William Roper Hull, Thomas J. S. Skinner came to the Calgary area from England at an early date. Skinner started out as a mail-carrier in the mountains, but took up permanent residence in the frontier community in 1887, at which time he entered the wholesale and realty businesses. Within the space of twenty years he was one of Calgary's most respected businessmen. As well as buying and selling real estate and serving as president of the Alberta Investment Company, he was connected with the Western Milling Company, The Standard Soap Company, the Calgary Natural Gas Company, and the Rocky Mountain Development Company by 1912.<sup>25</sup> He was also actively involved in the Calgary Board of Trade and the Congress of Chambers of Commerce of the Empire.<sup>26</sup> Skinner's luxurious home located in the heart of Mount Royal at the corner of Seventh Street and Twenty-second Avenue West was another expression of the wealth, status and pride of one of the city's most renowned self-made men (see Fig. 2).



Figure 2—Residence of T. J. S. Skinner.  
Source: GAI, Photo Archives.

Completed in 1911, the striking residence was organized on a rectangular plan with several projections. An abundance of materials was utilized in the two stories, attic level and basement, including sandstone, brick, concrete, stucco and wood. The frame was apparently wood; the sandstone masonry on the first one and a half stories thus merely provided a rugged decorative covering. In the front elevation, two symmetrical gables and a gable dormer with pediment protruded from the roof line. On the ground story, a generous open verandah skirted the front entrance, shaded by a simple shed roof supported by squared posts and brackets. Above, a small balcony overlooked the portico and grounds.

The Skinner home was to some extent a modern stylized version of an Elizabethan manor. In the upper stories, the half-timbered motif, moulded designs, decorated verges and roof brackets gave it an artful yet rustic appeal. The dark stained timbers presented a particularly interesting contrast in colour and texture to the stone and stucco surfaces, and nostalgically recalled a pre-industrial, pastoral era in English history when vernacular building traditions prevailed. Inside, the Tudor theme was reiterated in wood panelled walls completed with plate rails, wainscoting, ceiling beams and other decorative features.<sup>27</sup> The style of this house was inspired by the Domestic, or Vernacular, Revival Movement which had become influential in Great Britain by the turn of the century.<sup>28</sup> Translated into a twentieth-century context, Skinner's mansion was not only an assertion of social and economic accomplishment, but also evidence of the conscious importation of romantic English imagery into the western Canadian urban scene.

References to English vernacular forms were frequently made in other substantial Calgary homes. In Alfred Price's residence, for example, the simple lines of an old rural building appear to have provided the inspiration for the gambrel type roof, timbered gables and basic square plan (see Fig. 3). Price was an influential member of the city's managerial class; he came to Calgary in 1907 to assume the position of general superintendent of the C.P.R. for the Alberta Division.<sup>29</sup> His house, suitably located in the C.P.R. subdivision of Mount Royal, was a massive two and a half story structure designed by architect W. D. Chown.<sup>30</sup> It cost approximately \$20,000 to build in 1912,<sup>31</sup> and featured two long, flat dormers in the picturesque roof level, a two-story bay projecting in the front, and a sizeable verandah and balcony to the side. The facing of the walls was brick veneer, and sandstone was used in the basement as well as the trim. The Price home was described as charming and homey in external appearance, and fully modern inside. Well-appointed and conveniently laid out rooms presented a highly comfortable environment. Below, the basement served as a garage—a unique feature at that time—with space for four cars. As such, it was an extremely attractive and sophisticated plan,

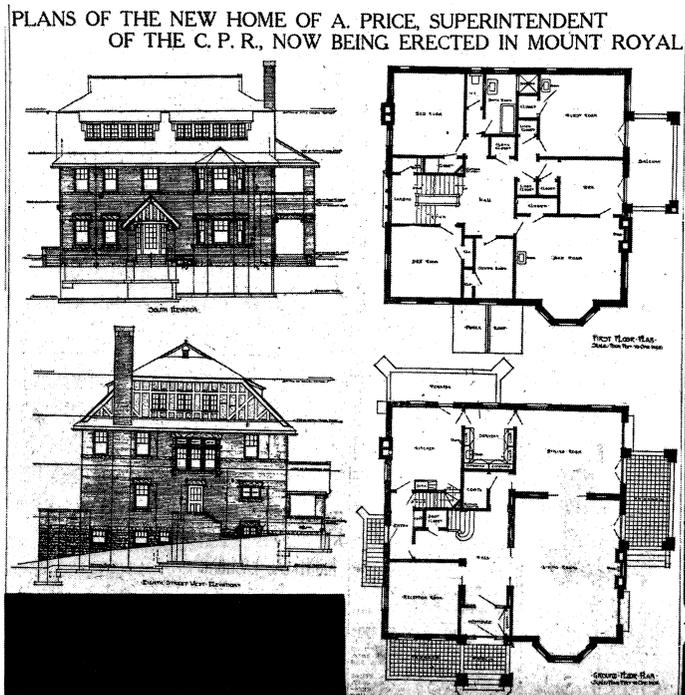


Figure 3—Plans for residence of Alfred Price.

Source: *Calgary Daily Herald*, June 17, 1912. GAI, Photo Archives.

representing, in the words of the *Herald*, “a departure for this city in home design.”<sup>32</sup>

Other houses reflected the same bucolic spirit in their styling. In Mount Royal, the residences of Mr. Nunn, A. J. Sayre, L. P. Strong, George Packham,<sup>33</sup> Eugene Coste<sup>34</sup> and others illustrated the increasing popularity of Vernacular Revival features. Meandering streets and huge lots with cheerfully arranged trees and flowers created a tranquil setting that was aesthetically appropriate. Far removed from the smoke of the industrial sector and the humdrum activities of everyday Calgary, these homes provided a sheltered environment that was surrounded by nature and full of tradition, a truly proper sphere for raising a family. Districts along or near the margin of the city’s two rivers were especially suited to such splendid domestic architecture. In Bowness, John Hextall implemented some of his plans for an ideal garden suburb in an effort to attract the attention of British capitalists. There, nestled among mature trees, he built several vernacular styled homes on enormous lots,<sup>35</sup> including his own, together with an impressive Tudor-styled country club house overlooking the Bow Valley to the east and the mountains to the west.<sup>36</sup> These cosy, cottage-like

structures had obvious English antecedents. Although somewhat isolated from Calgary, they are further evidence of the significance of imported domestic value in the growing city.

Paralleling the enthusiasm for Vernacular Revival styles was a certain interest in freer, more open designs, many of which were of American inspiration or adaptation.<sup>37</sup> Two and three-story wood frame houses with characteristically wide projecting eaves, clapboard or shiplap siding, decorative shingles and tiles, airy porches, large windows and commodious rooms offered an elegant, albeit less formal, atmosphere well suited to the requirements of family living. At the same time, tasteful embellishments such as leaded and stained glass, parqueted floors, wooden shutters and other trims displayed the affluence of their owners. The stylistic inspirations for these homes were varied: some were based on the open design of the Swiss Chalet, while others were derivatives of the California Bungalow style. Other forms imported from the west coast were reminiscent of oriental buildings with their bell-cast roof lines. Rather than simply mimicking specific historical styles, they were functional, informal family dwellings, erected in response to the heightened demand for high-quality homes during the boom period. The predominant use of wood in these homes can perhaps be attributed to the abundance of lumber and excellent craftsmen in the city, and conversely, to inconsistent supplies of brick and stone at the peak of the boom.

Regardless of the particular forms and styles adopted in the homes of Calgary's more prosperous inhabitants, a number of observations can be made on the significance of these buildings. First of all, it is clear that the function of these homes went far beyond providing mere physical shelter. Calgary's most opulent mansions were highly visible symbols of achievement which publicized the wealth, status and power of their owners who, while not an aristocracy in the sense of inherited privilege, were set apart from the rest of society by their conspicuous material consumption. The homes of the ascendant classes also exhibited great experimentation in styles, materials, comforts and services, indicating that their owners were patrons of superior taste in art and architecture, the vanguard of twentieth century urban culture in Calgary. Finally, these residences reflect a conception of the home as a unique social institution. Members of the entrepreneurial and managerial classes generally viewed the home as a special environment where love of beauty could be cultivated, either through gardening, art, or other activities; where guests could be formally entertained; where leisurely activities could be freely pursued and enjoyed; and most of all, where families could be raised, and where elitist values, traditions and attitudes could be instilled into future generations.<sup>38</sup>

### *Residences of the Working Class Population*

During the period that the building boom was in full swing, working-class dwellings became by far the most visible element in the urban landscape. While some structures were truly unique in design, most were built from common plans, mass-produced to meet the ravenous demands of the population explosion. In contrast to the palatial residences of Calgary's affluent citizens, these buildings were humble, and utilitarian. Taking into consideration the critical housing shortage from 1905 to 1909, and the fact that a great many newcomers to the city had never before owned their own homes, these simple residences must have seemed lavish. At this time, various important members of society supported the workers in their need for accommodation, arguing from a Smilesean point of view that a contented work force would be more productive, would be better citizens and would enhance the city's reputation as an economic and social leader.<sup>39</sup>

Prior to the boom years, housing for working-class people was difficult to find. Serious shortages were noted as early as 1905.<sup>40</sup> In 1906, the *Herald* reported that few house agents could supply one-tenth of the demand for modern dwellings on account of population increases.<sup>41</sup> Vacancy rates were generally very low between 1905 owing to stringent financial conditions, and many people opted to live in tents rather than pay exorbitant rents or real estate prices.<sup>42</sup> Since there had never been a period of oversupply in housing in the city's history, newly-arrived settlers had to rely heavily on whatever residences were built from year to year, with the result that there was competition for better quality dwellings.

To complicate matters for workingmen, the insatiable demand for houses led to an overall increase in rents. In 1906, it cost between \$30 and \$35 a month to rent a modern six to eight-room house, as compared to \$25 or lower for a similar house a year earlier.<sup>43</sup> In 1907, rents climbed to between \$35 and \$45 a month,<sup>44</sup> and by 1909 it cost as much as \$50 a month to lease a house.<sup>45</sup> Relentless population pressure inflamed the situation further.

Relief came, however, in 1909 when building activity began to pick up. Spiralling rents stimulated the construction of both owner-occupied houses and rental income properties for investors. But the principal factors which accelerated building construction were the availability of loan and mortgage money at reasonable interest rates and the abundance of relatively inexpensive residential lots in new subdivisions. Money could be borrowed at as low a rate as five per cent,<sup>46</sup> while lots in outlying districts could be obtained for as little as \$75.<sup>47</sup> Easy terms of purchase and payment offered by builders and realtors made it financially viable for many workers to own rather than rent their accommodation.<sup>48</sup> "Don't pay rent," urged an advertisement

in the *Albertan*, “when \$150 down and \$15 per month will pay for a nice cottage and lot.”<sup>49</sup> Real estate companies often required one-quarter or less of the full price as down payment on a house, with the balance paid monthly.<sup>50</sup> Similar arrangements were also made for the acquisition of residential land.

With the sudden change in economic circumstances, housing construction rapidly took off. Dwellings constituted over seventy-five per cent of the total number of buildings erected in the boom period, and not surprisingly, the overwhelming majority of these houses were for workers and their families (see Table 1). In 1912, for example, out of a total of 2,416 residences built, 2,173 cost \$4,000 or less.<sup>51</sup> Clearly the largest market for houses was the working-class population of the city. To a great extent, realtors and developers catered to their needs by trying to keep homes within the range of their incomes. The market for lower to middle-class housing was subsequently deluged by countless lots in newly-opened districts across the city, and fortunately higher prices were held off for a time. Relatively affordable housing also continued because of the fact that local carpenters often built dwellings from common plans, and the fact that many home-owners were able to assemble their own prefabricated house packages.

**TABLE 1**

BUILDING PERMITS FOR RESIDENCES, 1909–1913

Year	Total Permits	Permits for Residences
1909	777	617
1910	1,499	1,160
1911	2,619	2,054
1912	3,483	2,416
1913	2,078	1,500 (estimated)
Total:	10,456	7,747

Sources: *Calgary Daily Herald*, January 4, 1910; *The Morning Albertan*, February 28, 1911; January 4, 1912; *Henderson's Calgary Directory*, 1913.

The importance of providing workers with adequate accommodation was well known in Calgary at this time. Workers' housing was a crucial issue across Canada, and the *Herald* was quick to point out its serious implications for the national economy.

All men are influenced by their environment. There isn't any question about it. If the workmen employed in the factories live in unsanitary districts their efficiency must necessarily be impaired.

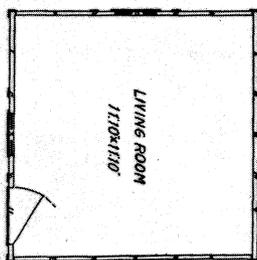
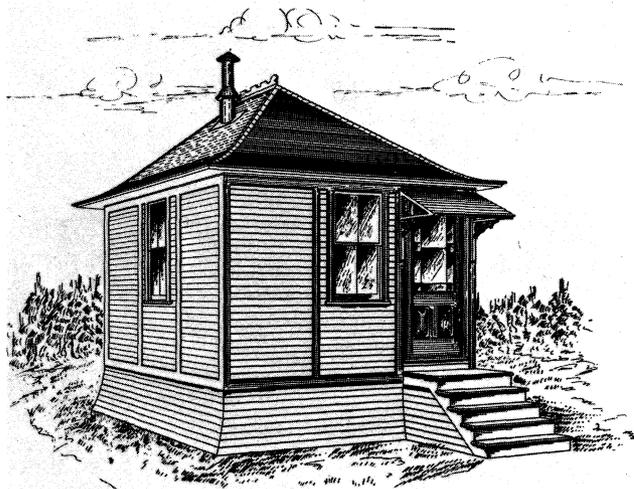
No manufacturer who therefore is worthy the name is satisfied with inefficient workmen any more than he is with inefficient machines.<sup>52</sup>

The *Herald* added that because there was a deficiency in skilled labour in the country, manufacturers had an unique obligation to help establish sanitary and attractive housing in order to draw workers to industrial centres.<sup>53</sup> In response to this situation, officials of the C.P.R. announced that half a section of land adjoining the enormous Ogden shops would be subdivided and reserved at low prices for employees who wished to build homes.<sup>54</sup> As well as demonstrating a sense of corporate responsibility, the C.P.R. also intended to build up a substantial and reliable supply of labour near its operations. City officials, too, realized the importance of the new subdivisions, and thus took steps quickly to ensure that utilities and services—water and sewer lines, electric power and the street railway—were available in these new districts.

Broadly speaking, the ownership of private property was seen as a good thing; workingmen could learn to be thrifty, independent and diligent by owning their own homes, thus ensuring social stability. With respect to working-class housing, W. R. Trotter observed in an address to the Trades and Labour Council at Calgary in 1911 that satisfaction of the “home instinct” would also strengthen the bonds of citizenship among the people.

What degree of comfort and happiness is experienced by the masses of people must be largely if not altogether determined by their social environment, and one may expect to find a greater loyalty to the national ideal where these factors are in accord with the will of the people and determined by them than be found . . . where autocratic, bureaucratic or aristocratic [influences control] the governing body.<sup>55</sup>

The moral support given to workers was certainly helpful, but more important in opening the door to the construction of inexpensive housing was the sudden change of economic conditions in 1909. In contrast to the stately mansions of the civic elite, the working-class dwellings erected during this period were pragmatic solutions to fundamental physical and emotional needs. Some designs provided more than just minimal comforts, but by and large most were simply “good, ordinary houses which served as real homes.”<sup>56</sup> Architectural flourishes were typically absent; simplicity of design and honesty of craftsmanship were more in keeping with the informal life style of working-class people. Of primary concern to workers was accommodation that was economical—houses which met family needs for shelter, privacy and friendship, but were worth the cost. Proximity to place of employment was also highly desirable, and districts such as East Calgary, Eau Claire, Bridgeland and Riverside were especially popular in the early years. After 1909, however, the operation of the electric street railway gave workers greater mobility. Suburbs very quickly stretched northward beyond Hillhurst and Crescent Heights to Balmoral and Rosedale, westward beyond Sunalta and Knob Hill to



**DESIGN A**  
-12'0" x 12'0"-

B.C.M.T. & T. CO.  
VANCOUVER  
B.C.

Figure 4—Design "A", Settlers' Series.  
Source: GAI, Photo Archives.

Rosscarrock and Parkdale, southward to Ogden and Ceepear, and eastward to Fairview and Albert Park.

Workers and their families had numerous house designs from which to choose during these years of hectic construction activity. The British Columbia Mills, Timber and Trading Company, western Canada's largest lumber establishment, produced a variety of prefabricated house packages in their factories on the Pacific coast.<sup>57</sup> Of these, plans from the Settlers' Series and the Town House Series proved to be the most popular across the prairies. Prices varied markedly: "Design A," a simple one room "sawed hut," twelve feet square, cost \$100 while "Design K," a small cottage of three rooms which featured a roof dormer and bay window and measured twenty feet by twenty-five and a half feet, cost \$350<sup>58</sup> (see Figs. 4 and 5). "Design MM," a deluxe version which cost \$675, had three comfortable bedrooms in its two stories but required a lot larger than the normal twenty-five feet to accommodate its dimensions of twenty-four feet by thirty-three and

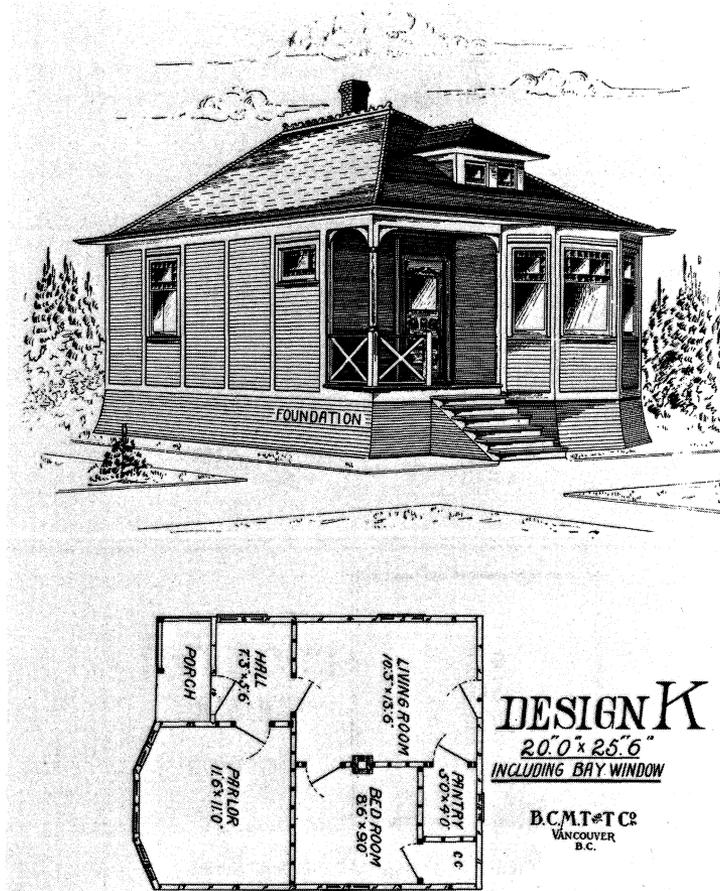


Figure 5—Design “K”, Settlers’ Series.  
Source: GAI, Photo Archives.

one half feet (see Fig. 6). The advantages of these homes were well advertised. Each structure was pre-assembled, numbered on the inside and painted on the outside prior to shipment. An itemized list of materials and an illustrated plan proved clear directions so that “anyone having an ordinary knowledge of tools”<sup>59</sup> could erect one without difficulty. The Company stated in writing that “two men should be able to enclose these buildings from one to four days, according to the size of the plan adopted,”<sup>60</sup> thus saving a considerable amount of money.

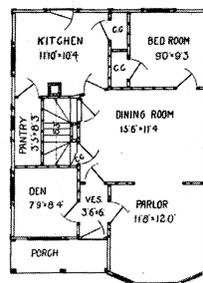
Prudential Builders Limited was another company which was geared to the mass production of inexpensive housing. Like the British Columbia Mills, it had its own lumber mill and manufacturing complex where pre-cut house components were made.<sup>61</sup> One plan, the “Calgary” model, was specifically suited to local climatic conditions

and was successfully marketed during the city's boom period.<sup>62</sup> It featured seven rooms on two levels, including four bedrooms, kitchen, living and dining rooms, a bathroom, pantry, alcove and a verandah running across the front.<sup>63</sup> In all likelihood other major lumber plants, such as the Crown Lumber Company which was linked to large industrial facilities and an extensive distributing network, also engaged in the marketing of similar sectional homes.<sup>64</sup>

In addition to the erection of ready-made structures, much copy building went on in Calgary. One syndicate, the Canadian Home Investment Company, built houses on a large scale across the city from at least five plans.<sup>65</sup> Another organization which arranged for the construction, financing and sale of dwellings was the Home Loan and Contract Company. Backed by English capital, Home Loan built many \$1200 bungalows from a basic plan<sup>66</sup> (see Fig. 7). Local carpenters were employed in great numbers by these and other companies, such as Messieurs Robertson and Carlile Limited who erected houses for both rental and purchase speculation (see Fig. 8).

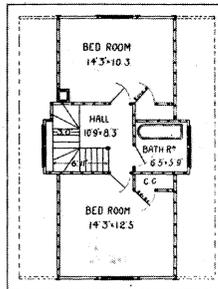
Individual architects and builders in the city were also kept busy designing economical homes for the masses. In addition to providing private consultation, Holman and Gotch,<sup>67</sup> William Emery,<sup>68</sup> and Henderson and Brown<sup>69</sup> designed many plans which appeared in the *Herald* in 1912 advertising the value of professional advice for home buyers. In many cases, the plans were of sufficient detail that small-scale contractors could easily copy or adapt them to their own construction work within the city (see Figs. 9 and 10). The *Herald* also encouraged readers to erect their own homes from plans published each week, and carried articles on topics ranging from interior decorating to sanitation and gardening. Beginning in March, 1912, nearly every Monday edition featured a page which was devoted to promoting awareness and interest in current domestic fashions. Many of the ideas presented therein to its readers were developed and tested in the cities of the United States. The bungalow style, for example, much publicized by local designers Holman and Gotch and Emery, was a product of the California environment. Its adoption in Calgary is ample illustration of the commonality of urban growth in North America and the impact of American ingenuity on architectural tastes in western Canada.

Bungalow designs were particularly appealing to Calgary's working-class population. Inspired to a large degree by the Craftsman Movement in the United States, particularly the work of Los Angeles architects Greene and Greene, and colonial residences in India,<sup>70</sup> the bungalow was a practical, gracious frame structure which could be erected at a relatively low cost. Simplicity of design and finish were the keynotes of the style.<sup>71</sup> All pretensions and extravagant effects, either inside or out, were to be avoided, since they were not in keeping with



GROUND FLOOR PLAN

**DESIGN**  
**M-M**  
**24'0" x 33'6"**  
INCLUDING VERANDA  
**B.C.M.T. & T.C.**  
VANCOUVER  
B.C.



SECOND FLOOR PLAN

Figure 6—Design "MM".  
Source: GAI, Photo Archives.

the bungalow spirit. Ideally, a bungalow consisted of "no more than an absolutely necessary number of rooms,"<sup>72</sup> plus an attic or small second story. It was further characterized by simple, horizontal lines, a wide projecting roof, numerous large windows and woodwork of the plainest kind.<sup>73</sup> Comfort and integrity were emphasized throughout, rather than ostentation and luxury. The bungalow was not designed as a status symbol, but to create and contain a congenial atmosphere conducive to harmonious family relations and relaxed living. Its beauty lay in its utility, its versatility, and above all, its humble charm.<sup>74</sup>

Other house styles were prominent in working-class districts, but apart from external differences, all dwellings served a basic purpose of meeting the physical, emotional and social needs of the city's lower income population. They also offered privacy for workers' families and refuge from an increasingly complex society wherein peace of mind

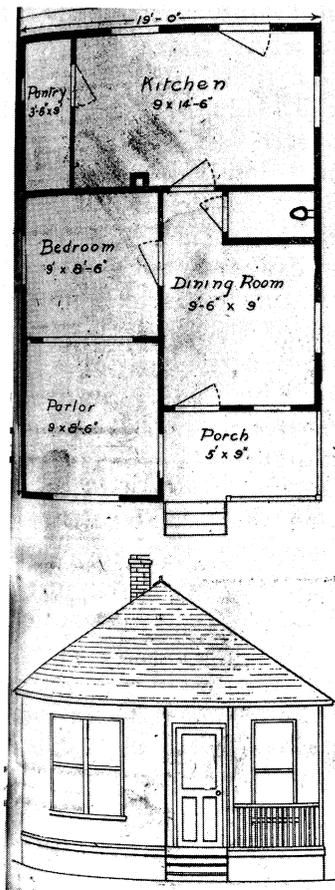


Figure 7—Bungalow, worth \$1200. For sale by the Home Loan and Contract Company. Source: *Calgary Daily Herald*, May 6, 1912. GAI Photo Archives.

could be restored. Moreover, the quality of life they offered to their occupants was generally respectable. Compared with the crowded tenement dwellings in British and eastern North American centres, these homes must have seem spacious and well-built.<sup>75</sup> Floor plans of 750 square feet were not uncommon for two bedroom bungalows situated on small 25 to 30 foot wide lots in subdivisions near Calgary's main industrial areas. In more remote districts such as Killarney, Altadore, Crescent Heights and North Balmoral, where land was typically cheaper, houses were often even larger.<sup>76</sup>

With regard to utilities and services in Calgary, indoor plumbing and water were apparently available in a substantial proportion of the homes erected during the boom years. In 1909, 971 water closets, 896 sinks and 592 baths were installed, whereas only 617 permits were

taken out for residence construction.<sup>77</sup> By 1912, the discrepancy between the number of service connections made and the number of housing starts was even more noticeable. That year, 4,811 water closets, 3,862 sinks and 3,181 baths were installed, compared to 2,416 building permits for residences.<sup>78</sup> Successive extensions of water and sewer lines and reasonably low prices for service to customers made it possible for most property owners to benefit from these amenities.<sup>79</sup> Underlying this was the fundamental concern of city administrators to create and control an advanced physical environment for a rapidly growing population, and thereby protect local citizens from the threat of communicable disease.<sup>80</sup> Electrical power was also relatively inexpensive during this period, particularly after May of 1911 when Calgary Power Limited began operation of its new Horseshoe Falls plant on the Kananaskis River.<sup>81</sup> Similarly, with the completion of the Canadian Western Natural Gas, Light, Heat and Power Company's pipeline from Bow Island to Calgary in 1912, gas became available to local consumers at the low price of thirty-five cents per thousand cubic feet.<sup>82</sup> Prior to the arrival of the natural gas pipeline, coal and artificially produced coal gas had been widely used for fuel in workers' homes.<sup>83</sup> However, because of the advantages of natural gas in cheapness, abundance of supply and cleanness of combustion, these other domestic energy sources were quickly displaced. By September 30, 1912 there were 2,500 gas services in operation in the city; two years later Canadian Western had a total of 12,000 customers in Alberta, most of whom were Calgary residents.<sup>84</sup>

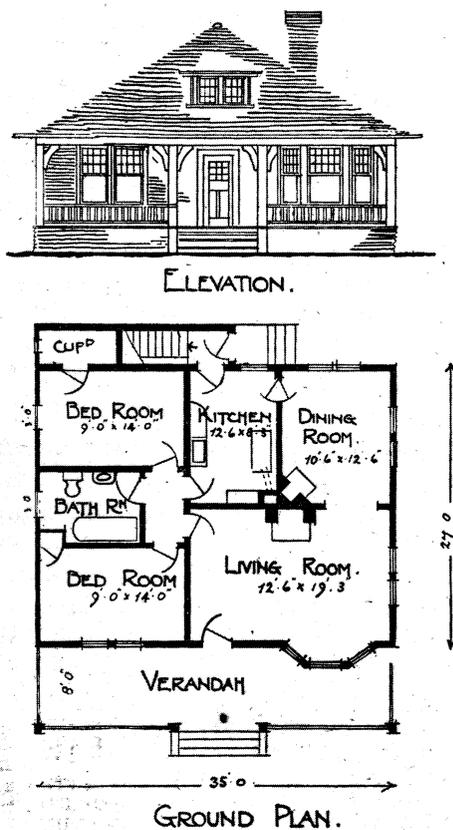


Figure 8—Houses erected by Messieurs Robertson and Carlile, Ltd. in Calgary.  
Source: *The Prairie Provinces of Canada*, compiled by H. J. Boam. GAI, Photo Archives.

Altogether then, Calgary workingmen and their families enjoyed a level of comfort and convenience in their new homes that was unsurpassed in many cities elsewhere. With the dramatic change in the financial climate in 1909, the dream of home ownership suddenly became a reality for many, enhancing the pride and contentment of the local working class.<sup>85</sup> Furthermore, the grouping of these homes in new, distinctively lower income subdivisions helped to foster a sense of community among the workers, and as well an awareness that they too had a common stake in the city's future.

### *Apartments and High-Density Structures*

Residential patterns of Calgary's burgeoning population between 1905 and 1915 indicate that the detached single-family dwelling was by



HOLMAN & GOTCH ARCHT.  
DOMINION BANK BUILDING CALGARY

The estimated cost of this Bungalow is \$3,000.

Figure 9—Bungalow By Calgary Architects Holman and Gotch.  
Source: *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 1, 1912. GAI, Photo Archives.

far the most strongly preferred form of housing. Workingmen from crowded urban centres in Great Britain and eastern Canada despaired of high-density living, and therefore shunned the images of “living factories” upon coming to the west. They saw great opportunity for self-advancement in the new country. The prospect of owning a home, in particular, filled most with a hope of attaining greater economic freedom and social respectability. Yet with continued population pressure, escalating real estate values and stricter economic conditions in 1913, fewer workers were able to attain this goal. Rental accommodation once again became scarce because of intensified demand. As a result, apartment construction accelerated between 1911 and 1913, and the lower income people in the city were compelled to accept high-density dwellings as a solution to their housing needs.

Prior to the crest of the boom, apartments in Calgary were largely the domain of certain members of the affluent classes. While most entrepreneurs and professional people were inclined to live in commodious private homes, others who had left their families behind, were single or travelled a great deal consequently found that apartment life had definite advantages. Apartments offered a comfortable and modern environment often located near the city’s central business district. Furthermore, they freed their tenants from the domestic responsibilities imposed by home ownership, thus allowing them more time to socialize with their associates and clients. Rental prices were high, however, and prohibited all but the well-to-do from enjoying these conveniences. At the Marlborough Mansions, for example a suite could be rented for \$45 a month in December 1908,<sup>86</sup> compared to \$35 a month for an average size house in a good locality.<sup>87</sup>

In spite of the cost, growing numbers were attracted by the virtues of apartment living. At the same time, city officials evidently supported the development of higher quality apartment buildings as they tended to attract tenants from the upper classes. With this demand for premium rental accommodation, then, numerous luxurious structures were erected. Of these, few were as striking as the Devenish Apartment Building on Seventeenth Avenue and Eighth Street West (see Fig. 11). Designed by Alex Pirie, it was built on a rectangular plan one city block long and three stories in height. Crenelated turrets at each corner and decorative parapets in the front facade gave it the appearance of an enormous castle, while the entrances were accented with classical details. The building was constructed of solid brick<sup>88</sup> on a concrete foundation, and was ornamented with sandstone trim around the windows. Fifty-seven spacious suites and numerous special features provided a maximum of comfort to residents, among whom were some of the community’s most illustrious members.<sup>89</sup>

The Connaught Apartment Building, located on the corner of Fourth Avenue and Sixth Street West, was perhaps the most extrava-

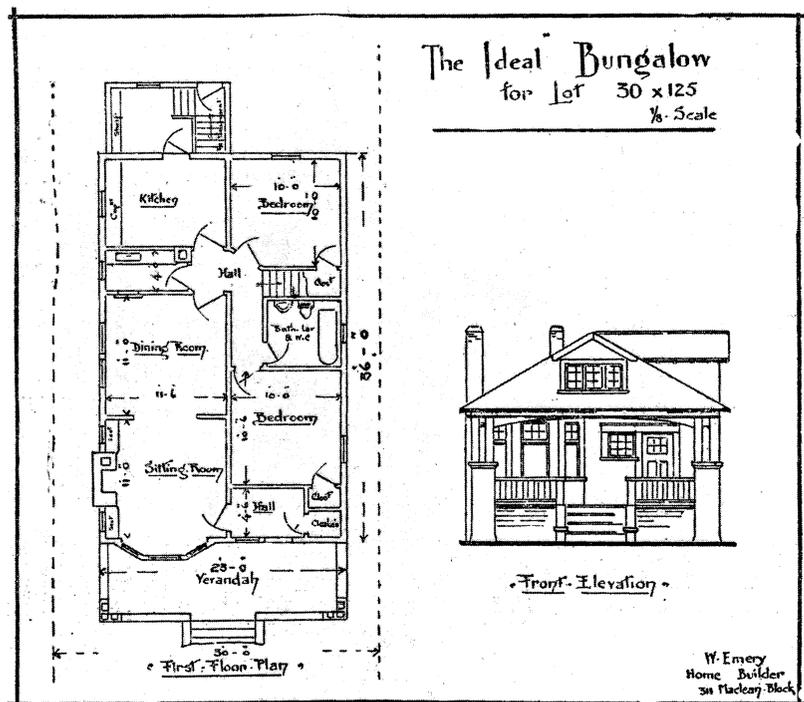


Figure 10—Bungalow by Calgary Designer W. Emery.  
Source: *Calgary Daily Herald*, April 15, 1912. GAI, Photo Archives.

gant edifice of its kind in the city. A three-story solid brick structure composed of twelve large and luxuriously appointed suites,<sup>90</sup> it was designed by J. J. O'Gara and opened for public inspection in January of 1913.<sup>91</sup> The building was remarkably handsome. Situated on splendid grounds directly across from the picturesque Calgary Normal School, it was elegantly symmetrical, and finished throughout in solid bird mahogany, clear maple flooring and artistically hung wallpaper. It also offered the most up-to-date domestic conveniences, including a built-in Tuec vacuum cleaner system with outlets in every suite, a garbage incinerator and a Kribble Vapor Vacuum heating system, one of the most successful steam units on the market.<sup>92</sup>

Other higher class apartment houses were similarly located close to the city's business centre. The area skirting Central Park near the glamorous residences of the elite became a favoured district for two and three-story multiple dwellings. Among the many situated there were the Moxam Apartments and Houlton House, next to the Loughheed mansion; Dufferin Lodge, across from First Baptist Church; the Lorraine Apartments, across from Pat Burns' and William Roper Hull's estates; the Crandell and Hester Apartment Buildings and the Hermitage.<sup>93</sup>

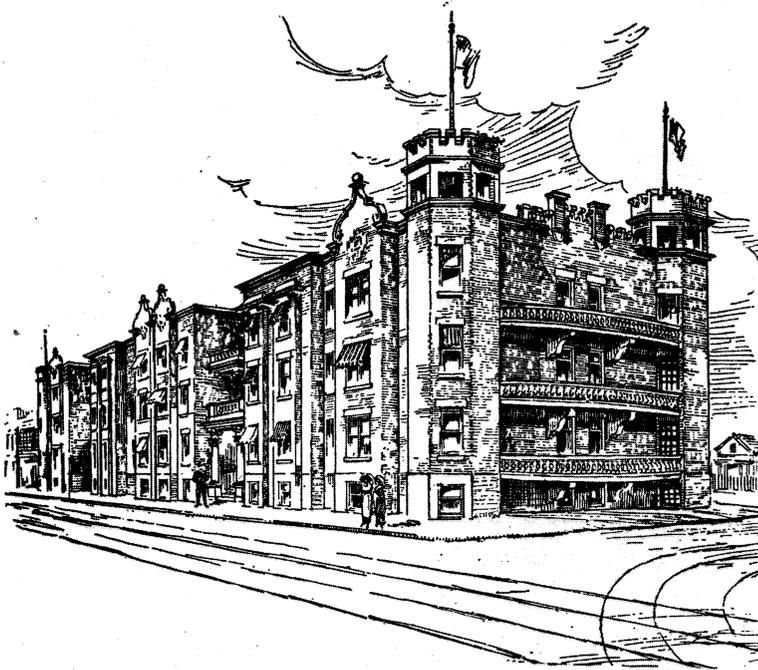


Figure 11—The Devenish Apartments.

Source: *Calgary Daily Herald*, August 15, 1912. GAI, Photo Archives.

With the sudden flood of immigrants into the city during the peak years of 1912 and 1913, the occupancy structure of apartments in Calgary changed drastically. The steady influx of a thousand people a month kept the demand for apartments and houses considerably in excess of the supply. Rental prices consequently continued to rise.<sup>94</sup> Real estate values also climbed sharply, more than doubling the price in some working-class districts,<sup>95</sup> and thereby limited the number of people who could afford to buy homes. As a result, the construction of rental property—both single-family and multiple-family dwellings—took off at an astronomical rate as investors found a rewarding opportunity for high returns on their money. Whereas in 1911 there had been 25 apartments in the city,<sup>96</sup> by 1913, 82 were listed in the *Tregillus-Thompson Directory* for Calgary.<sup>97</sup> Many of the structures erected were clearly intended to meet the needs imposed by the swollen working-class population. Changed conditions in the local labour market contributed to workers' rapid acceptance of high-density living. In spite of an oversupply in many of the trades in Calgary, demographic pressure was relentless in 1913. And with the sudden scarcity of finance capital in the city, construction slowed to a virtual standstill, causing wide-spread unemployment in the building industry.<sup>98</sup> For those workers who were fortunate enough to have steady

jobs in other sectors of the local economy, the options for accommodation were somewhat restricted; but for others who found themselves being pushed closer to the brink of poverty, the alternatives were few indeed.

While high density dwellings represented a more efficient use of urban land and offered a superficially attractive solution to the problem of accommodation for the growing population of the working class, top City of Calgary officials generally perceived apartments in negative terms. Building Inspector H. A. Sylvester described them as "no more than a necessary evil at best" and ". . . a menace."<sup>99</sup> It was believed that the erection of apartment buildings tended to hurt surrounding neighbourhoods due to the gradual delapidation and neglect of rental units by tenants, and the subsequent decline in the class of occupants.<sup>100</sup>

Slums, the bugbear of older eastern centres, were to be avoided in Calgary where, according to Sylvester, the opportunity for rightly ordered development still existed.<sup>101</sup> Furthermore, it was thought that apartments were "a municipal parasite" in that tenants shared all the advantages of public utilities and civic amenities but bore only a small percentage of the burden of local property tax.<sup>102</sup> Restrictions for apartment buildings were consequently made quite rigid in Calgary. For example, the city's new Building Ordinance By-law which was passed in 1912 required that no less than two-thirds of the owners of land in a block where an apartment was proposed give their approval for its construction.<sup>103</sup> However, while the task of regulating indiscriminate apartment construction was commendable, the Building Department was still compelled to deal with the reality of accommodation shortages and to permit selective development of poorer quality structures on that basis.

Of the multitude of apartments and tenement dwellings built for the working-class population between 1911 and 1913, a substantial number were located in East Calgary, close to the city's industrial districts. These included the Befus, Burn, Carson and Dougall Blocks on Ninth Avenue East, and the Hillier and Samis Blocks, Sevenoaks Court and the Louise Apartments immediately east of the downtown area. Some were also erected in Broadview near the car-line, including the Phylis Apartments, the Florence Apartments, and the Gordon, Kerr, Ross and Vendome Blocks. Others yet, such as the Morasch Apartments, the Poffenroth Apartments and the Isabella Block were to be found elsewhere, scattered in the city's principal working-class districts of Bridgeland, Crescent Heights and Bankview.

The vast majority of these structures were cheaply constructed and austere in appearance. Red pressed brick manufactured locally<sup>104</sup> or at Redcliffe, Alberta was commonly used as a veneer over either a wooden or reinforced concrete frame. Essentially classical in their

simple, severe forms, most had little more than a pressed metal cornice and sandstone trim for ornamentation. Economy of materials and plainness of design were stressed. Many also had retail space in the ground level in order to make them better paying investments for their owners.<sup>105</sup> Inside, most of these structures offered crowded and rough living quarters to tenants, conditions that were definitely a step below that available in most single family residences in workers' districts. These buildings therefore stood in striking contrast to the opulent and imposing apartment dwellings of the professional, managerial and entrepreneurial classes. As well, they represented a reluctant departure from the preferred norm of single family dwellings for the working-class population in the city.

### *Conclusion*

In the residential landscape which emerged between 1905 and 1915, the reality of both an aggressive entrepreneurial and managerial elite and a substantial working-class population were strikingly apparent. Extravagant mansions openly declared the indomitable spirit of Calgary's civic, commercial and corporate leaders, while street after street of simple, mass-built bungalows and cottages revealed the presence of a ubiquitous labour force. Toward the beginning of the war, apartment buildings and tenement dwellings began to appear in large numbers as well, signaling tightened economic conditions and spiralling land values across the city. Also evident was the impact of modern, twentieth-century metropolitan culture in the form of various house styles and design features, domestic conveniences and amenities, building materials and construction techniques. Further, in the emerging architectural landscape, the influence of the Vernacular Revival Movement from Great Britain, the Craftsman Movement from the United States and practical design innovations from west coast lumber companies and local artisans were apparent. Ostentatious residences, with their ornamental flourishes in masonry, glass and woodwork, provided a suitable display for the recently acquired wealth and status of their owners. In addition, the availability of cheap, high-quality lumber and industrially-manufactured sectional houses from the west coast, inexpensive pressed brick, cement and other locally produced materials enabled many Calgarians to erect their own homes.

Despite a serious housing shortage in the first half of the decade, the population of the city swelled as opportunities for the successful employment of capital and labour expanded wildly. The availability of substantial money for mortgages and loans after 1908 caused local construction, particularly house construction, to accelerate. But increased immigration into the community from less buoyant regions and countries after 1910 and then the collapse of the boom in 1913 changed the housing situation drastically, especially for the working-

class population. Rising unemployment, coupled with cutbacks in workers' wages and rapidly dividing sources of financial capital, further weakened Calgary's economic situation, with the result that single family housing became too costly for a large number of citizens. Many workingmen were therefore forced to abandon their hope of owning a home, and to take up residence in more affordable high-density dwellings similar to the structures they had lived in before coming to the west. The land of opportunity thus proved to be a land of disappointment for many, particularly those who perilously ventured forth in the advent of economic recession and war.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For further background on Calgary's overall development in this period, see A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen, eds., *Frontier Calgary: Town, City and Region, 1875-1914* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975); M. L. Foran, *Calgary An Illustrated History* (Toronto: James Lorimer and the National Museum of Man, 1978); H. C. Klassen, "Life in Frontier Calgary," in A. W. Rasporich, ed., *Western Canada Past and Present* (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975). See also B. P. Melnyk, "Calgary Buildings, 1905-1914: The Emergence of An Urban Landscape" (Unpublished Master's thesis, the University of Calgary, 1980) chapter one.
- <sup>2</sup> See Paul Voisey, "In Search of Wealth and Status: An Economic and Social Study of Entrepreneurs in Early Calgary," in A. W. Rasporich and H. C. Klassen eds., *Frontier Calgary: Town, City and Region, 1975-1914*. (Calgary: McClelland and Stewart West, 1975), pp. 221-241.
- <sup>3</sup> See A. O. MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, 2 vols. (Calgary: The Western Canada History Company, 1912); also John Blue, *Alberta Past and Present*, 3 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer Historical Publishing Company, 1924), for extensive biographical information on these and other men.
- <sup>4</sup> Paul Voisey, "In Search of Wealth and Status," in Rasporich and Klassen, eds., *Frontier Calgary*, pp. 236-237.
- <sup>5</sup> *Construction*, III, 2 (December 1909), p. 111. See also James A. Cockburn, *Calgary, Alberta: The City of the Foothills in the Land of the Chinook with its Commercial Houses, Churches, Residences, etc.—Portrayed* (n.p.: n.pub., 1905), Glenbow Alberta Institute (GAI) Library.
- <sup>6</sup> See *Picturesque Calgary* (Calgary: Calgary Herald Publishing Company, 1905) for a more complete view of some of the city's notable residences which were erected in an earlier time.
- <sup>7</sup> William Pearce was Superintendent for Lands and Mines with the Dominion Government and later worked for the C.P.R.'s Department of Natural Resources. His home featured a total of fifteen rooms and included such modern comforts as indoor plumbing and running water, steam heat, natural gas, a large refrigerator, a wine cellar, an irrigated garden, three fireplaces, a billiard room and servants' quarters. See Paul Voisey, "In Search of Wealth and Status," p. 238.
- <sup>8</sup> See City of Calgary Planning Department, "Potential Heritage Sites Evaluation" (Unpublished report, 1976), (PHSE), volume 4, category 15, file 220. City of Calgary Planning Department Library.
- <sup>9</sup> *The Calgary Herald (Herald)*, March 8, 1958: Lougheed entertained such royal visitors as the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, Princess Patricia, and the Prince of Wales.
- <sup>10</sup> For pictures of the Pearce, Lougheed, Burns and other early sandstone mansions, see Vicky Williams, *Calgary Then and Now* (Vancouver: Bodima Books, 1978). According to Thomas Ritchie, Francis M. Rattenbury designed the British Columbia Legislative Buildings in Victoria as well. See Ritchie, *Canada Builds 1867-1967*, Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1966, p. 129.
- <sup>11</sup> See Trudy Soby, *Be It Ever So Humble* (Calgary: Century Calgary Publications, 1975) for pictures of many of these structures.
- <sup>12</sup> This figure represents about 10 per cent of the total number of residences built in 1912, approximately 20 per cent of the total erected in 1910 and 52 per cent of the number built in 1909. See *Herald*, June 26, 1909; *The Calgary Albertan (Albertan)*, February 28, 1911 and *Henderson's Calgary Directory*, 1913, p. 147.
- <sup>13</sup> MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, vol. 1, p. 583.
- <sup>14</sup> See GAI, Photo Archives for other views of the Roper Hull estate.
- <sup>15</sup> Voisey, "In Search of Wealth and Status," in Rasporich and Klassen, eds., *Frontier Calgary*, pp. 236-238.

- <sup>16</sup> MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, vol. 1, p. 582.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 581–583.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>19</sup> *The Calgary News Telegram (News Telegram)*, January 11, 1913.
- <sup>20</sup> *Construction*, III, 2 (December 1909), photograph.
- <sup>21</sup> MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, vol. 1, p. 583.
- <sup>22</sup> Examination of the structure was impossible as it was demolished in 1970 to make way for a high rise apartment building.
- <sup>23</sup> The use of shaped lapping tiles was reminiscent of pantiles which were common in English vernacular buildings. See R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1971; reprint ed., 1978), pp. 92–93.
- <sup>24</sup> Alastair Service, *Edwardian Architecture* (London: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 140. According to Service, Edwardian architects resurrected the classical spirit of England in the Baroque age to commemorate the slowly passing glory of the British Empire prior to the Great War.
- <sup>25</sup> MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, vol. 1, pp. 514–515.
- <sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>27</sup> GAI, Photo Archives; these pictures of the Skinner residence were taken in the 1920s, but probably indicate the basic interior finish of the house. The large two-story tower shown in one of the pictures gave the home the appearance of an Italian villa, but was likely built after the end of the decade studied, as was the impressive greenhouse to the side.
- <sup>28</sup> See R. W. Brunskill, *Illustrated Handbook of Vernacular Architecture*, pp. 206–209 for discussion of the Vernacular Revival in England. See also Service, *Edwardian Architecture*, Chapters Two, Six and Twelve, for a discussion of the Domestic Revival.
- <sup>29</sup> Henry James Morgan, *Canadian Men and Women of the Time* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1912), p. 917.
- <sup>30</sup> *Herald*, June 17, 1912.
- <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>33</sup> *Albertan*, February 28, 1912, “Calgary, the Beautiful City of Homes.” Also see *Construction*, III, 2 (December 1909), for pictures of the residences of Mr. Nunn and A. J. Sayre.
- <sup>34</sup> GAI, Photo Archives; photograph of the 28 room Coste house built in 1913. Also Alberta Culture, Historic Sites Service files.
- <sup>35</sup> See *Albertan*, February 28, 1911 for pictures and description of houses being sold in Bowness.
- <sup>36</sup> Alberta Culture, Historic Sites Service file on the Bowness Golf Club, Old St. Stephen’s College, Edmonton. Vernacular styled buildings were also prevalent in Elboya, Elbow Park and Glencoe.
- <sup>37</sup> Plans and pictures of such homes appeared in the *Herald* on April 8 and 29, 1912, for example.
- <sup>38</sup> See Mark Girouard, *Life in the English Country House—A Social and Architectural History* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1978), Chapters Ten and Eleven.
- <sup>39</sup> Samuel Smiles, British apologist of the work ethic and the Victorian virtues of thrift and self-help, wrote the following in 1875. “The accumulation of property has the effect which it always has upon thrifty men; it makes them steady, sober and diligent. It weans them from revolutionary notions, and makes them conservative. When working-men, by their industry and frugality, have secured their own independence, they will cease to regard the sight of others’ well-being as a wrong inflicted upon themselves; and it will no longer be possible to make political capital out of their imaginary woes.” Quoted in David Rubenstein, *Victorian Homes* (London: David and Charles, 1974), pp. 218–219. See also Herbert Ames, *City Below the Hill: A Sociological Study of a Portion of the City of Montreal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1972) for another Canadian illustration of this viewpoint.
- <sup>40</sup> *Herald*, October 14, 1905.
- <sup>41</sup> *Herald*, April 9, 1906.
- <sup>42</sup> *Herald*, May 3, 1905. Also *Herald*, July 4, 1907. Advertisements for tent structures, such as appeared in the *Albertan* on April 30, 1909, were carried by local newspapers well into the boom period.
- <sup>43</sup> *Herald*, December 18, 1905, advertisement. Also *Herald*, December 15, 1906, advertisement by W. B. Barwis for an eight-room house, all modern, on Fourteenth Avenue West, to rent at \$35 a month.
- <sup>44</sup> *Herald*, May 2, 1907, advertisement for a small house close to Eighth Avenue, renting at \$45 a month; *Herald*, December 3, 1907, advertisement for a seven-room house with a stable at \$35 a month.
- <sup>45</sup> A small, compact, very comfortable house was advertised in the *Herald* on May 1, 1909 for \$50 a month. On December 16, 1909 the *Herald* advertised a seven-room, fully modern house at \$75 per month, indicating a swift rise in rental prices during the year. Such an increase is remarkable since December was typically a month of slackened demand, and therefore generally lower prices.

- <sup>46</sup> *Henderson's Directory*, 1912. Among the companies which advertised a five per cent interest rate on mortgages were the Canadian Home Investment Company (*Herald*, June 13, 1911) and the North-West Home and Loan Company (*Herald*, May 11, 1912).
- <sup>47</sup> Advertisement for lots in Spruce Cliff by Cecil Hadfield; *Albertan*, March 1, 1909.
- <sup>48</sup> *Herald*, May 1, 1909.
- <sup>49</sup> Advertisement by Bruce Gordon in the *Albertan*, May 12, 1909.
- <sup>50</sup> For example, see the *Herald*, July 2, 1909; H. M. Splane and Company offered a six-room cottage for sale in Mills Estate at \$1600, with \$400 down and the balance to be paid monthly. Lots in South Calgary were sold at \$110 by Eureka Real Estate Company with similar terms of one quarter cash and the balance to be paid monthly; see *Herald*, September 28, 1909. On May 13, 1920, C. H. Cruikshank and Company's advertisement in the *Herald* offered houses on even easier terms. For example, a fully modern house on Eighteenth Avenue East worth \$3000 could be purchased with only \$400 down.
- <sup>51</sup> *Henderson's Directory*, 1913, p. 147.
- <sup>52</sup> *Herald*, March 18, 1912.
- <sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>54</sup> *Herald*, March 23, 1912.
- <sup>55</sup> *Souvenir of the Twenty-Seventh Annual Convention of the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada*, Calgary, 1911, Address by W. R. Trotter to the Convention (n.p.: n. pub., 1911).
- <sup>56</sup> *Herald*, April 15, 1912.
- <sup>57</sup> GAI, *The British Columbia Mills, Timber and Trading Company Catalogue of Patented and Ready-Made Houses* (Vancouver: n. pub., 1905).
- <sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.* Also see the *Herald*, May 30, 1911; it was common for people to erect their own houses during the boom years.
- <sup>61</sup> D. W. Holdsworth and G. E. Mills, "The B.C. Mills Prefabricated System: The Emergence of Ready-Made Buildings in Western Canada," *Canadian Historic Sites Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, no. 14 (Ottawa: Parks Canada, 1975), pp. 149-150.
- <sup>62</sup> *Herald*, June 24, 1911, advertisement, p. 14.
- <sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>64</sup> The Crown Lumber Company Limited was incorporated in 1905. By 1912, 52 yards were in operation in different parts of the province. All purchasing was done in Calgary, where warehouses were also maintained from which outside yards were supplied. MacRae, *History of the Province of Alberta*, vol. 1, pp. 566-567. Also, GAI, *Crown Lumber Plans and Business papers*.
- <sup>65</sup> *Herald*, June 13, 1911, advertisement.
- <sup>66</sup> *Herald*, May 6, 1912, p. 21.
- <sup>67</sup> *Herald*, April 1 and 22, 1912.
- <sup>68</sup> *Herald*, April 15 and May 20, 1912.
- <sup>69</sup> *Herald*, August 26 and September 9, 1912.
- <sup>70</sup> See Gustav Stickley, *Craftsman Homes—Architecture and Furnishings of the American Arts and Crafts Movement* (New York: Dover Publications, 1979, repr. Craftsman Publishing Company, 1909). Also D. W. Holdsworth, "House and Home in Vancouver: Images of West Coast Urbanism, 1886-1929," in Artibise and Stelter, eds., *The Canadian City*, pp. 195-198. Also W. R. and K. Current, *Greene and Greene—Architects in the Residential Style* (Fort Worth: Amon Carter Museum of Western Art, 1974), pp. 4-5. Also see D. W. Holdsworth, "Vernacular Forms in an Urban Context," Chapter One.
- <sup>71</sup> *Herald*, April 1, 1912; Stickly, *Craftsman Homes*, pp. 1-5, 194-205.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>74</sup> See also F. G. Brown, "Bungalow Design and Construction," in *Construction*, I, 11 (August 1908); and "Types of Pacific Coast Homes," IV, 3 (January 1911).
- <sup>75</sup> The quality of construction of workers' houses was generally satisfactory in Calgary; nevertheless, with large-scale production of inexpensive housing, some jerry-building took place as contractors tried to cut their costs. See *Herald*, September 3, 1912 for contemporary observations on the subject.
- <sup>76</sup> Many of the bungalows and cottages described in preceding pages of this chapter were approximately this size.
- <sup>77</sup> *Annual Report of the City of Calgary*, 1909. (Calgary: City Clerk, 1910), p. 54.
- <sup>78</sup> *Annual Report of the City of Calgary*, 1912 (Calgary: City Clerk, 1913), p. 202.
- <sup>79</sup> See GAI City Clerk's Papers, annual reports of civic committees, 1906-1914, and *Annual Reports of the City of Calgary*, 1907-1913, for accounts of the extension and development of local services and utilities. Also see the *Herald*, August 4, 1932 for a capsule Summary of the Waterworks Department's activities in this period. Despite difficulties in pumping water to outlying districts on the North Hill and South-West Calgary, some problems of supply during winter months and some problems with turbidity, water service was generally good before the war. In 1912, it cost only \$5 for a year's supply of water for a five room house.

- Quoted from *Herald in Canadian Western Natural Gas: Half a Century of Service 1912–1962* (Calgary: n. pub., 1962).
- <sup>80</sup> See *News Telegram*, March 20, 1912 for an example of local health concerns. Also see *Annual Reports of the City of Calgary, 1907–1913*, for summary details of civic sanitation and Health Department undertakings.
- <sup>81</sup> Power rates dropped significantly because of the abundance of electricity and the fact that the City of Calgary had signed a generous contract for power supply with the Company. *Some Facts About Calgary Power, Limited*, (Calgary: n. pub., 1962) GAI Calgary Power Papers, “Memorandum of Agreement,” September 12, 1910. Also see *Albertan*, May 22, 1911.
- <sup>82</sup> Municipal Manual, 1915, p. 67; *Annual Reports of the Canadian Western Natural Gas, Light, Heat and Power Company, 1912–1915*, n.p., n. pub., 1912–1915.
- <sup>83</sup> *Ibid.* See *News Telegram*, May 27, 1909 and *Albertan*, October 5, 1911 for details of earlier gas discoveries to Colonel Walker’s property in East Calgary, and attempts by A. W. Dingman to service nearby residential subdivisions. While this early work successfully introduced natural gas in the city, it was the technical skill and business daring of Eugene Coste backed by the Canadian Pacific Railway that brought it into widespread use in Calgary households. Coste’s discovery of a major gas field on C. P. R. Land at Bow Island in 1908, and subsequent agreement with Company officials to market the product in Calgary and Lethbridge, furthermore, did much to establish the growing natural gas industry in southern Alberta. See GAI, CPR Papers, “Correspondence between Company officials and Mr. Eugene Coste.”
- <sup>84</sup> *Annual Reports of Canadian Western Natural Gas Company, 1912, 1914*. 1914 was the greatest single year of gas service connections in the city.
- <sup>85</sup> This may provide a partial explanation for the stable, conservative character of the Calgary labour movement in the years 1905 to 1912. After 1912, as housing became more scarce and unemployment and inflation became rampant, workers became agitated because of losses in their standard of living. See E. A. Taraska, “The Calgary Craft Union Movement, 1900–1920” (Unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Calgary, 1975).
- <sup>86</sup> *Herald*, December 22, 1908, advertisement.
- <sup>87</sup> *Herald*, December 18, 1908, advertisement by Toole Peet.
- <sup>88</sup> *Albertan*, February 28, 1911, p. 31; according to the City of Calgary, PHSE, volume 1, category 1, file 96, the structure has a reinforced concrete frame with brick exterior bearing walls. On May 1, 1912 the *Herald* listed a furnished suite for rent at \$75 per month.
- <sup>89</sup> *Henderson’s Directory, 1912*.
- <sup>90</sup> *Herald*, January 4, 1913. Each suite had five rooms: a living room, dining room, kitchen and two bedrooms plus a bathroom and hall. Many also had their own balcony.
- <sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>92</sup> *Ibid.* Also see *Henderson’s Directory, 1912*.
- <sup>93</sup> *Tregillus-Thompson Directory, 1913*, pp. 189–190.
- <sup>94</sup> In 1909, it cost between \$40 and \$50 a month to rent an average size house. By 1912, it cost between \$55 and \$70 to rent similar accommodation. By 1913, over-crowding and high rents became topics which concerned the local press; see *News Telegram*, February 21, 1913, editorial, and *Albertan*, July 3, 1913, editorial.
- <sup>95</sup> Lots in Bridgeland were advertised by William Toole at between \$150 and \$300 in the *Albertan*, March 24, 1909. On January 2, 1913, the *Herald* carried an ad for Bridgeland property by the same agent at \$660.
- <sup>96</sup> *Henderson’s Directory, 1911*.
- <sup>97</sup> *Tregillus-Thompson Directory, 1913*.
- <sup>98</sup> *Labour Gazette*, volumes 13 and 14, reports on Calgary labour conditions from April to October, 1913. Also, *Calgary Board of Trade Annual Reports, 1913*, “Report of the Council,” pp. 27–28.
- <sup>99</sup> See GAI City Clerk’s Papers, Box 58, file folder 470.
- <sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>103</sup> GAI City of Calgary By-Laws. Building Ordinance #1366, pp. 31–33.
- <sup>104</sup> Some of the major brickyards in the city were the Calgary Silicate Pressed Brick Company, Tregillus Clay Products, Crandell Pressed Brick and Sandstone Company, Brick and Supply Limited and the Alberta Pressed Brick Company. As early as 1910, however, the Redcliffe brickyard, advertised in the *Herald* on June 15 as the finest and largest in Canada, began to out-compete local concerns in supplying pressed brick to construction projects.
- <sup>105</sup> Among the many buildings which doubled as retail space and rental accommodation were the Ross Block, the Kerr Block, the Befus Block, the Western Block, the Underwood Building and the Loughheed Building. See *Henderson’s Directory, 1914*, for other buildings, along Ninth Avenue, South-East, Seventeenth Avenue South-West, and Fourth Street South-West.

## The End of the Open Range Era in Western Canada

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**ABSTRACT.** In 1905 vast areas of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan were still covered with native grasses and grazed by herds of cattle under extensive open range conditions. By 1912 wheat was king, the range had been enclosed and ploughed up, and homestead settlement had reached its maximum extent and density in Palliser's Triangle. This transformation was produced both by purposive adaption within the cattle industry and by changes in a number of external variables which profoundly altered the economic milieu. In the foothills of the Rocky Mountains open range methods had been replaced by fences, selective breeding, and winter feeding, by the turn of the century, while the short-grass prairie to the east was occupied by cattlemen who had been pushed north of the line by the "sod-busters." During the first years of the new century the Dominion Government's perception of its western domain underwent a profound change. The cattlemen's competitive position was undermined by changes in the pattern of world trade in beef and by an exceptionally severe winter. The wheat farmer's position on the other hand was strengthened by advances in dry farming technology. This paper will explore the process by which these complex variables interacted to produce change on a volatile frontier of settlement.

### RESUME

En 1905, de vastes régions du sud de l'Alberta et de la Saskatchewan encore couvertes d'herbes sauvages étaient toujours parcourues par des troupeaux broutant librement. Vers 1912, ce territoire était devenu le royaume du blé: la prairie avait été clôturée et labourée, et l'étendue et la concentration des fermes avaient atteint leur apogée dans le Triangle de Palliser. L'adaptation volontaire de l'industrie bovine et les changements enregistrés dans nombre de variables externes qui avaient profondément modifié le milieu économique, étaient responsables de cette transformation. Vers la fin du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle, les méthodes d'alimentation en pâturage pratiquées au pied des Rocheuses avaient été remplacées par la mise en place de clôtures, l'élevage de sélection et l'alimentation d'hiver, alors qu'à l'est, l'herbe courte de la prairie était envahie par des éleveurs poussés au nord de la frontière américaine par les "sod-busters." Au début du XX<sup>e</sup> siècle, la vision que le gouvernement du Canada avait de son domaine de l'ouest allait subir de profondes transformations. La position concurrentielle des éleveurs était désavantagée par les nouvelles configurations du marché mondial du boeuf et par un hiver exceptionnellement froid. Cependant, la position des producteurs de blé était renforcée par les progrès technologiques de l'aridoculture. Cette étude examinera le processus d'interaction de ces variables complexes, responsables des changements survenus dans une région nouvellement colonisée.

### *Introduction*

The opening years of the twentieth century saw a surge of optimism pass through the cattle industry in western Canada. Vast areas of southern Alberta and Assiniboia were still covered with native grasses. Canadian and British cattle companies continued to flourish using, for the most part, the extensive methods of the open range. Cattle companies from the United States moved onto the Canadian range with the support of the Government, and to the newcomers "the virgin prairie of southwestern Saskatchewan looked like the promised land."<sup>1</sup> There was an influx of young cattle from south of the border which bore comparison with the great immigration of the 1880's.<sup>2</sup> At the same time exports from the Canadian West of mature ranch cattle rose to new heights.

By 1912, wheat was king. An ever growing network of railways had reduced the open range to a series of disconnected islands. The grid pattern of barbed wire fences and road allowances, which had existed

for so long only on the maps of the surveyors, became a finite reality. Homestead settlement burgeoned to reach its maximum density in Palliser's triangle. Few cattlemen were complacent enough to expect that their hold over the open range would last for ever, but none could have anticipated the speed with which their industry was to be brought low and the grassland violated by the ploughs of ten thousand farmers.

This transformation from open range to a mosaic of farms and ranches was a product of an infinite number of decisions on the part of a heterogeneous collection of people with differing aims, aspirations and goals. They monitored the changing economic milieu according to their varied perceptions and abilities and constantly adjusted their strategies. In most circumstances, land use change over extensive areas is likely to be a slow process taking generations to achieve. In this case the transformation seems to have been precipitate. The aim of this paper is to examine the factors which prompted such rapid reappraisal.

Contemporary observers blamed the end of the open range on the killing winter of 1906–1907. The advantages of hindsight partially confirm their assessment. No industry could sustain the awful losses of that winter without undergoing changes. Nevertheless, this incident, for all its importance, must be reviewed in context. The dominance of ranchers over the grazing lands of the North West rested on three foundations: the support of the government of Canada; the widely held belief that the shortgrass prairies of Palliser's Triangle were too arid for arable farming; and the insatiable demand of the British market for beef. All three of these foundations were being eroded even before the killing winter.

### *Ranchers and the Government*

The government of Canada had encouraged the establishment of large scale cattle raising in the North West by lease legislation enacted in 1883.<sup>3</sup> During the next twenty years the rancher was assured of the tacit support of the Department of the Interior.<sup>4</sup> The original "closed leases," which precluded homestead settlement, had been cancelled in 1896, but generous settlement terms had enabled most major ranch companies in the foothills to transfer from leased to deeded land with minimum disruption. Moreover, the establishment of stock watering reserves, shelter reserves, driftways, and cattle trails, did much to ensure that ranchers maintained their hold over summer grazing areas far beyond their deeded acreage.<sup>5</sup>

The appointment of Clifford Sifton as Minister of Interior to the incoming Laurier administration in 1896 heralded changes for the ranchers as it did for the Department itself.<sup>6</sup> Sifton seems to have recognized the fact that the process of farm settlement, however vigorously encouraged, would take some time to run its course. In the interim large amounts of land would remain unused. He felt that

nothing should be done to disrupt the profitability of the range cattle industry which was making use of this territory. Settlers were therefore encouraged to take out small leases in the vicinity of their homesteads, while large leases were issued to “deserving cases” in increasing numbers during 1902 and 1903. The leased acreage increased from half a million acres in 1901 to about two million acres in 1903. Nonetheless, complaints concerning the complexity and ubiquity of stock watering reserves along the line of the railway between Fort Macleod and Calgary were received during his first year in office and became increasingly strident.<sup>7</sup> There was a danger that this bad publicity might reduce the flow of homesteaders into the region. In 1900 Sifton moved to dismantle the system of water reserves which had been painstakingly put together over the past twelve years. W. M. Pearce, the chief architect of the reserves, was reassigned to become Inspector of Surveys in 1901.<sup>8</sup>

Sifton’s attitude towards the cattlemen was pragmatic. On the one hand, they should be encouraged to make the best possible use of unoccupied land. On the other hand, their interests should not be allowed to obstruct the progress of more intensive farm settlement. There was one thing the ranchers could be sure of, Sifton would not tolerate unorganized occupation of crown lands. They could rely on the Department of the Interior to support their rights over those of casual squatters.

The fact that their leases were open to homestead settlement was severely criticized by the cattlemen. Petitions and requests for changes in the homestead and pre-emption clause of the leases were received from the Western Stock Grower’s Association and from residents and ranchers of Assiniboia.<sup>9</sup> The rancher’s position is graphically explained in a letter from Alexander Mackay, Secretary of the American “Matador Land and Cattle Company,” to Sifton, he explained:

A lease granted with the right of settlement to squatters and others would be of little or no use for the purposes of this company, as the business would be prosecuted on a considerable scale, and if the company were exposed to vexations, annoyances and blackmailing at the instance of squatters and others, their business would not be worth pursuing under these conditions.<sup>10</sup>

Government officials acknowledged the problem, admitting that, “there is no doubt that it is not very satisfactory to the leaseholder to have no assurance that his ranch may not be broken up by homesteads or sales at any time.”<sup>11</sup> The whole situation was subject to thorough review during the fall of 1903 and new regulations were introduced which went some way to meet the demands of the cattlemen.<sup>12</sup>

These regulations were in force for only five months before Sifton resigned his cabinet post. He was replaced at the Department of the Interior by Frank Oliver—who for years had championed the squatter

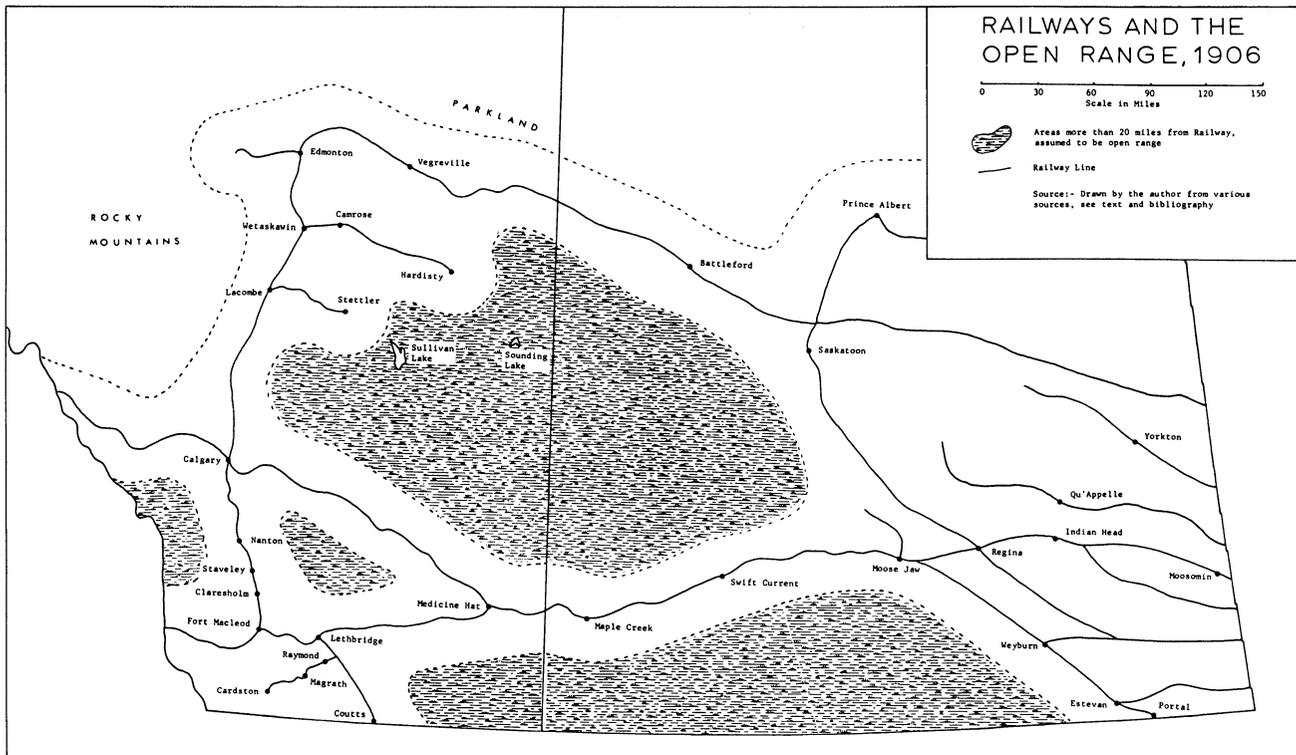
and the farm settler against the big cattle companies. Oliver explained his attitude to the Inspector of Ranges unequivocally, "The policy of the Department is to protect the rights of owners of cattle actually in occupation, whether those owners apply for a lease or not."<sup>13</sup> The rights of squatters were to be upheld against those of the cattle companies—a complete reversal of earlier government policy. Oliver's new regulations abolished absolutely the possibility of "closed" leases. All leases were subject to withdrawal and cancellation, while no lease was to be issued until the land concerned had been inspected and proven unfit for agriculture. Moreover, climatic factors alone were not sufficient to justify classifying land as unsuitable for agriculture. Only land which was too gravelly, stony, sandy or of too rough a surface for agriculture, was to be classed as not fit for agriculture and therefore suitable to be covered by grazing leases. Although the new policy was not retroactive and a number of large leases remained, the implicit recognition of a difference between "land suitable for agriculture" and "the grazing lands" had disappeared, and with it the claim of ranchers to special treatment under the Dominion Land's Act.

#### *"Pastoral" vs "Agricultural"*

During the opening years of the twentieth century the range cattle industry was challenged for the first time with competition for space from commercial agriculture which was sustained by eastern Capital and spurred by rapidly evolving technology. The rise in the price of wheat, the extension of railway mileage, the wet cycle of rainfall, advances in dry-farming technology and agricultural mechanization, as well as the energetic policy of the Department of the Interior, all contributed to a positive surge of settlement.<sup>14</sup>

This advance can be mapped in a number of ways, for instance by using population data for each township or the cropped area in each township. Another good indicator of the progress of settlement is the expanding railway network. Cash grain farming depended on the railway for access to markets and there was a theoretical distance beyond which it was not economic for the farmer to move his product to an elevator. This critical distance varied with time, the condition of the rural roads, the capital available to the farmer, and the price of wheat. In the early years of the twentieth century it was estimated at about ten miles.<sup>15</sup> However, when the pulse of settlement was running strongly farmers established themselves in anticipation of railway building and for short periods grain was hauled for much greater distances. For this reason the areas marked on maps 1 and 2 as being "beyond the economic reach of the railways" and therefore available for open range grazing, are those areas which were more than 20 miles from the nearest railway line.

To the ranching industry, the expansion of settlement along the railway between Calgary and Fort Macleod was most critical (Map 1).



Map 1—Railways and the Open Range, 1906

Superintendent Primrose reported from Fort Macleod in 1903: "The increase of settlement in this district has been enormous, to the north from Macleod to Nanton, to the east to Kipp, to the south to the boundary, and west to the Crow's Nest Pass, nearly every available section of land has either been taken up or purchased."<sup>16</sup> Stopping places on the railway, marked by corrals and a derailed cattle car in 1902, grew rapidly into thriving small towns like Claresholm, Nanton, and Stavely. The Mormon settlements of Raymond Stirling and Magrath, blossomed almost overnight. "Last year, at the time of the director's visit, a new town called Raymond was being laid out, and the only object which broke the monotony of the plains was the surveyor's tent. Not an acre of crop was in sight. Within a year a town had sprung up with a population of 600 all comfortably housed. Their crops cover an area of nearly 5,000 acres and grain of all sorts has given very satisfactory yields."<sup>17</sup> A continuous broad band of settlement reached from Calgary to Fort Macleod by 1906.

Not only did the number of settlers increase rapidly, but individually and collectively they posed a more formidable threat to the open range than had their predecessors. During the 1890's, the ranchers had had to face the incursions of homesteaders and squatters most of whom aspired to become small ranchers. They were resented by established cattlemen but at least they shared an interest in stock and the range. After the turn of the century, the great influx of settlers was made up of people of a very different ilk. Many of them were experienced cash grain farmers. Some of them had sold farms in the United States for \$15.00 to \$20.00 an acre and were purchasing land in Canada for \$4.00 to \$5.00 an acre. They had capital to invest in machinery and hastened to break up their holdings and to extend the scale of their agricultural operations.<sup>18</sup>

Contemporary observers were unanimous in expressing the view that this increase in settlement meant the end of the ranching industry as they had known it in the foothills. "The farmer and his fences are gradually driving the big ranches further and further back, and it is only a question of years when the real ranch will have ceased to exist and the farm with its small bunch of cattle will have taken its place."<sup>19</sup> Foothills' ranchers were cut off from their summer grazing by a belt of farmland some 50-100 miles wide. At the same time they had to compete with settlers for continued use of winter range in the Porcupine Hills and the valleys of the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains. Ranchers were faced with two alternatives, either they could intensify production by fencing, winter feeding and cropping fodder, or they could relocate on the shortgrass prairie to the east. In 1906 an era ended when the lands of the Cochrane Ranch, one of the first and perhaps the most prestigious of the major Canadian cattle companies, were sold to the Mormon Church.<sup>20</sup>

### *Markets, Prices, and the Meat Trade*

The influx of settlers into "cattle country" was not the only problem which faced ranchers in the early years of the twentieth century. Marketing problems and falling cattle prices affected both the "Cattle King" and the small ranchers and eroded their ability to compete with the cash grain farmer. The last year of high cattle prices was 1902, and by 1903 many individuals were prompted by dwindling profit margins to bypass the major cattle buyers and ship direct to Britain.<sup>21</sup> This was not successful. An alternative strategy was to withhold cattle from market in the hope that prices would pick up. The Provincial Legislature of Alberta displayed interest in "the depressed state of the beef market," soon after its establishment in 1905.<sup>22</sup> In a report to the committee on agriculture, the Secretary of the Alberta Stockbreeder's Association summed up the problems facing the cattlemen. He pointed out that because of the rapid settlement of the country, stockmen were being confined to their own landholdings. This involved a much larger capital expenditure for lands, fences, buildings, as well as measures to provide regular winter feeding for cattle. This situation was compounded by a "gradual decline in beef prices during recent years." He argued that wholesale spaying of heifers and disposal for slaughter of breeding cows demonstrated the stockman's loss of confidence.<sup>23</sup> The following year a more formal Commission of Inquiry reached the conclusion that "the rancher and the producer are not receiving sufficient remuneration for their labour and investment."<sup>24</sup>

There was a growing feeling among western Canadian cattlemen that the companies which controlled the export trade were responsible for their problems. In particular, they were convinced that they were being provided with extremely poor service by the Canadian Pacific Railway. The Territorial Purebred Cattle Breeder's Association petitioned the Dominion Department of Agriculture to investigate the reasons why United States' cattle were landed at British ports cheaper and in better condition than "the bruised and ill-handled Canadian ranch cattle."<sup>25</sup>

The truth of the matter was that the Canadian Pacific railway was totally incapable of handling the increased freight traffic which was being offered for shipment. Not only had eastbound shipments of cattle jumped threefold from 20,000 head in 1898 to 70,000 head in 1903, but also increased quantities of wheat competed for rolling stock, overloading the railway during the critical fall shipping season.<sup>26</sup> Cattle were moved slowly in poorly equipped box-cars, 48 to 72 hours elapsing between stops for food and water.

These ongoing complaints from the Canadian grasslands reflected far reaching changes which were taking place in the international meat

trade. Canada's cattle trade was threatened, in the long term, both by keen competition and by substitution based upon improved technology.<sup>27</sup> In 1900, live cattle made up about half Great Britain's beef imports, by 1910 this figure had fallen to 17 per cent. The shipment of live cattle was an inefficient and costly way to deliver meat to a distant market. It meant the transportation of large quantities of offal, and additional costs for labour, insurance and feed. Losses at sea had been cut to a minimum in properly equipped vessels, but considerable shrinkage was inevitable. The fact that sustained the trade in livestock was the British housewife's penchant for meat freshly killed by local butchers. Meat slaughtered in abattoirs adjacent to the ports fetched 1½d to 2d a pound more than chilled beef. However, as the chilling process was perfected, and the problem of distributing this highly perishable commodity was solved, chilled meat became more and more difficult to distinguish from freshly slaughtered beef, and the comparative advantage of the livestock trade disappeared. Technological innovations in chilling techniques paved the way for a spectacular expansion of exports of beef from Argentina, and of lamb from Australia and New Zealand. Imports of frozen and chilled beef from these sources to Britain doubled between 1900 and 1910.

Thus, the winter of 1906-1907 struck an industry which was already concerned as to its future and extremely vulnerable. The tide of homestead settlement was at last flooding in and the government had neither the will nor an obvious justification for special support of range interests. Dry farming technology had evolved to a point where it was becoming difficult to assume that there would be extensive areas of the Canadian West which were unsuitable for arable farming. Finally, increased costs of production and problems with transportation decreased the Canadian cattleman's ability to compete with both the cash grain farmer for land, and with beef producers elsewhere in the world for markets.

### *The Winter of 1906-1907*

In March Harry Otterson, the manager of the T Bar Down outfit, rode from the ranch headquarters to the winter range along the White-mud River. Later he described his expedition in these words:

It surely was a gruesome ride. The cattle were in all stages of dying. The brush was simply lined with dead cattle. The live ones at night would lie down on the dead and many would not be able to get up again, consequently they were literally piled up.<sup>28</sup>

At the same time cowboys were using axe handles to dispatch cattle trapped in deep drifts along the valley floor of the Red Deer River near Dorothy.<sup>29</sup> A. E. Cross recommended that weak cattle in his range herd should be put out of their misery "so that available hay could be used to feed the stronger beasts."<sup>30</sup>

The inhabitants of the small towns of southern Alberta were shocked by the condition of the range stock. The back lanes and alleys of Claresholm harboured several hundred head.<sup>31</sup> Literally hundreds more were killed by trains because they were too weak to struggle out of the drifted cuttings. One night Fort Macleod was invaded by a herd of half-starved cattle, their legs raw and bleeding from breaking through crusted snow. In the morning the bodies of 48 steers were removed from the streets.<sup>32</sup>

Such, in brief but dramatic terms, was the impact of the notorious winter of 1906-07. Wallace Stegner spent that winter on a farm near the Whitemud River. He felt that it signalled the end of the open range in the country to the east of the Cypress Hills. He remarks: "The net effect of the winter of 1906-07 was to make stock farmers out of ranchers. Almost as suddenly the disappearance of the buffalo, it changed the way of life of the region."<sup>33</sup>

In the spring the losses were evaluated. The main impact of the winter fell on the shortgrass prairie from Sounding Lake southward to the Cypress Hills and the United States border. Here, losses were estimated at between 60 and 65 per cent. Even the leading cattle companies, noted not only for their size, but also for their skillful and experienced management, lost more than half their herds. Newcomers were hit far harder. Smith and Mussett, who had moved from Kansas to range just north of Prelate in 1902, counted 3,500 head in the fall, most of them "pilgrim" stock from Manitoba. There were only 236 survivors in the spring.<sup>34</sup>

In contrast, ranchers in the Bow Valley, west of Calgary, emerged from the winter almost unscathed. Near Red Deer final tallies showed that losses were only marginally greater than normal. In this area, frost-damaged crops provided excellent feed. West of High River, reports from A. E. Cross' A7 Ranch were also reassuring, while at Pincher Creek estimates put losses at 25 per cent.

The exact extent of the losses caused by the severe winter of 1906-07 will never be known, but even the most conservative estimates support the conclusion that about half the working capital invested in the range cattle industry was liquidated. No industry could survive such an ordeal without undergoing profound changes.

The most obvious effect of the disaster was the failure of a large number of major cattle companies, and the retreat of others to the United States. By 1909 the Turkey Track, the T Bar Down, and the Conrad Price Cattle Company had all closed down their Canadian range interests. Veteran Canadian cattlemen like the Maunsell brothers and George Emerson went bankrupt, as did the Prince and Kerr Ranch and the High River Trading Company.<sup>35</sup> Hardened cattlemen suffered personal revulsion during the "carrion spring" and retired as soon as they were able to tie up their affairs.<sup>36</sup>

Some broad based companies could absorb their losses and capitalize on the misfortunes of others. The Winnipeg based firm of Gordon, Ironside and Fares bought out several American interests and consolidated their herds along the Whitemud River. Pat Burns, George Lane and A. E. Cross were all able to expand their operations in 1907.<sup>37</sup> In general, the severe winter encouraged the expansion of corporate control of the cattle industry and replaced eastern and foreign capital with Western Canadian capital.

Among the survivors, the experience of the severe winter speeded up a movement towards more intensive methods of animal husbandry. The capacity for adaptive response to changing conditions on the part of the cattleman should not be forgotten. Exhaustive experiments at government experimental farms and careful monitoring of private operations, had proved conclusively that a policy of feeding grain to steers during the winter could pay handsome dividends.<sup>38</sup> Pat Burns had always specialized in winter feeding. By 1908, he was using oats and barley meal in increasing quantities in place of wild hay.<sup>39</sup>

The small stockman was also profoundly affected by the severe winter. For years the homestead farmer, who was characteristically short of both capital and labour, had looked upon a small herd of beef cattle as a sheet-anchor for his farming operations. The heavy losses of the winter, taken in conjunction with low cattle prices and rising wheat prices, forced farmers to reassess their position. A great many of the smaller ranchers sold their stock and devoted their entire attention to growing grain. The recorder of brands noted that there had been a decrease of 900 cattle brands in Alberta and Saskatchewan in 1907.<sup>40</sup> The Department of Agriculture urged farmers to stay with cattle, and these sentiments were echoed by Pat Burns who remarked: "Dazzled by dollar wheat, many farmers are now selling their stock to make room for more wheat. Keep your cows for breeding. We are now shipping cattle which should be kept at home."<sup>41</sup> Stock shipments eastward trebled as cattle, breeding cows and calves were sold off for whatever they would fetch.

Thus the winter of 1906-07 disrupted the growth of "mixed farming" and the gradual transfer from extensive methods to more intensive stock-farming. Authorities who had noted the decline in the area of the open range, had expressed the hope and the belief that the consequent shortfall in cattle production would be made good by increased output of farmbred stock. Mixed farming was encouraged as it was good for the soil and provided some insurance against natural and fiscal calamity. Official perception of sound agricultural practice proved to be at variance with the aspirations of immigrant farmers.<sup>42</sup> Small-scale stock rearing on farms was only appealing as long as substantial returns rewarded limited inputs of capital and labour. The number of cattle raised on farms remained high while each farm was surrounded

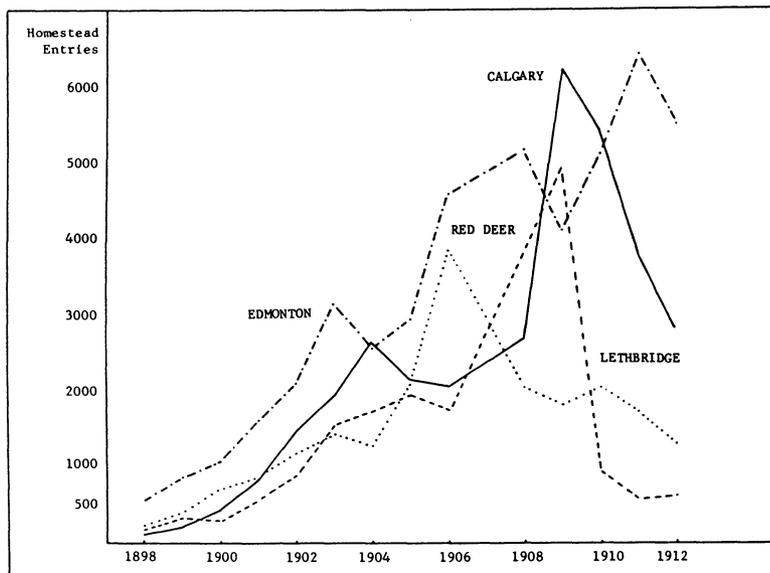


Figure 1—Homestead Entries at Selected Agencies, 1898–1912  
Source: Alberta, *Department of Agriculture*, Annual Reports.

by tracts of natural grassland. From 1903 onwards the smaller stock-farmer found it less and less easy to dispose of his product. Export buyers were not impressed with small lots of inferior cattle and local markets were oversupplied. Moreover, the incoming flood of settlers quickly reduced the common grazing land adjacent to farms, and the price of wheat continued to rise. The winter of 1906-07 demonstrated that cattle were a risk unless hay was put up, pastures were fenced, and some shelter was provided. Such measures meant demands on time and capital. The farmer who had maintained a small beef herd weighed his strategy carefully during the summer and fall of 1907. Was it worth his while to re-establish his herd? Or should the money be spent on a contract with a steam ploughing firm to break additional land for wheat? Evidence suggests that the latter alternative was adopted by many.

Significant changes in the Dominion Land's Act were passed in 1908 and hastened the transaction from pastoral activity to crop farming. Odd numbered sections were offered for sale in the form of pre-emptions or purchased homesteads at \$3.00 per acre.<sup>43</sup> An immense reserve of land which had been available for grazing was thrown open to settlement. Forty years later one aspiring rancher recollected the impact of this legislative change:

In our district [Ghost Pine Creek north-east of Drumheller] the little fellows just getting started in ranching like myself had but two choices. They could sell out entirely and leave the country, or they

could turn farmer. The later course meant pre-empting another quarter section and selling of all but a few cows and possibly a few three year old steers as they happened to have. The proceeds from the sale of cattle would have to be invested in another team of horses and in farm machinery.”<sup>44</sup>

This was not merely a local phenomenon, it was a widespread trend worthy of mention in the annual review of agriculture in Alberta: “This year men who have lived in the west for years as ranchers raised their first crop, and will raise more next year.”<sup>45</sup>

The pace of farm sttlement increased in the years immediately following the bad winter. The activity at the Lethbridge and Calgary land offices reached a fevered pitch as the number of entries jumped from about 2,000 in 1906 to more than 5,000 in 1909 (Figure 1). The acreage sown to major crops made an equally obvious upturn (Figure 2).

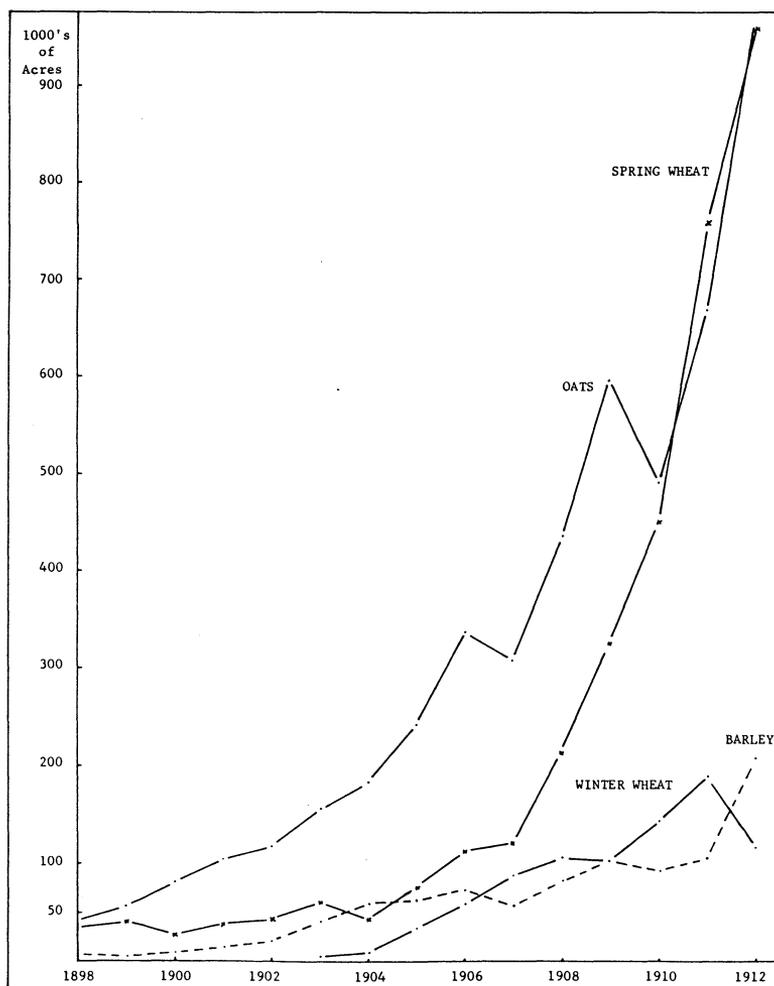


Figure 2—Acreages Sown to Major Crops, Alberta, 1898–1912  
Source: Canada, *Department of the Interior, Cereal Map, 1914.*

A massive programme of railway building accompanied the expansion of settlement. The area classified as being beyond the economic reach of the tracks was reduced to a few scattered pockets and even these were threatened by planned extensions (Map 2). Typical of railway building which was critical to range interests were the lines laid north from Lethbridge to Noble, Barons, and Carmangay, and the spur from Suffield to Vauxhall, with its planned extension to Welbeck. The entire area between the mainline and the Crow's Nest branch was lost to the open range. Further north the line from Bassano to Empress was graded, while the link from Drumheller to Hanna and the Saskatchewan border penetrated the heart of the last major range area.

Advancing settlement was spurred by the tide of enthusiasm for dry farming which was generated by the work of Hardy Webster Campbell in the United States. Incoming farmers were encouraged by his optimistic forecast for the shortgrass prairies of southern Alberta and Saskatchewan: "I believe of a truth that this region, which is just coming into its own, is destined to be the last and best grain garden of the world."<sup>46</sup> The fact that the seventh annual dry farming congress was held in Lethbridge in 1912 was fitting culmination of a promotional campaign which had started five or six years before.

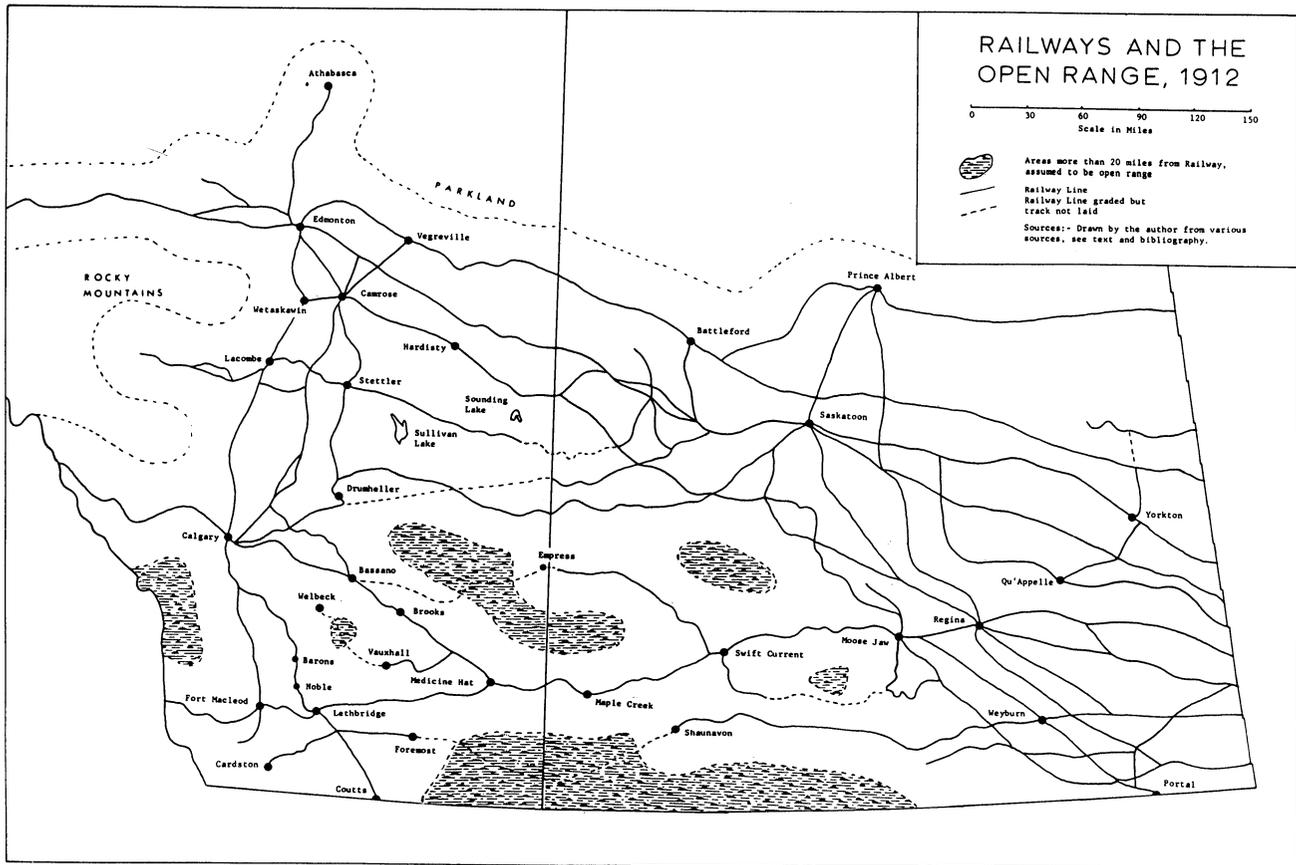
Contemporary reports reflect the excitement which the rapid pace of change engendered. There were some eighteen steam ploughs operating in the Lethbridge area in 1908, while along the Milk River newly broken land was yielding 30-40 bushels to the acre.<sup>47</sup> Around Fort Macleod cattle buyers were finding it hard to buy enough cattle to meet their demands. Superintendent Begin reported from Maple Creek:

Ranching in this part of the province will soon be a thing of the past. Ranchers are going out of business. Most of the land has been opened for homesteaders. Old ranch grounds are gradually being cut up by farmers. Stock cannot anymore roam over the country as hitherto. . . . Maple Creek is supposed to be ranching country, with a great number of cattle, but the price of beef in the town of Maple Creek is higher than any place in the province.<sup>48</sup>

A process of enclosure which had started in the valleys of the Bow and the Oldman rivers in the 1890's had reached its logical conclusion. Even in the heart of Palliser's Triangle the settled ways of the farmer replaced those of the pastoralist.

### *Summary and Conclusions*

In May 1912 four men met in Calgary and planned the "greatest outdoor show on earth," The Calgary Stampede. Their aim was to memorialize a way of life which had disappeared forever. Each of the four had been intimately involved in the open range phase of the cattle industry and their collective perception that an epoch had ended must carry much weight.<sup>49</sup>



Map 2—Railways and the Open Range, 1912

The ending of the open range era was a process which took more than a decade to work itself out. It was not an event which can be positively identified and dated. During the last years of the nineteenth century interested parties in the valleys of the foothills had witnessed the first fences, the last general round-up, and the advent of farm settlement. The quickening pulse of settlement had pushed those in search of unenclosed range from the Little Bow to the Red Deer River during the first years of the twentieth century. Finally, with bewildering speed, farmers had invaded the last bastions of the range cattle industry in the period from 1906 to 1912.

The traumatic impact of the severe winter of 1906-07 must be evaluated in this context. It accelerated trends which were well established before its onset. The attitude of the government to the cattleman changed as the pace of settlement picked up. Competition for space increased production costs and rendered the export trade in live cattle uneconomic, while advances in dry farming technology reduced the comparative advantage of pastoral activity. Some cattlemen held fast to traditional methods and were swept aside by the pace of change. Others, both great and small, displayed remarkable resilience and adaptability. They constantly modified their strategies and intensified their operations. Ironically, 1912 was the start of a period of increased prosperity for the stockmen of western Canada. Demand for cattle continued to exceed supply, and the great United States market was exploited to the full. During the next two decades, much of the short-grass prairie won from the pastoralists by the dry farmers, was abandoned, and neglected fences gave way once more to open grassland. However, the stockmen who took advantage of these territorial and market opportunities had abandoned for the most part both the methods and the philosophy of the open range era.

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## Fictions of the American and Canadian Wests

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**ABSTRACT.** In our everyday perception, it is by "fiction" that we order the chaos of sensory experience, and on a larger scale, it is by "fictions" that we structure our experience in order to assign meaning to it. The historical tradition is commonly more important to the novelist than the historical fact. The Canadian and American Wests have developed differently and this has naturally influenced literature. This article examines the divergent forms of fiction developed in the two Wests.

### RESUME

C'est grâce à la "fiction" que nous organisons dans notre perception quotidienne, le chaos de notre expérience sensorielle. Et, sur une plus grande échelle, c'est grâce à des "fictions" que nous structurons notre expérience, afin de lui donner un sens. En général, pour le romancier, la tradition historique est plus importante que le fait historique. Le développement de l'Ouest canadien et celui de l'Ouest américain sont différents, et ceci, bien sûr, a influencé la littérature. Cet article examine en quoi divergent les "fictions," telles qu'elles se sont développées dans l'Ouest canadien et dans l'Ouest américain.

If asked to describe the sound of a clock, most of us would probably say "tic-toc," thus creating a fiction by which to humanize the thing, make it talk our language. Frank Kermode, in his literary study *The Sense of an Ending*, says that experimental subjects, having imposed this fiction, register measurably higher success in predicting the interval between tic and toc than between toc and tic even though the sounds are indistinguishable.<sup>1</sup> Because of the fiction, the interval between tic and toc is charged with significant duration; it is structured meaningfully. Kermode concedes that as fictions go, "tic-toc" is not very interesting, nor very significant except that it illustrates an important psychic need and our way of satisfying it. In our everyday perception it is by such fictions that we order the chaos of sensory experience, and on a larger scale it is by fictions that we structure our experience in order to assign meaning to it. In this extended category of fictions Kermode includes the hypothesis by which the natural scientist organizes his investigation of physical phenomena, the theory by which the historian attempts to make the events of the actual world comprehensible, the fiction through which the novelist seeks a reality of another kind, and the popular myths within which we assign value to the material and immaterial worlds. Truth is stranger than fiction because it is by such fictions that we understand our world. At the mundane level the average man is expected to buy his house and car, marry and divorce his mate, select his career and cast his vote according to prevailing myths. In the more rarified atmosphere of literature, the historical tradition is commonly more important to the novelist than the historical facts. A Frederick Manfred may crawl across the prairie to recapture imaginatively the ordeal of Hugh Glass, but the form and significance of his *Lord Grizzly* owes more to Turner's frontier thesis than to Ashley's expedition up the Missouri.

The fiction of the American and Canadian Wests has been very different partly because the fictions through which those Wests have been perceived have been very different. Setting aside, for the occasion, all personal and literary influences, consider the historical traditions which influenced the novelists most profoundly in the first half of the Twentieth Century. Canadian historian W. L. Morton compares them in his "Clio in Canada" (1946), a germinal essay in western Canadian historiography in which Morton laments the effectiveness of the Laurentian thesis as self-fulfilling prophesy:

In the frontier Turner found the American quality of American history. It was, according to his thesis, in virtue of the frontier experience that the American people became American. But, according to the Laurentian thesis, it was the commercial system of the St. Lawrence which made Canada, not a folk movement wringing from the harsh, common life of the frontier a national character and way of life, but a scheme of commercial exploitation, Hamiltonian in its politics, imperialistic in its methods, aiming not at political justice but at commercial profits.<sup>2</sup>

Obviously these theories would not only imply different sets of values for the two Wests but assign them entirely different positions in the national consciousness. The ready acceptance of these theories suggests a reasonable correspondence with public opinion, and there is some evidence to confirm the suggestion. Edwin Fussell, in *Frontier: American Literature and the American West*, claims that journalistic publicists of the mid-Nineteenth Century were fond of saying that the American mind would be brought to maturity along the chain of the great Lakes, the banks of the Mississippi, the Missouri and their tributaries in the far northwest.<sup>3</sup> The contrasting Canadian attitudes of the time can be found in Douglas Owsram's *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West, 1856-1900*. Owsram cites influential spokesmen of the time who held to the belief that the northwest was "both unsuitable for settlement and worthless," and that "no British colony will ever approach nearer than twelve or thirteen hundred miles' to the Red River."<sup>4</sup> Such professional and public "fiction" would have an influence on what kinds of fiction would be thought appropriate to the two Wests.

Of course, historical theories, unlike Kermode's "tic-toc," have substantial bases in fact. The Wests always *have* been different, culturally and institutionally, in ways characterized by the two theories. Canada's West was not a frontier in the sense of the advancing edge of a more or less continuous settlement. Separated from settled Canada by several hundred miles of intractable precambrian shield, it was not the "frontier" or border *of* anything. Because of its isolation it had to be colonized in a more deliberate way than if it had been contiguous with the settled colonies. Any influx of settlers was preceded by the struc-

tures and institutions of society, including traders, missionaries, Indian treaties, railroads, land survey and law enforcement. This was one of many circumstances encouraging attitudes toward institutions and the sources of order unlike those characteristic of the American West. And the differences have been profound and permanent beneath the homogenizing effects of mass media. Suffice it to say that the people of a West which can elect Ronald Reagan do not see the world in quite the same way as those in a West which can elect democratic socialist governments in three out of four provinces. The inundation of both regions by the same popular culture is likely to change rather than eliminate the difference. When an American and a Canadian sit down to their T.V. sets, they may tune in the same American western, but the American is watching something domestic, in some sense his own, while the Canadian is watching something he knows to be exotic. The pictures are the same but the experience is quite different.

Probably none of the regulative fictions applied to the Wests are without some basis in fact, but what we were actually doing to settle the two Wests—and continentalists and post-Turnerians would argue that it was not that different—may be less important to the novelist than what we thought we were doing. The differences in that perception find suggestive parallels in the basic ideals upon which the two nations were founded. If we postulate a kind of national mythology growing from our origins, it should be no surprise that a republican democracy created by a Declaration of Independence and a revolutionary war should nurture different myths than a hierarchical dominion created by an act of someone else's parliament which has repeatedly and with force of arms rejected the revolution. Compare the founding documents:

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitles them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. ———We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men were created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness, ———That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or abolish it. . . .<sup>5</sup>

This is poetry, and its themes are those of the frontier: egalitarianism, the Laws of Nature, radical faith in individualism and the primacy of the individual conscience, the fallibility of institutions, the legitimacy of civil disobedience and violence, freedom, pursuit or questing.

The preamble to the BNA act contrasts sharply:

Whereas the Provinces of Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick have expressed their Desire to be federally united into one Dominion under the Crown of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, with a Constitution similar in principle to that of the United Kingdom:

And whereas such a union would conduce to the Welfare of the Provinces and promote the Interests of the British Empire: etc.

Be it therefore enacted and declared by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:

Including: "The Executive Government and authority of and over the Dominion of Canada is hereby declared to continue and be vested in the Queen."<sup>6</sup>

You might wonder why we would exhaust ourselves in attempts to bring this document to Canada. It is bureaucratic prose. Its themes are order, hierarchy, profitability, expediency, and others, commonly summed up as "Peace, Order and Good Government." Note especially that the theoretical source of power and authority remains at the top rather than the bottom; the model of order is deductive rather than inductive. Words such as "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness" would seem almost frivolous in such a verbal context. I have sometimes thought that the solution to any impasse in Canada-U.S. relations might be derived from a close rhetorical analysis of these two documents.

It is easy, perhaps even unnecessary, to identify the correspondence between the ideals voiced in the Declaration, those evident in Turner's frontier thesis, and both the popular mythology of the nation and the popular fictions of the American West. As Richard Slotkin says in his *Regeneration Through Violence*, "In American mythogenesis the founding fathers are not those eighteenth-century gentlemen who composed a nation at Philadelphia. Rather they are those who (to paraphrase Faulkner's *Absalom, Absalom!*) tore violently a nation from the implacable and opulent wilderness."<sup>7</sup> The popular mythology finds its most direct expression in popular fiction which, as John Cawelti says in his *Six-Gun Mystique*, "has the important functions of articulating and reaffirming the primary cultural values."<sup>8</sup> The formula western, in particular, has served as "a kind of foundation ritual," a dim reflection—or perhaps an unwitting parody—of America's struggle for independent nationhood. The pattern is clearly visible from Owen Wister to Zane Grey to Max Brand or Louis Lamour. Central is the frontiersman as Henry Nash Smith describes him in *Virgin Land*, a figure torn between the lure of anarchic freedom in Nature and the comforts and responsibilities of civilization, half-reluctantly helping to carve a nation out of the virgin wilderness, to

establish a society which his own heroic gifts preclude him from enjoying. The rich dramatic potential of this half-savage figure explains the eternal vitality and almost universal appeal of the popular western. What is more significant is that the writing and reading public have consistently chosen a particular phase of settlement to embody their ideals of nationhood, whether the stories are studiously historical or totally a-historical. The good rogue cop on television is still a frontiersman: "Baretta" is a crypto-western.

The correspondence between popular fiction of the Canadian West and the British North America Act is by no means as obvious. In the hierarchical, centralist mythology (and historiography) of the nation, the West would necessarily appear not as the living edge of society but, at worst, a hinterland providing markets and raw materials, at best a purified model of Ontario. The adventure stories, romances of pioneering and sentimental romances of early twentieth-century writers such as Ralph Connor, Nellie McClung, Robert Stead and Arthur Stringer do, however, articulate the primary values of peace, order and good government in an hierarchical dominion. The dominant myth is not the frontier but the garden, specifically an imperial garden in which the adventures justify a hazy identification of the human order of empire with the natural order and the divine order. The central figure is not Smith's half-savage frontiersman but a teacher, a minister, a policeman or a respectable homesteader, firmly entrenched within the cultural order and devoted to demonstrating that order is also natural and divine.<sup>9</sup> There is no extra-legal justice, no salutary application of violence, no individualistic hero in the American sense. Even the North West Mounted Policeman, that chivalric figure riding into danger to maintain the right, derives his power not from anything inherent in his personality but from what he represents—an abstract "right" descending from a remote centre of Empire. He is the knight, not as hero but as champion, invincible not in his powers of self-assertion but in his powers of self-abnegation. So much for Freedom, egalitarianism, the laws of nature, individualism, the fallibility of institutions, the legitimacy of civil disobedience and violence. Northrop Frye once said that a Canadian was an American who had rejected the revolution.

Here again the phase of settlement emphasized by the fiction is significant of national perceptions of the West. A couple of decades at the height of the cattle industry in the American West inspired mountains of popular fiction. The fact that two centuries of fur trade which preceded settlement in the Canadian West have inspired little fiction suggests how slight an interest the Canadian imagination has taken in the frontier and its attendant questions of primitivism and civilization.

The serious or literary fiction of the Wests is, by its very nature, more difficult to generalize about. Its relationships to the regulative

fictions through which the two Wests have been perceived are also more subtle, complex, often ambivalent; it would be misleading to suggest direct correspondence of the sort evident in the popular fictions. But at the risk of appearing to do just that, I would like to single out some typical features of theme, form and mode which are suggestive of connections with the other fictions, including the popular. The serious fiction, for example, is distinguished by a tendency to scrutinize and question those primary cultural values affirmed in the popular. Thus while Wister, in *The Virginian*, offers a glib justification for a lynching by appealing to democratic principles, Clark, in *The Oxbow Incident*, uses a lynching to explore the nature of justice, of responsibility, and of individual and communal authority in a democratic society. Serious fiction of the Canadian West began as a conscious reaction against the romances of pioneering. While Robert Stead's early romances celebrate the harmony of man's agrarian order with the orders of nature and of God, Frederick Philip Grove, in his *Fruits of the Earth*, explores a profound spiritual alienation from the land arising from that very presumption of harmony. The Anglo settler, seeing familiar institutions in place, assumes that he can transplant his Ontario culture intact without regard to the character of the new land.

To some extent, then, the serious fiction returns to the themes of the popular fiction not to affirm the popular mythology but to engage at a more profound level the paradoxes inherent in the national ideals. In this respect both Wests have a distinctive value to the literary artist by virtue of being large, recently and sparsely populated, and above all, settled not by foreign powers but by the United States and Canada as nations. The writers can find in the traditions of the Wests the literary symbols appropriate to exploring certain fundamental aspects of the North American condition of being an immigrant culture coming to terms with a vast and often inhospitable continent. The Wests, in effect, offer the extreme case of the individual caught in the collision between an old culture and a new land. The setting seems particularly useful in developing themes of individualism and community, man's spiritual relationship to nature and ethical relationship to society. The ways in which American and Canadian writers have developed these themes seem to me to diverge in nationally distinctive ways. Take, for example, the treatment of man's spiritual relationship with nature—and, by extension, with the entire created universe. In the work of major western writers such as Ferguson, Guthrie, Clark, Fisher and Manfred, some version of the frontier experience remains central. The hero is a frontiersman like Sam Minard in *Mountain Man* or Boone Caudil in *The Big Sky*, caught between the freedom of the wilderness and the bonds of human society. In a sense, he is a protagonist of the national psyche; by virtue of his revolutionary tradition he is freed from any fixed commitment to traditional social bonds, moving with

freedom of choice between the natural and human orders. The result may be tragic, as when Caudil discovers that his savagery has violated the bonds of human brotherhood and isolated him from his kind. Or the quest may be successful, as when Sam Minard experiences the wilderness as a vast symphony, provided the frontiersman establishes a spiritual bond with nature, freeing him from any weak dependence on society. Max Westbrook, in his monograph on Clark, interprets this aspect of the hero's quest as a search not simply for freedom but for contact in nature with a primordial reality which will unify and complete his psyche, fragmented by the forces of civilization. Only with a wholeness of the conscious and the unconscious, the rational and instinctual sides of his being, can the hero be an effective force in creating the new kingdom out of the wilderness. The terms of the quest, as Westbrook interprets them, are reminiscent of the familiar American struggle against the tyranny of the conscious intellect which D. H. Lawrence describes in his *Studies in Classic American Literature*. They also suggest a search for moral authority in a society which, by embracing a revolution, has rejected traditional authority. The values expressed in the Declaration of Independence are clearly evident: freedom, the laws of nature, egalitarianism, individualism, the fallibility of institution, etc. In his essay "Mountain Home," Westbrook goes further, to make an explicit connection between the pattern of the frontiersman's quest and the ideals of the revolution: "Briefly stated, this pattern is a devotion to values beyond the law, located, somehow, in nature."<sup>10</sup>

If the protagonist of the American psyche is at large between the natural and cultural orders, his Canadian counterpart, by virtue of having rejected the revolution, finds himself confined within the social structure of his cultural inheritance, and his access to his immediate natural environment is defined and distorted by encompassing cultural patterns developed to accommodate life in a very different place. Grove's Abe Spalding, in *Fruits of the Earth*, confined within the rectilinear world of European man which has been blindly imposed upon the prairie, discovers that ignoring and suppressing external nature has the dangerous consequence of repressing the instinctual nature within himself. The two aspects of nature can threaten to destroy his consciously created world. Northrop Frye describes one reaction to this tension manifested in Canadian literature:

It is not a terror of the dangers or discomforts or even the mysteries of nature, but a terror of the soul at something that these things manifest. The human mind has nothing but human and moral values to cling to if it is to preserve its integrity or even its sanity, yet the vast unconsciousness of nature in front of it seems an unanswerable denial of those values.<sup>11</sup>

The terror Frye describes is only one effect of the problematic and

unstable relationship with nature implicit in a culture which rejects natural law in favour of traditional human wisdom. The more general condition of the protagonist of the national psyche, as seen in the work of major western Canadian writers such as Grove, Edward McCourt, Sinclair Ross and W. O. Mitchell, is one of seeking yet fearing contact with that natural environment which at the same time represents the immediate present experience (denied by the undiscarded culture) and the unconscious, intuitive side of his own being. Above all, he is seeking to understand what his relationship to that environment should be, within the terms of his inherited culture. The very different ways in which the two literatures develop the universal theme of tensions between the conscious and unconscious aspects of the psyche are consistent with the national ideologies.

Differences in the treatment of common themes inevitably generate differences in form between the American and Canadian western novel. Because of the importance America has ascribed to the frontier and to the process of "westering," the novels, as John R. Milton says in *The Novel of the American West*, favour questing motifs and forms related to epic, romance and myth.<sup>12</sup> The mobile hero's questing through nature implies a loose equation between physical movement and spiritual transformation. The West is recreated as sacred space through which the hero moves toward an archetypal experience of a primal reality.

In the Canadian western novel, the protagonist is inclined to be static, seeking inward for an understanding of his spiritual relationship to the place in which he finds himself. In effect, the West is of interest not as space but as place, and journey motifs are a less common structural feature. Take, for example, such central novels as Grove's *Settlers of the Marsh*, Ross's *As For Me and My House*, or Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*. Even though Grove is writing about the immigrant experience, his settlers do not journey west; they merely arrive there. Ross's Bentleys have been shifted from one small town parsonage to another, yet the dramatic tensions of the novel are generated not by movement but by the rigid immobility of their lives. *Who Has Seen the Wind* dramatizes the passage of a boy from childhood without the traditional journey motif. Underlying the fact that journeying could have been but was not chosen as a main narrative strategy is the less obvious fact that movement and westering do not carry the implications they have in American fiction.<sup>13</sup> Rather than epic and romantic, the fiction is inclined to novelistic and confessional forms. The frequency of involuted forms with a high degree of technical sophistication may grow out of the fact that the novels are a search for ways of understanding the ambivalent relationship of the individual to his environment. If the philosophical thrust of the American western novel could be said to be moral or ethical, that of the Canadian might be described as epistemological.

Considering the divergent forms of fiction developed in the two Wests, it is not surprising that the American epic and romantic fictions are finally more affirmative of national ideals. The relationship, that is to say, between the literary fiction and the other fictions through which the Wests have been perceived is more amicable in the American West. Even satiric writers such as Thomas Berger in *Little Big Man* and Ken Kesey in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* are ultimately less concerned with criticizing frontier values than with lamenting their passing. But then, the ideals themselves are fundamentally more optimistic. The differences in the fictions attaching to the two Wests reflect the contending assumptions of unfallen and fallen man upon which the two nations were founded. If, as Leslie Fiedler says, "America had been unremittingly dreamed from East to West as a testament to the original goodness of man,"<sup>14</sup> then the Canadian West has been the product of stern reflection upon the need for just institutions to contain the impulses of unregenerate man.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *The Sense of an Ending; Studies in the Theory of Fiction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), pp. 44-45.
- <sup>2</sup> "Clio in Canada: The Interpretation of Canadian History," reprinted in *Approaches to Canadian History*, ed. Carl Berger, Canadian Historical Readings I (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967), p. 45.
- <sup>3</sup> *Frontier: American Literature and the American West* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), p. 11.
- <sup>4</sup> *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), p. 7.
- <sup>5</sup> "The Unanimous Declaration of the Thirteen United States of America," 1776. The copy from which I quote is a facsimile produced for the American Bi-centenary.
- <sup>6</sup> G. P. Browne, ed., *Documents on the Confederation of British North America*, Carlton Library No. 40 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1969), pp. 302-304.
- <sup>7</sup> *Regeneration through Violence; The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), p. 4.
- <sup>8</sup> *The Six-Gun Mystique* (Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1975), pp. 31-33.
- <sup>9</sup> This feature of the fiction is examined more thoroughly in my *Unnamed Country* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1977), chapter III.
- <sup>10</sup> "Mountain Home: The Hero in the American West," in *The Westering Experience in American Literature*, eds. Merrill Lewis and L. L. Lee (Bellingham: Western Washington University, 1977), p. 9.
- <sup>11</sup> Conclusion to *Literary History of Canada*, gen. ed. Carl F. Klinck (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1965), p. 830.
- <sup>12</sup> *The Novel of the American West* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), p. 59.
- <sup>13</sup> This subject is explored in more detail in my "Imperial Heritage in Prairie Fiction," *Kunapipi* vol. 2, no. 2 (1980), 107-116.
- <sup>14</sup> *An End to Innocence: Essays on Culture and Politics* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1955), p. 132.



## Material Culture and the W. R. Motherwell Home

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**ABSTRACT.** The W. R. Motherwell homestead near Abernethy, Saskatchewan will be open as a National Historic Park. There has been an increased scholarly interest in the subject of material culture, based on the premise that the lives of individuals are reflected in the objects that they made, purchased, commissioned or used. Artifacts may be used as primary evidence to show that the Motherwell home embodied and reflected a certain system of beliefs when it was built in 1897 but that by the years of the First World War these beliefs had been considerably altered.

### RESUME

Le "homestead" W. R. Motherwell près d'Abernethy, en Saskatchewan, va bientôt devenir un parc national historique. Les érudits s'intéressent de plus en plus à la "culture matérielle." Cet intérêt est fondé sur l'idée que la vie des individus se reflète dans les objets qu'ils ont fabriqués, achetés, commissionés ou utilisés. Les artefacts de la résidence Motherwell sont preuve que, lorsqu'elle a été construite en 1897, cette résidence incarnait et reflétait un certain système de valeurs. Mais ils indiquent aussi, que, lorsqu'est arrivée la première guerre mondiale, ces valeurs s'étaient considérablement modifiées.

The W. R. Motherwell homestead near Abernethy, Saskatchewan is soon to open as a National Historic Park. Scientific agriculture, agrarian unrest in the West, Ontarian settlement and Motherwell the politician are the major themes to be interpreted at this site, but the restoration of the stone home will also allow visitors a glimpse of the domestic life of the Motherwells and by extension, that of the larger society to which they belonged. Unfortunately there are few documentary sources to attest to domestic life in the Motherwell household. To supplement the scanty written record an extensive series of interviews were undertaken with people once familiar with the home. There were also the artifacts—the house and some belongings of the family that could be used as evidence of their beliefs, habits, pleasures and experiences. In recent years there has been an increased scholarly interest in the subject of material culture which has been defined as "the study through artifacts of the beliefs—values, ideas, attitudes and assumptions—of a particular community or society at a given time."<sup>1</sup> The underlying premise of material culture is that the lives of individuals are reflected in the objects that they made, purchased, commissioned or used. A wide range of artifacts made or modified by man may be included within the scope of material culture such as paintings, books, clothing, architecture, agriculture, furnishings and vehicles. Artifacts may be used as primary evidence to show that the Motherwell home embodied and reflected a certain system of beliefs when it was built in 1897 but that by the years of the First World War these beliefs had been considerably altered.

In the spring of 1882, at the age of twenty-two, W. R. Motherwell, a recent graduate of Ontario Agricultural College, travelled to the end of the steel at Brandon and from there continued overland by wagon

and ox-team to claim his homestead north of the Qu'Appelle Valley in the District of Assiniboia. The area was first known as "Pheasant Plains," named for a mound butte inhabited by pheasants. The first settlers were greeted by a vast expanse of prairie, interrupted only by scattered copses of poplar and willow and by the heavily-treed banks of Pheasant Creek which meanders through these plains, one branch rising in the Pheasant Hills to the east, the other in the File Hills to the north. Vestiges of the recent past were still visible to the early homesteaders in the trails of the buffalo that wound toward the rivers and creeks and in the still deep ruts of what was known as "the old Pelly trail."<sup>2</sup> This scene rapidly underwent a dramatic change as the land was partitioned into sections and townships of cultivated fields and pasture land, demarcated by fences, roads and shelter-belts, and dotted with barns, stables, granaries, log dwellings and eventually, comfortable, often imposing farm homes.

W. R. Motherwell played a prominent role in the history of his district and the province of Saskatchewan. For the first twenty years he concentrated on the demanding conditions of agriculture in the rigorous prairie environment; it was only when his farmstead began to exhibit signs of prosperity that Motherwell became involved in the larger affairs of the community. He was elected first president of the Territorial Grain Growers' Association in 1902. Motherwell was Saskatchewan's first Minister of Agriculture from 1905 to 1918 and served at this post federally from 1921 to 1930.



Figure 1—The Motherwell Home, circa 1904.  
(Courtesy of Parks Canada, Prairie Region)

Such a career was likely beyond the imagination of the young man who, like many of his neighbours, spent his first prairie winter in a tent. In 1883 Motherwell built a log home from logs hauled from Pheasant Creek. It had a simple interior arrangement consisting of one multi-purpose room and two small bedrooms.<sup>3</sup> The following year Motherwell brought his new bride Adeline Rogers to this modest home. The first two Motherwell children died in infancy before reaching the age of one year. A son, Talmadge, was born in 1890, and a daughter, Alma, in 1892. During the years in the small log home, Motherwell was clearly inspired by a vision of a more substantial home for his family; he annually searched the prairie for suitable fieldstones, selecting them on the basis of their size, shape and colour.<sup>4</sup> The stone home that Motherwell built in 1897 (Fig. 1) was undoubtedly inspired by an architectural style he would have been familiar with as a youth; the Italianate, current in the north-eastern United States and Ontario in the 1860's.<sup>5</sup> This style proved to be popular with well-to-do Ontarian settlers in south-western Manitoba and south-eastern Saskatchewan in the late nineteenth century.<sup>6</sup> During the 1890's Motherwell began a program of tree planting and ground beautification, creating a woodland oasis in the midst of the prairie and a picturesque environment for his home. Named "Lanark Place" after the owner's home county in Ontario, the farmstead at the height of its splendour must have presented an imposing sight on the prairie (Fig. 2). Adeline Motherwell only briefly enjoyed these luxurious new surroundings after years of strained economic circumstances as she died in 1905.

The home that W. R. Motherwell built in 1897 exhibits traits of Victorian domestic architecture that document a certain system of beliefs. The home reveals assumptions about what was considered virtuous and edifying. It illuminates norms concerning family life, social categories and permissible behaviour. The ideology behind this style and form of architecture has been described as the Victorian "cult of domesticity" that reached a pinnacle in the last decades of the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> This was a conception of the home as the storehouse of moral and spiritual values in society. The home was seen as crucially important in moulding or influencing its inhabitants, particu-



Figure 2—Lanark Place, 1922.  
(Courtesy of Parks Canada, Prairie Region)

larly the children. The home was considered the children's source of spiritual education and it was the woman's role to make the home the school of virtue. The rise of the cult of the home and motherhood in the late nineteenth century has been explained as an attempt to counteract the rapid social changes brought about by industrialization and urbanization.<sup>8</sup> In the home, delicate women and children could be kept purified and isolated from the outside world in order to preserve virtues crushed by modern life.

Victorians believed that nature preserved the spiritual values that the city and the factory destroyed.<sup>9</sup> The rural environment of quiet fields and pure air offered a world of peace, health and well-being. Nature was the central theme of Canadian poets of the 1880's and 90's; Archibald Lampman and Bliss Carmen urged their readers to resist corruption by maintaining close contact with nature.<sup>10</sup> Closeness to nature was also a concern for late nineteenth century writers on the home, and luxurious landscaping was encouraged.<sup>11</sup> The ideal vision of nature was clearly not the vast expanse of bald, windswept prairie that met the eyes of the first settlers to the Abernethy district. As a contributor to *The Farmer's Advocate* wrote in 1897, farmers in the Canadian West should endeavour to:

. . . surround themselves with the beauties of nature by improving the external appearance of their home by the systematic laying out

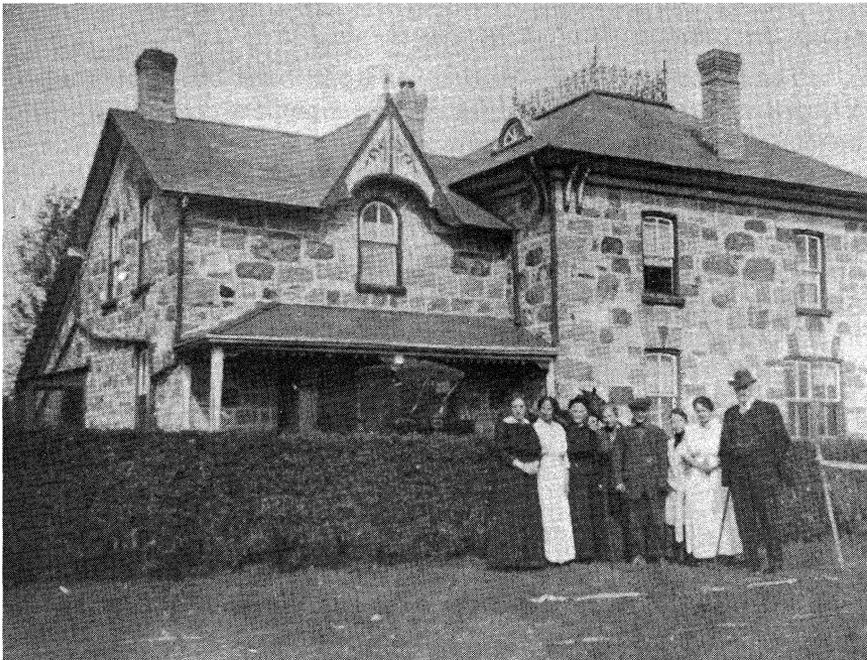


Figure 3—Side view of the Motherwell Home, circa 1915.  
(Courtesy of Parks Canada, Prairie Region)

of its grounds, and the planting of hedges and ornamental trees and shrubs, and arranging flower beds and lawns.<sup>12</sup>

The writer felt a man's spiritual well-being was revealed by the state of his natural surroundings: "We can . . . say . . . by the appearance of a man's farm that his moral, his intellectual, and we may also say his religious character can be inferred."<sup>13</sup>

W. R. Motherwell carefully planned and nurtured a pastoral environment for his home. Eventually the farmstead was surrounded on all sides by rows of stately maple, willow, and poplar trees which shaded and sheltered a recreation area known to the family as their "outdoor living room" which included ornamental flower beds, an orchard, a "lover's lane" and a lawn tennis court.<sup>14</sup> Clearly the pleasures of outdoor life were valued in the Motherwell home in an age when these were highly touted, not only for the good health that resulted from fresh air and exercise but for the spiritual consolation that resulted from close contact with nature. The Motherwell home offered many pleasant views of nature. Porches and verandas were common features of fashionable homes of the late nineteenth century.<sup>15</sup> These blurred the distinction between outdoors and indoors and emphasized a home's relationship to the natural environment. The Motherwells could survey the out-of-doors from the upper floor "balcony" that faced the rising sun, aptly roofed by a sun-ray motif pediment. From the porch beneath this balcony one could view the ornamental flower beds. Activities on the tennis court could be seen from the south veranda (Fig. 3) and the "widow's walk" on top offered a panoramic view of the entire farmstead. From the "eyebrow" dormers in the attic one could also survey the bounty and splendour of the country. In the room known to the family as the "lobby," large double windows facing south let in fresh air and sunlight and allowed a pleasant view of the "outdoor living room." Plants that were placed in the deep window sills weakened the demarcation between inside and out. The wallpaper in the lobby, in several shades of green with a leafy, forest-motif pattern, also helped bring nature into the home. The virginia creeper that eventually covered most of the front of the house accentuated its close contact with nature (Fig. 4).

As well as trying to evoke or express natural beauty, the Motherwell home clearly reflected certain social conventions. The home embodied a lifestyle rooted in the segregation between the utility section of the home and those who were employed there and the ceremonial, formal areas for the family and their guests. This tendency toward stratification was evident in the exterior of the home; the front was the subject of architectural embellishment and the back was not, a characteristic of many homes of the Victorian period.<sup>16</sup> The service area of the home was not deserving of equal decorative treatment. In the original spatial organization of the interior of the home the frame-

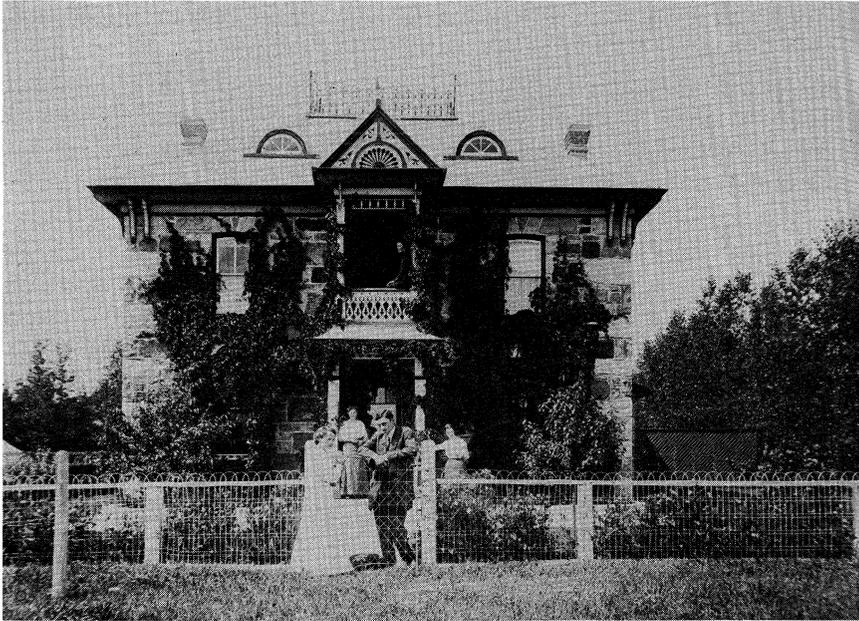


Figure 4—The Motherwell Home, circa 1911.  
(Courtesy of Parks Canada, Prairie Region)

work was established for a way of life based on the concept of two communities, the family and the servants, living under the same roof but occupying different worlds.

Plans of the Motherwell home were published in the *Nor'West Farmer* in May, 1900, as part of their series on “Western Homes: How, When and Where They are Built” (Fig. 5). These presumably reflect the Motherwells’ initial intentions for the arrangement and allocation of space in the home. There were three distinct zones in the Motherwell home. The front of the home was the formal presentation area; on the basis of the parlour and dining room visitors would draw conclusions as to the refinement and social position of the inhabitants of a home. The service or preparation area of the home was relegated to the rear. Upstairs was a third zone for privacy. At the front were commodious sleeping quarters for the family and at the back of the home were two smaller rooms for the servants.

Hallways, staircases and doors in the Motherwell home were positioned to ensure one could move from one zone to another without invading intervening spaces. A rear hallway or vestibule connected but also formed a barrier between the ceremonial and utilitarian functions within the home. Servants could enter each of the rooms at the front without having to pass through the others. The family and their guests need never be disturbed by the noise, sight, smell or clutter of daily

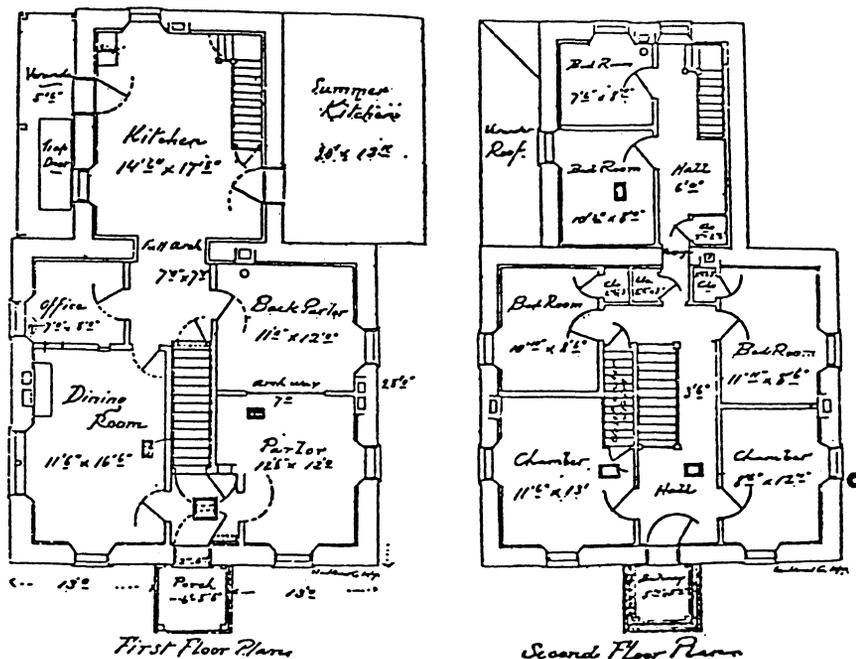


Figure 5—Floor plan illustrations of the Motherwell home.  
(*Nor West Farmer*, May 5, 1900, p. 349)

cleaning and cooking. A rear staircase, narrower and steeper than the front stair, ensured that servants could not invade the privacy of the family. Upstairs a narrow “passage” connected but also delineated the sleeping quarters of the family from those of the servants. The original arrangement of the front hallway in the Motherwell home conveyed the impression of privacy and the compartmentalizing of the home into zones of specialized functions. Upon entering from the outside into the hall the visitor would have been confronted with three closed doors. Welcome guests could be graciously received in one of the formal rooms while social inferiors could be ushered to another area of the home or remain in the hall without disturbing the privacy of the family. The late Victorian hall has been described as “. . . a place which was neither wholly interior nor wholly exterior but a sheltered testing zone which some passed through with ease and others never went beyond.”<sup>17</sup>

When it was first built, the Motherwell home reflected certain social categories and codes of behaviour. While the framework remained for a routine based on the proprieties of social station it is clear that by the First World War these were no longer rigidly observed. Throughout the English-speaking world the ceremonies and rituals that we have come to associate with the word “Victorian” waned as the twentieth century proceeded. These social observances may have

disappeared sooner in the Canadian West. More study is required before the point can be made conclusively but travellers to the West in the early years often noted a spirit of egalitarianism, particularly evident in the rural areas.<sup>18</sup> A visitor to the Lipton area, just north of Fort Qu'Appelle remarked in 1905 that:

The absence of contrast between the conditions of employer and employed is very striking to the English observer. The tendency in England is to keep down the working classes, the tendency in Canada is to encourage them to rise.<sup>19</sup>

An English woman who worked as a "home help" in a number of rural homes in the West during the early 1900's found justification for the warning she had received before leaving England that Canadians resented "frills" and "airs of superiority."<sup>20</sup> When she suggested to her mistress that the hired man eat in the kitchen when a large number of guests were expected in the dining room the reply was that ". . . even to suggest such a thing to the taciturn yokels would offend them mortally, and when a farmer's wife of her acquaintance had done it on a like occasion, it had been the talk of the whole district."<sup>21</sup>

Oral evidence confirms that by the First World War there was little contrast between the employer and the employed in the Motherwell home. The hired help ate with the family in the kitchen and according to one employee no matter what class of visitor dropped by, there was ". . . nobody too low to sit at his table . . . they got the same as the entertaining of the big shots."<sup>22</sup> The Motherwells continued to employ one or more "hired girls" but discussions with them indicate there was no social disadvantage attached to this work. Motherwell's daughter Alma remembered the women as "more like companions."<sup>23</sup> They were expected to work long hard hours alongside the other women of the household.

It is clear from the oral evidence however that Mrs. Motherwell was not a regular contributor to the household chores. But this was not because she clung to a Victorian ideal of the delicate female secluded from the rigours of daily life. Motherwell married Catherine Gillespie in 1908. By the time of her marriage at age forty-two, Catherine had forged a successful career as a teacher, Presbyterian missionary and most recently as Principal of the File Hills Indian Residential School. Catherine was clearly at odds with the Victorian image of the passive, reclusive female. She felt that women had lost respect and consideration because they had ". . . gradually sank [sic] into the position of toy and slave, forced to assume a slavish attitude toward her lord and master."<sup>24</sup> She was concerned about women's "timidity and shrinking" that was the "result of our early training and environment."<sup>25</sup> Although Mrs. Motherwell did not work outside the home after her marriage she remained active in women's organizations such as the Saskatchewan Homemakers Club. In 1911 she joined Nellie McClung, Cora Hind

and others in addressing the first annual convention of this organization. In her talk on "Domestic Bookkeeping," Mrs. Motherwell deplored the fact that women were economically dependent on men and urged that wives be given a share of the proceeds of the "home firm."<sup>26</sup> There was much discussion among these early home economists about how to modernize and industrialize the home, about the need to cut down on the number of partitions in the home to make them simpler and more efficient and about the benefits of creating family living spaces rather than social rooms conceived as display.

Alterations made to the Motherwell home in 1911 may well have been due to the new influence of Catherine and her view that "homes must be raised intellectually, morally, spiritually, socially and aesthetically."<sup>27</sup> The alterations cutting down on the multiplicity of doors, dramatically opened up the house and had the effect of eroding the consciousness of social station evident in the original plan. The arrangement of the front hallway was the focus of these alterations. The south-east wall and door in the hallway were removed so that the visitor entered immediately into the large room with sunny double windows, generous wainscott panelling and a welcoming hearth. The stairs were altered to curve into this room rather than running straight up from the front entrance behind a closed door. The message that the privacy of the family was carefully guarded was altered significantly by this change in the arrangement of the stair. It was probably at this time that the front entrance to the parlour was changed from a single door to double doors with large panes of glass. The effect was once again to mollify the appearance of a private realm in the home to which only visitors of a certain social station were encouraged to enter. The parlour was now open to the view of whomever entered the home. The double doors were more "social" as they allowed two people to enter the room together. Another indication that formalities became fewer in the Motherwell home is that after about 1914, no area was reserved for formal dining. Whether guests were present or not, all dined in the winter kitchen. The room designed as the "dining room" in the 1900 plans had become a family living space known to the family as the "lobby."

By the First World War the Motherwell home reflected an ambivalence of old and new values in the arrangement and allocation of space and in its furnishings and decor. A clear vestige of an older, more traditional way of life was the parlour. Until the late 1920's the Motherwells had a formal parlour for the reception of guests and for special occasions. It was a room ready at all times to receive the outside world, presenting an air of propriety and dignity, insulated from all other activities in the household. The furnishing and decor of the parlour indicate that it was seen as a room for the display of objects of universal refinement and culture; it was not the place for personal

souvenirs, family photographs, hand-made or locally-made items. The parlour was the only room in the home deserving of large luxurious rugs and heavy curtains for the windows and archway. These also enhanced the sense of privacy and tranquility desirable in a parlour. Exotic imports were exhibited here. There were two Japanese vases with scenes in green and blue of bullrushes, birds and blue sky.<sup>28</sup> Visible behind Mrs. Motherwell in the only photo of the parlour is a four-panelled folding screen with an oriental design. As a Winnipeg retailer advertised in 1907, Japanese art contributed to the "luxury and beauty" of a home: "What truly artistic home is there in all America that has not its specimens of Oriental art?"<sup>29</sup> Pictures in the parlour were of the sentimental "problem" variety in which the viewer is drawn to speculate upon the story behind the scene depicted.

While the parlour of the Motherwell home was a remnant of a lifestyle based on the protocol and rituals of an earlier time, the lobby expressed a more modern outlook. The lobby was a multiple-purpose room, the centre of daily social and recreational activities for the members of the household. There appears to have been little concern to exhibit objects of universal beauty or refinement in this room as there was in the parlour. Rather the individual tastes, experiences and pleasures of members of the family were in evidence as were objects associated with the local environment. A davenport desk, originally from the Territorial capital building at Battleford, and presented to W. R. Motherwell, usually sat under the east window. A grandfather clock, also a presentation to Mr. Motherwell, sat near the front entrance after 1918. A framed photograph of the first Saskatchewan cabinet hung in the lobby as did portraits of Motherwell's parents. Mrs. Motherwell displayed mementos of her work among the Indians in this room. A beadwork collection adorned one of the walls and there were also two or three Indian portrait paintings, possible the work of James Henderson of Fort Qu'Appelle.<sup>30</sup>

The lobby seems to have had a more genuine air of warmth and hospitality than the Motherwell's parlour. Many of those once familiar with the home described the room as "cozy."<sup>31</sup> The dark wainscot panelling and the fireplace helped create this atmosphere. The centre-piece of the lobby was the open-hearth, wood-burning fireplace with burnt-orange tile facade and wooden overmantel with shelves and a mirror at the centre. The fireplace may be regarded as a reminder of the Victorian cult of domesticity. The hearth enjoyed a revival toward the end of the nineteenth century not because it was necessary or practical as a source of heat but for its symbolic meaning.<sup>32</sup> The fireplace evoked the idea of the home as a place of warmth, security and protection. It was seen as a means of fostering family stability and cohesion in the face of a rapidly changing world. A mirror at the centre of the mantel could reflect the happy scene of the family gathered about the hearth.

In her address on “Keeping Young People Interested in Country Life,” Mrs. H. W. Dayton of Virden, Manitoba told the Home Economics Society of Manitoba in 1913 that she was

... glad to see in the new homes being built that there are fireplaces—not for ornament only, but big places that will accommodate a number of persons around it. You can imagine the young people cracking nuts and jokes around the fire, but you can not imagine them doing it around a hole in the floor called a register.<sup>33</sup>

The fireplace in the Motherwell home served primarily symbolic purposes. In a home equipped with central heating, and this one was particularly ineffective, it was not a necessity. The fireplace was useful as an auxiliary source of heat only in the winter months when a coal baseburner was set inside the opening. Nevertheless it served as the focus of the activities the family shared together in the evenings. It was in the lobby and not in the cold formal parlour that the Motherwell family played games such as checkers, pit, table tennis, crokinole and euchre.<sup>34</sup> Katherine’s sister Janet would gather the children around the fireplace and tell their fortunes by sending wishes up the chimney.

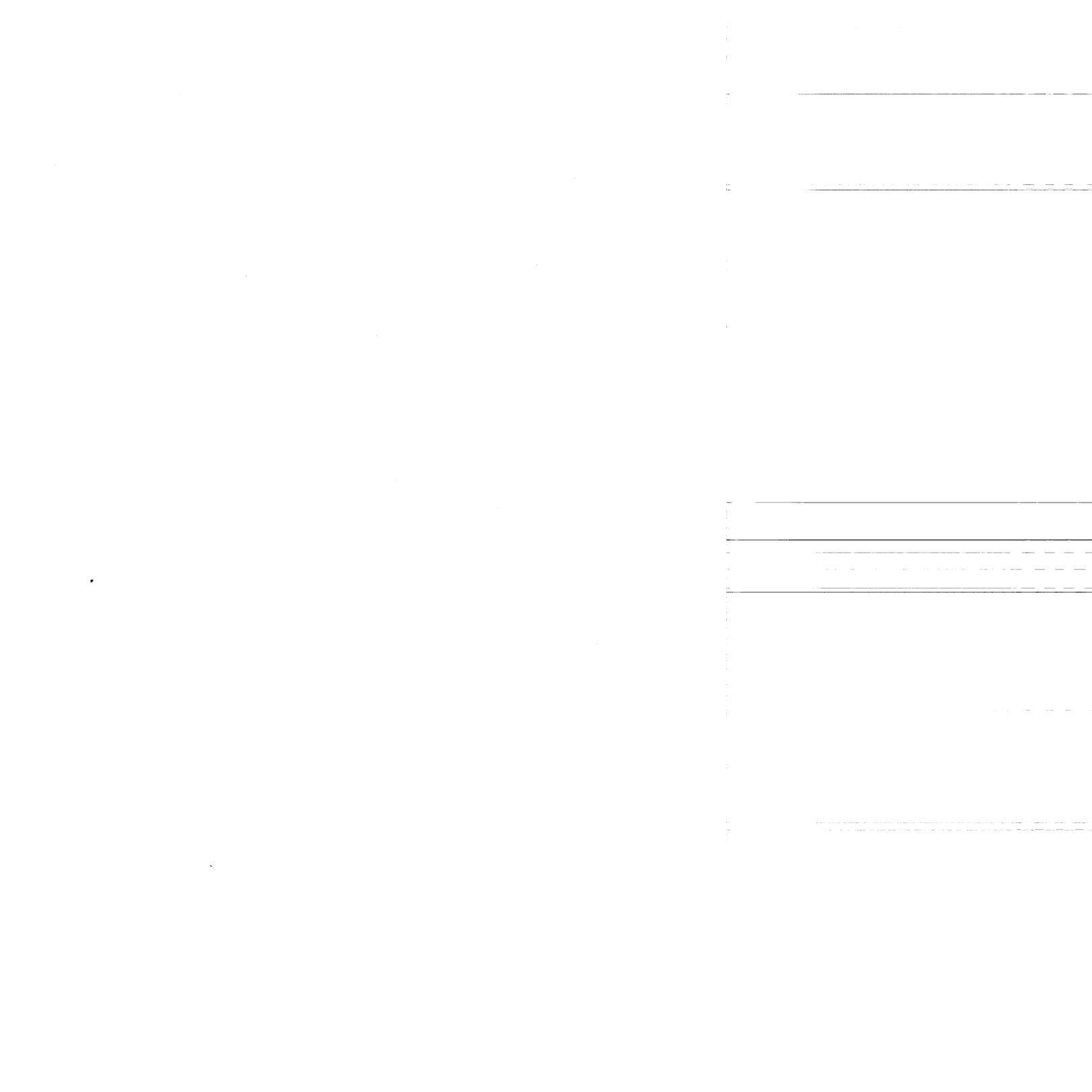
The material record of the Motherwells documents domestic life at Lanark Place and provides clues to some of the beliefs and values cherished by this family. The architectural and decorative motifs of the home and its pastoral environment represented certain domestic virtues. The home evoked the theme of closeness to nature which was seen as a preserver of spiritual and moral values. It was built of natural materials, the fieldstones of the prairie, and was eventually wrapped in virginia creeper. The porches of varying shapes and positions offered numerous views of the splendour of the natural surroundings. The pleasures of outdoor life could be appreciated indoors as well through large windows that acted as frames for the landscape and through decorative details such as potted plants, leafy wallpaper and stuffed animals. The prominent fireplace in the Motherwell home displayed the domestic sentiments of security, protection and traditional family bonds. The home was originally designed and shaped to accommodate distinct roles for the servants, family and their guests. The spatial organization of the home projected the concept of two separate communities under one roof. The original arrangement of the front hallway and the two formal presentation rooms at the front of the home suggest a lifestyle based on refined rituals and the observance of social station. The material record may also be used as evidence that formality and ceremony were gradually eroded in the Motherwell home and the recognition of social station became less marked. The formal dining room disappeared as all residents shared meals together in the kitchen. When the maze of doors at the front entrance was eliminated, guests could be welcomed into a cozy family living room without undue ceremony rather than having to sit in a proper parlour. Yet a

formal parlour remained in the Motherwell home until well into the 1920's. By the time of the First World War adjustments had been made to adapt the home to an era of less rigid behaviour codes but this lifestyle had not been fully and boldly embraced. The Motherwell home embodied both old and new values as the residents of the Abernethy district seemed to express in a presentation honouring the Motherwells on the occasion of the fifty-seventh anniversary of the first turning of the sod; their home had always manifested both "a rare charm and culture" and a "delightful hospitality and sincerity."<sup>35</sup>

#### NOTES

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## BOOK REVIEWS

**Dictionary of Canadian Biography. Vol. XI: 1881 to 1890**, edited by Frances G. Halpenny and Jean Hamelin. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. Pp. xx, 1,092, \$35.00, cloth.

The publication of a volume of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* is always a welcome occurrence to students and scholars with a personal or professional interest in disciplines which deal with Canadian subjects. Volume XI, the seventh volume to appear, includes biographies of 586 men and women who died between 1881 and 1890. Like its predecessors, this volume provides a wealth of new information about Canada's past by examining the lives of those, both great and small, who contributed to it.

For reasons of space, this review will confine itself to those subjects of most interest to readers of this journal, i.e. individuals whose careers related primarily to Western Canada. But students of Western Canada should be aware that in this volume there are many excellent biographies of important figures from Central and Atlantic Canada, such as Ontario methodist minister and educational administrator Egerton Ryerson, the influential Ultramontane Bishop Bourget of Quebec, and Sir Albert J. Smith, the vigorous but unlucky anti-confederate Premier of New Brunswick.

A useful "Geographical Index" places the figures in their most appropriate regional context. Undoubtedly, the most important Westerner in the volume is Louis Riel. L. H. Thomas presents a masterful analysis of one of the most controversial figures in Canadian history. Although he accepts T. Flanagan's recent view of Riel as a millenarian prophet, he emphasizes that throughout his career "Riel saw himself primarily as the advocate of justice for the Métis" (750).

The destruction of native culture on the prairies and the role of Indian leaders in the 1885 Rebellion can be understood through a group of excellent biographies of Crowfoot, Big Bear, Little Pine, Beardy, Wandering Spirit and Poundmaker by such fine scholars as Hugh Dempsey, Rudy Wiebe, John Tobias and Sylvia van Kirk.

One of the most fascinating studies in this volume is G. Friesen's portrait of John Norquay, the English-speaking mixed blood Premier of Manitoba from 1878 to 1886. In the 1880's Norquay was one of Canada's major political leaders, finally defeated by economic conditions and political manoeuvring. Friesen asserts that Norquay used his connections with wealthy businessmen for private gain, and observes, "like the province which he led, he had made the transition from the fur trade to the world of industrial capitalism" (646).

There are many individuals in this volume whose careers in Western Canada were not primarily concerned with politics. Among these is Lieutenant-Colonel John S. Dennis. Dennis was trained as a land surveyor in Upper Canada, qualifying in 1842. Over the next two decades he surveyed a number of town sites along the routes of the Grand Trunk and Great Western railways. He also had a strong interest in the militia, securing a commission in 1855. He was sent as an employee of the Canadian government party to survey lots in Red River in 1869. He aroused the distrust of the Métis by staying with Dr. Schultz, and by basing surveys on the American section system, a procedure which seemed to threaten existing Métis river lot holdings. During the Red River resistance he organized a motley group of 300 volunteers; when Schultz and his followers were captured, Dennis quickly disbanded the group and returned to Ottawa. Dennis' career in the 1870's was very productive. He served as head of the Dominion Lands Branch from 1871 to 1878. While directing the Western surveys, he attempted to reassure the Métis and the Indians that their rights would be respected, a substantial change from his military tactics of 1869. From 1878 to 1882 he served as deputy minister of the interior under Macdonald. He was very concerned over the depressed situation of the Métis and the Indians, but his sound, practical advice was ignored.

Another interesting figure is John Black, the first Presbyterian minister in the Canadian Northwest. Born in Scotland in 1818, he moved with his family to New York State in 1841. He soon enrolled in an academy in that state to prepare himself for the ministry. He decided to complete his training in Canada West, and was one of the first students enrolled in the Free Church's college (later Know College) in Toronto when it opened in 1844. Since he had some knowledge of French, he expected to preach among the French Canadians in Canada East. Ordained in 1851, he very reluctantly agreed to temporarily serve the Presbyterian community in Red River. He was to remain there for the last three decades of his life. He was instrumental in developing a number of Presbyterian churches and missions in Manitoba and the North-West Territories. In 1871 he played a major role in the establishment of Manitoba College, one of the colleges that has come to make up the present University of Winnipeg. Black endeavoured to promote good relations between Protestants and Roman Catholics in Manitoba and resigned from the Board of Education in 1876 in opposition to resolutions of the Protestant section of the board aimed at dissolving the province's denominational school system. His prestige in his church was illustrated in 1881 when he was offered the position of moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Unfortunately he had to decline because of illness, and he died in Winnipeg in 1882.

There are a number of interesting British Columbia figures in this volume. Among these is Francis J. Barnard, a loyalist from Quebec, who came to the Fraser River gold fields in 1859. Failing to find gold, he moved into the transportation business. In the gold-rush period he successfully eliminated the competition of both small and large American transport companies on mainland British Columbia and set up "a vertical Canadian monopoly in the essential carriage of mail, express freight, passengers and gold" (51). He won the federal contract to build the 700-mile section of the CPR telegraph line through the Yellowhead Pass from Fort Edmonton to Cache Creek. He then suffered a serious financial loss when the Macdonald government abandoned the Yellowhead route and cancelled his contract. He failed to get compensation for this loss in the courts. He was also a politician who played an important part in promoting British Columbia's union with Canada. A more important political figure is the colonial administrator Sir Anthony Musgrave, governor of British Columbia from 1869 to 1871. Born in Antigua in 1825, he entered the colonial service in 1854 as colonial secretary of his native colony. While governor of Newfoundland (1864-1869) he made vigorous efforts to promote the island's union with Canada, a policy which he regarded as the solution to Newfoundland's serious economic problems. However, he was unable to overcome the island's powerful anti-Confederation forces. As governor of British Columbia he strongly emphasized the need for the construction of a railway to B.C. as a means of overcoming popular opposition and indifference to union with Canada. In Newfoundland he had found it frustrating to work within the constraints of responsible government. He did not face such restrictions in B.C. and in less than two years he used his exceptional administrative abilities to bring the province into Confederation.

One of the most controversial figures in B.C. history is the coal-miner, entrepreneur and politician Robert Dunsmuir. D. T. Gallacher rejects both the old view of Dunsmuir as a great builder and pioneer industrialist and the recent view of him as B.C.'s "chief symbol of unbridled capitalism" (293). Gallacher maintains that Dunsmuir was not an especially ruthless coal magnate when compared with other B.C. coal entrepreneurs of the 1870's and 1880's. He asserts that what chiefly distinguished Dunsmuir from the other coal promoters, many of whom failed to get enough start-up capital, was his "astute move" in obtaining capital from the British naval officers at Esquimalt who had "both an awareness of the value of the coalfields in the region and the financial means to make substantial investments" (292). One can wholeheartedly agree with Gallacher's call for a "full-scale study of his personal and business career . . ." (293).

The *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* continues to maintain its

high standards of scholarship and remains a valuable source for scholars engaged in researching any aspect of Canadian history.

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**Custom Combining on the Great Plains: A History** by T. Isern. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982. Pp. 250, \$18.95, cloth, \$10.95, paper.

Thomas Isern, an assistant professor in the Division of Social Sciences at Emporia State University, Kansas, sees custom combining as a reflection of the adjustment of men and capital to the environment of the great plains. In fact, he concludes the book with the idea that the custom cutter is "the archetypical plainsman, the ultimate in adaptation to the geography of his region." The author's promised description of the "archetypical plainsman" however, is somewhat flawed by an infusion of largely unprocessed statistical and other research data which adds little to the text.

The first third of the book is devoted to a brief history of the development of custom combining and outlines the environmental, economic, agricultural, technological and social influences that have shaped farming practices on the great plains. Isern describes the development of machine farming from the late nineteenth century and explains the major innovations and events that changed farming from an occupation of labour to a capital intensive enterprise. The labour shortages and grain demands of the First World War led to increased mechanization of American farming and exhibited the advantages of machine farming. Agricultural practices were modified to suit modern equipment and through the nineteen twenties, farm equipment usage increased steadily. The high capital cost associated with mechanized farming however, limited the ownership of farm equipment and supported numbers of itinerent custom operators who relied on the south to north movement of the harvest for work. The concurrent development of a national road network made this type of operation possible. The Second World War led to farm labour shortages and an increased world demand for grain. However, as industrial production was focused on the war effort, farm equipment became scarce. This combination of circumstances provided perfect conditions for the operations of custom combiners. The 1944 Massey-Harris Self-Propelled Harvest Brigade is well described to show the links between custom combiners experience and farm implement design. In the post war economy, Isern elaborates on the further evolution of the custom combiner by explaining the changing conditions in American agriculture that eliminated

part-time farmer/custom combiners and other marginal operators.

The fifth and six chapters of the book focus on the current state of custom combining. Isern describes the large amount of equipment needed in the industry and analyzes how the operators buy, sell or trade equipment to improve their operations. The work crew is another essential part of custom combining; Isern provides an insight into the costs and problems of managing a crew of travelling workers. He especially notes the improvements that have kept custom combining attractive to labour. Isern also describes the daily routine of custom combining and the reader begins to see the professional abilities and hard work that mark the haste of the harvest.

Government involvement and regulation is described in two chapters. The first outlines the efforts of local governments to regulate custom combiners and direct them to areas where they were needed. These attempts at formalizing custom combiners—farmer relationships provide an interesting example of government's well meaning attempts—to regulate the frontier individual. Isern also describes the discussions between national governments which eventually opened the international boundary to custom combiners.

Isern concludes his book with a short biography of a custom cutter, Irvin Zacha, who began combining in Kansas in 1946 on a shoestring. Zacha's subsequent career in custom combining spans three decades giving an idea of the growth and trials of the industry.

The book provides a great deal of information on custom combining, however Isern has cluttered his writing with a morass of statistics, tables and maps which add little to his account. While some of the tables give interesting items, much of the data, by Isern's own admission (p. 37), appears to be compiled from incomplete or limited records. Limited analysis of this data by the author also caused the reviewer to question the significance of various items. Between pages 108–111 the author quotes four sources in detail with two tables to conclude that custom combine outfits used between 2.1 and 2.5 combines each. Some reworking of the data would have made this section more effective.

The photos selected for the book highlight the demanding life of the custom combiner and add much to Isern's descriptive text.

The book presents a look at an interesting adaptation of man and capital to the environment of the great plains and gives many insights into the development of plains agriculture. Unfortunately the author has been unable to resist using unnecessary detailed research data which adds little to the text and reduces its readability.

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**The Great Plains: Perspectives and Prospects**, edited by M. P. Lawson and M. E. Baker. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1981. Pp. 284, \$9.95, paper.

Precise definition of regions creates problems. It is therefore apt that in the preface it is conceded that the boundaries of the Great Plains is unclear. The book generally restricts the region to the mainly flat area defined by the Missouri River in the east, the Rocky Mountains to the west, the border with Canada in the north, and it encompasses Oklahoma and the Texas Panhandle to the south. The title itself is fully appropriate. Various perspectives, grouped by subject area, are given consideration, and considerable speculation as to future prospects is made.

In the section on historical perspectives Clawson argues that the impact of change over time is more the result of external forces than internal initiatives. One cannot help but observe that this is at variance with the concept of rugged individualism, a prairie myth considered in the ultimate chapter. Clawson's examples include the transformation of the Indian way of life following the introduction of horses, and the effect of the Homestead Act on settlement. A second valid point raised is the homocentric nature of resources. Specific physical resources may have existed for a long time, but without human ingenuity, they remain dormant. Lockeretz in his consideration of the dust-bowl rightly perceives that its cause was not singular. Perhaps the climatic factors are underemphasized. He mentions the ecological view that the imposition of a plains agricultural system devoid of environmental constraints was a primary cause of soil erosion. The main value of this section, however, is its recognition that economic factors are not epiphenomenal. High wheat prices which occur simultaneously with abundant rainfall have precipitated more grain farming. Paradoxically, the 1930s Great Depression also stimulated wheat production since farmers had become so indebted that increased production was conceived as a necessary procedure to meet mortgage and rental payments. Insufficient attention was paid to the land's suitability for crop production.

The section entitled people in transition contains three divisions. Brown in his assessment of potential impacts of changing population size and composition on the plains posits the view that economic decentralization, preference for rural living, and modernization of rural life are responsible for the positive turnaround in population growth in nonmetropolitan America. Brown contends that Great Plains diversity demands that specific local problems be addressed. Pursell's discussion of natural population decrease utilizes a taxonomy which designates natural population decrease counties as those where deaths exceeded births in four out of six years over the period 1970 through

1975. A negative impact of population decline is potential labour shortage, but positive impacts for development include larger per capita bank balances of older residents which act as funding sources, and greater leadership possibilities for young business people. Williams, White and Johnson in their attempt to predict future qualities of life in the region anticipate that world population growth and energy shortages will continue to maintain demand for Great Plains agricultural and energy resources. While conceding that their climatic scenario is uncertain, the preceding authors contend that recent favourable and reliable world climate conditions may change, which in turn would augment demand for Great Plains agricultural products. The preceding papers involve prediction. This necessarily demands caution. The projections, however, appear reasoned rather than intoxicated.

The section on climatic influence is scholarly, interesting, and recommended. People inhabiting hazardous zones often perceive that hazards are cyclical in nature. Conjecture suggests that droughts in North America recur every 22 years. This conjecture is supported by dendrochronological research. In a paper of adventurous scholarship, Stockton, Mitchell, and Meko discuss tree-ring evidence of a relationship between drought occurrence and the Hale sunspot cycle. Results indicated that the risk of large-scale drought increases following the Hale sunspot minimum. Scant mention is made here of a fascinating paper by Warwick and Bowden who hypothesized that the impact of climatic fluctuations on a persistent and adaptive society have through time a smaller impact on its residents because of their adaptations. Evidence supported the lessening hypothesis.

Five papers occupy the section on the agricultural spectrum. Hulett notes that grasslands have many values including aesthetic resources and is aware that acrimonious conflict between conflicting interests may develop. In a paper of considerable vision, he discusses the catastrophe hypothesis which affirms that the more technology we employ, the greater our dependence on it, the greater the chance of future disaster. He advocates, in relation to the grasslands, more interdisciplinary research and less reliance on technology. A similar plea for interdisciplinary research comes from Grogan in his paper on plant genetics. While not denying the contribution of genetics to yield increases, other contributions such as soil fertilizers and cultural practices are recognized as valuable. For this vision, Grogan deserves credit. In his paper on water-law institutions, Moses asserts that accommodation on water transfers can be reached, and is optimistic that legal institutions can satisfy an increasing public demand for instream use. Borelli presents an optimistic view on the future of irrigated agriculture on the Great Plains, and advocates solutions to the major threats to irrigated agriculture which he considers energy and water quality and competition for water.

Schmedemann's paper addresses ownership and control of Great Plains agricultural land. An increase in absentee landlords, paid managers and land aggregation is anticipated. Part ownership should also be added to the list. An interesting observation is that inheritance tax was instituted to prevent massive land accumulations. Paradoxically, such taxes now ensure aggregations since they augment the financial problems of owner-operators. Altogether, an interesting section, especially the papers by Hulett and Grogan.

Section five deals with industrial and urban influences. Kale restricts his domain to the northern plains and foresees that manufacture of electrical and nonelectrical machinery will continue to increase their percentage of the region's industrial base. A scholarly, lavishly illustrated paper is provided by Rugg and Rundquist. They dispel the image that the Great Plains are predominantly rural, and develop the theme of urban fields in the Great Plains context. They refer to the population phenomenon of nonmetropolitan areas currently experiencing a more rapid population growth than metropolitan areas. The authors also assess the economic, land use, and mining impacts on the urban periphery on the Great Plains. In the final paper of this section Leistriz and Murdock consider the implications of energy development in this region rich in oil-shale, coal and uranium.

A fascinating paper by Gessaman concludes the book. The myth of rugged individualism on the Great Plains persists in literature, visual images and specific life experiences. Functions, however, have been continually transferred from individuals and families to groups. It is pointed out that requests for government intervention in Great Plains prices and income problems runs counter to rugged individualism. Gessaman aptly comments on the ability of Great Plains residents to tolerate the cognitive dissonance engendered by imagery that is non-congruent with reality.

The book provides an interesting miscellany of papers of variable quality. The methodologies used by Stockton, Mitchell, and Meko, and Rugg and Rundquist in the sections on climate and urban influences respectively are impressive. Several papers make the bold attempt to predict the future, usually with sound reasoning. Particularly impressive was the stress on interdisciplinary work. Many problem solutions demand knowledge of several disciplines.

An additional section is suggested. Attitudinal research of the type produced by Saarinen in his monograph on perception of the drought hazard on the Great Plains (1966) would definitely add to the perspectives. Much motivation is nonpecuniary. Studies of the perceptions and attitudes of Great Plains residents would widen the domain of the book and facilitate better understanding of Great Plains problems, and decision-making.

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**Overland from Canada to British Columbia**, by Mr. Thomas McMicking. Edited by Joanne Leduc. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1981. Pp. 121, \$19.95, cloth.

The promise of gold drew a large number of people to British Columbia in the mid-1800s. The majority of them travelled by way of Panama (not the Panama Canal, as stated on the dust jacket) or by sea around Cape Horn. A large number travelled the overland route through American territory.

This book is the journal of the leader of the largest single group of people who travelled the overland journey through British Territory, Thomas McMicking. This account of the journey was originally published in 14 parts by the New Westminster "British Columbian" between November 1862 and January 1863. The journal was kept from the time McMicking, with 23 other men, left Queenston, Canada West and by American train and steamer reached Fort Garry, Red River in the company of around 130 others, who were also bound for British Columbia. "The Overlanders," as the group of around 150 are called, then made a long and difficult crossing of the Hudson Bay Territory, dividing at Tete Jaune Cache, some going to Fort Kamloops, some into the Cariboo and some to New Westminster. Although the account illustrates that the journey was extremely difficult it is interesting to note that the only woman in the party, Mrs. Schubert, made the entire crossing while pregnant, giving birth to her fourth child the day after arriving in Fort Kamloops.

Joanne Leduc brought together this account using a number of sources. She has included watercolors and sketches by William Hind, "Expedition Artist," which add much to the description of the journey. The drawings, photographs, and map which outline the route taken help us to visualize the journey. The book has a lengthy introduction, a write-up on Hind, several appendixes, one of which talks about the route in detail, a bibliography and very extensive interesting notes. It is unfortunate that the notes could not have been placed with the text. Their location makes constant flipping back and forth almost mandatory.

An interesting side to the book is Joanne Leduc's section on the contributions the travellers made to Western Canada in later years.

This book will be of great interest to those who enjoy Canadian history.

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**Letters from a Lady Rancher** by Monica Hopkins, introduction by Sheilagh S. Jameson. Calgary: Glenbow Museum, 1981. Pp. 172, \$12.95, cloth.

As interest in the role of women in Canadian history grows, we can expect to see more books like *Letters from a Lady Rancher*. Not only does it provide an absorbing picture of life on a horse ranch in early twentieth-century Alberta from a woman's perspective but it does so in the literary form of letter-writing, a form particularly common to women who most often bore the responsibility for keeping family and friends back home informed, reassured and entertained. Thus this book helps to rescue the experiences of women on the ranching frontier as well as encouraging us to respect the now neglected art of letter-writing.

On one level, *Letters from a Lady Rancher* is simply a good read. Through letters to her friend Gill in Australia, Monica Hopkins recounts interesting events that occurred on a day-to-day basis from 1909 to 1911 at "Enmore," a ranch located south-west of Calgary in the Priddis area. As Billie Hopkins' new bride, Monica came to the ranch from a comfortable English upper middle class family complete with servants. While life on the ranching frontier was clearly much different from the one she had experienced in England, she did not come to a totally primitive environment. Her "log cabin" had "a very nice large sitting room, kitchen and three bedrooms" (p. 10) as well as a larder and bathroom. Monica did, however, have to learn to cook and clean and she immediately began to contribute this work plus the care of farm-yard animals to the family economy. The following spring she also worked with her husband in the garden. Many of the best anecdotes in these letters come from the experiences of learning how to cope with laundry day and how to care for and nurture chickens, the one animal Monica never seems to have liked! Here, in everyday life, is illustrated the dialectic between metropolitan culture and frontier reality.

Despite her many tasks, Monica found a great deal of time to enjoy the freedom ranch life offered her. Historians like Eccles have noted that the frontier provided an outlet for the energies of adventurous young men but the letters of the childless Monica Hopkins give a

good indication that some young women took advantage of the wide open spaces as well. Soon after her arrival in Alberta, Monica learned to ride and this gave her the freedom to visit neighbours, explore the countryside or ride the nine miles to the store and post office for much sought after mail. Along with her husband, Billie, and often a hire man or two or some friends, Monica enjoyed a number of adventures including a camping trip to the mountains. Throughout the course of the two years these letters cover, one feels that Monica and Billie Hopkins were two young people getting a great deal of enjoyment out of life. No problem ever became a crisis and Monica was probably being quite honest when she said "it is a glorious life and even if we don't make our fortunes we are getting a great deal of joy and fun out of living. We are able to do *what* we like, *when* we like, and *how* we like. . . ." (p. 57). For the Hopkins, at least, life seems to have been the dream of youth fulfilled.

That her situation was not necessarily typical, however, is recognized by the author who occasionally remarks on the much harder life faced by other women including native women in the district. About a year after arriving on the ranch, Monica admitted that despite loving every minute of her new life she realized "that this is essentially a man's country" and a woman must be prepared to "sink her own identity and take on her husband's interests" (pp. 89-90). Although Monica's marriage seems to have been surprisingly egalitarian for the time and place and her husband (and even hired men) frequently participated in cooking and cleaning chores, other women were not so lucky. Particularly burdened, as Monica notes, were young mothers and old women who most often were left isolated in their homes without ready access to medical care or helping companionship. In addition Monica sometimes acknowledges the impact of poverty on many families. The Hopkins never seemed to suffer because their operation was already well-established and they received assistance of various sorts from home. Billie, for example, came into a legacy which allowed the couple to return to England for a lengthy visit. And, as Monica notes, the Hopkins were regarded as members of the elite though they were not always seen as behaving in keeping with that standing in life.

Because the Hopkins were members of the local elite, judicious use must be made of the evidence provided in these letters. Important aspects of Monica's experience may well have been the exception rather than the rule. Nonetheless the insights provided into the everyday life of women on the ranching frontier make this book a useful addition to the socio-historical literature of this country.

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**Bacchanalia Revisited: Western Canada's Boozy Skid to Social Disaster**, by James H. Gray. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982. Pp. 197, \$16.95, cloth.

Here is a book that could serve equally well as required reading for members of the Women's Christian Temperance Union, or as a well documented source of information for the social historian interested in the changing pattern of laws, ideologies and public drinking habits of prairie peoples during this century.

James H. Gray, the author of eight previous books, has rightfully earned the reputation of being one of Canada's most widely read social historians. His *Red Lights on the Prairies* and *Booze* published in 1971 and 1972 respectively are probably his best known works and were in part responsible for bringing some aspects of Canadian history out of the rarified dry air of academia and into the living rooms of Canadians. In this respect Gray along with Pierre Burton must be given the credit for accomplishing the difficult task of popularizing Canada's past.

However, *Bacchanalia Revisited* is not the vintage Gray that his readers have come to expect. This book seems to be influenced greatly by his childhood years and his father, a binge alcoholic. He confesses that his happiest childhood memories are of the prohibition era when his father "got a steady job, kept it, and brought his pay home every week." As a youth he belonged to the local Temperance Legion and handed out temperance tracts on street corners. It is unfortunate that Gray lets his temperance zeal get a little out of hand in this latest attempt; there is an element of preaching here, of mindless moralizing that detracts from this otherwise excellent documentation of social change on the prairies.

The essence of the book is an analysis of the social processes that led to the abandonment of the prohibition policies in the three prairie provinces which originated in Canada during the second decade of this century. Gray contends that prohibition ended largely because the provincial governments thought they could develop a mechanism for dispensing alcohol to the public that would also prevent the problems usually associated with alcohol. With this system in place the governments believed they had the best of two worlds; the sobriety of prohibition, with the added benefit of huge sums of money generated from the sale of alcohol. He also suggests that there was something uniquely Canadian in the public belief that governments could devise a way to permit drinking but eliminate drunkenness. It is not made clear if its our naivety or conservativeness that makes us unique, but even the Americans, with their deeply ingrained concern for the preservation of civil liberties retained prohibition longer than Canadians. From Gray's perspective, this belief on the part of the Canadian public and their representative governments that liquor controls would work was a

serious error in judgement that has put Canadian society on a collision course with social disaster.

There are chapters in the book that are vintage Gray. His vivid accounts of the bootleg trade in Manitoba in Chapter Four is an example of this author's expertise as a writer. The Gray humour is also still evident; he tells us, for example, that the provincial governments approached their new role as controllers of alcohol ". . . With a sort of jaundiced toleration, almost like straight-laced spinsters who inherited a string of lucrative brothers." Gray is a story teller, and it is this sort of earthy imagery that transforms dry historical documentation into something memorable and meaningful for the reader. Unfortunately, this book does not maintain this desirable storytelling style that holds readers so well. As the chapters unfold, the book begins to read more and more like a standardized textbook of Canadian history, emphasizing dates, names and technical terminology. This process reaches its apex in Chapter 11 in which Gray tells us about the medical discoveries which relate alcohol abuse during pregnancy to possible fetal abnormalities. This chapter is no doubt based on scientific evidence but the scientific literary style that Gray uses here seems out of place with much of the book.

Gray concludes by offering some modest solutions which he believes will halt our skid to social disaster. All of his solutions are directed at making alcohol less available to the public. For example, he suggests raising the price of liquor to the point that its purchase becomes prohibitive to much of the public. This would mean a cost of about \$60.00 for a bottle of hard liquor and \$50.00 for a case of beer. He gives us figures and study results which prove that alcohol consumption is directly related to price, but is realistic enough to know that no political system is going to hang itself with an issue as controversial as sixty dollar a bottle booze. Gray also overlooks the fact that raising the price of booze to these levels would be a solution that is heavily class biased. The low paid worker might be forced to cut down on his liquor purchases, but, just as in prohibition, the liquor cabinets of the rich would be well stocked. Raising the price to this level would be nothing more than a modern version of prohibition and would bring about all the problems commensurate with that era, including the brewing and selling of moonshine to the working class at a price they could afford. Gray also suggests that we could limit the number of liquor outlets by limiting the number of state issued licenses. This recommendation also seems to be made with tongue in cheek. It may be true that the noon hour tippler may have second thoughts about his double scotch lunch if he has to walk ten blocks to get it rather than across the street, but this type of drinking is not the essence of our problems with alcohol. If our noon hour drinker *must* have his drink he will get it one way or another, even if he must bring it to the office

with him. Raising the drinking age to at least twenty-one is a more practical partial solution. Many people would no doubt agree with Gray that lowering the drinking age to eighteen caused more problems than were anticipated. While those teenagers who are determined to drink will continue to do so regardless of the law, there are probably thousands of young prairie people who drink earlier simply because the booze is legally available to them and it is therefore "the thing to do." Raising the legal age will not in itself save our society from moral degradation, if the results would be noticeable at all. Perhaps we could have the governments lower the alcoholic content of the drinks he suggests. An interesting suggestion, but would it really limit people's use of alcohol? If a person's intention is to drink to get drunk, then its only a matter of time until they achieve their purpose; they will drink more to achieve the same effect. As for the casual drinker who drinks only at social occasions and makes it a point not to get drunk, the lowered alcohol content might be a blessing in disguise that Gray has not anticipated. Would this person not now be able to drink *more* without the fear of becoming intoxicated?

Gray's book is interesting. It fills a gap in our historical knowledge about life on the prairies and for this reason alone is worth reading. For those who are expecting a sequel to Gray's previous works there is still enough of the old master here to keep them from suffering too much disappointment. However they will not find the rich depth and colour here that they have come to expect of this author. For the scholar the facts are here, all carefully presented and documented albeit at times muddled in with the temperance lectures. For the temperance advocate the book will be a reaffirmation of the faith with a bit too much of that dry historical stuff. *Bacchanalia Revisited* would seem to be a book that offers a little something to everyone but not a lot to anyone.

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**Alberta, 1954-1979, A Provincial Bibliography** by Gloria M. Strathern. Edmonton: The University of Alberta, 1982. Pp. 750, \$30.00, cloth.

Alberta has been poorly served by historians and bibliographers in comparison to Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia. Strathern's effort does not correct the imbalance. The typographical errors in the volume are numerous and in some instances embarrassing. Leafing through the volume, one finds "Bowsfield" misspelled on page 334, "Jensen" on page 509, and "Artibise" on page 339. These amusing annoyances, where correct spellings are obvious, leads to a

mistrust of other information. The index is not always accurate. For example, the "Elk Point and District Reflections" indicated as number 2880 on page 479 is not to be found as that listing.

More serious than typographical errors are the omissions. While the theses completed at Alberta universities are listed, much done elsewhere is ignored. In some instances the omissions are indeed serious. Omissions tend to be general books on the West that include substantial sections on Alberta. Examples of a few omissions are:

Trope, Harold Martin. *Only Farmers Need Apply*. (Toronto, 1972).

Foster, Janet, *Working for Wildlife*. (Toronto, 1978).

Thompson, John. *The Harvest of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918* (Toronto, 1978).

Van Kirk, Sylvia. *The Role of Women in the Fur Trade*. (Winnipeg, 1975).

Hall, David. "The Political Career of Clifford Sifton" (Toronto Ph.D., 1973).

University of Lethbridge. *A Preliminary Guide to Archival Sources Relating to Southern Alberta*. (Lethbridge, 1979).

All of these should have been included.

There is also a great inconsistency in the listing of local histories. Checking of the lists of private Alberta publications receiving provincial government assistance indicates that a sizeable portion have not been included. The history of "The Highway Patrol Branch 25 Years," and Charles Merta's history of the Knights of Columbus are, for example, absent. Some of the Tree Frog Press publications are also not listed.

More seriously, the philosophy behind the selection of publications should be questioned. The decision to exclude government publications is most unfortunate. Only the archaeological impact assessments published by Syncrude are listed—the hundreds done by other companies and research firms, resting in the Historical Resources Library, Alberta Culture, are not. The exclusion of Babcock's government published biography of Alexander Rutherford is unconscionable. As very little monograph material is available on Alberta, the best should be included, whether a government publication or not.

As a historian who tends to quarrel amicably with librarians, the bibliography illustrates one critical point—the users of a bibliography must be consulted, if not be principal advisors to the bibliographer. Scholars like Professor Lewis G. Thomas and Dr. Hugh Dempsey could have provided the expertise which would have made a definitive volume. Generally students and scholars will find the shorter work by

Alan Artibise on Western Canada a more useful and accurate compilation.

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**Paper Wheat: The Book**, created by 25th Street Theatre. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1982. Pp. 97, \$10.95, paper.

*Paper Wheat* is, as the blurb to this book reminds us, the most successful stage play in Saskatchewan's history and, though the blurb doesn't go this far, one of the most successful in Canadian stage history. It filled theatres night after night, received standing ovations across the country, and made enthusiasts out of many who had been indifferent to indigenous theatre. Lovers of *Paper Wheat* will want to know more, and they will find it in this book. Here is a complete text of the play, but also: an introduction by John Archer, giving the historical context of the events on which the play is based; an introduction by Don Kerr, describing the genesis and metamorphosis of the company and the play; a short account by one of the actor-creators; many pictures from various productions of the play; scores for the play's songs; and an itinerary for the provincial and national tours. In examining the various parts that make up the book, I want to ask for what audience the book is created?

The answer to the question is implicit in the title—*Paper Wheat: The Book*—echoing such popular titles as *Superman: The Movie* which announce that the offered fare will be “the same: but different,” the assurance that every fan wants. This book is not designed for academics, nor is it an acting version. Nor, I think, is it designed for a general audience unfamiliar with the play; both John Archer and Don Kerr assume familiarity with the characters in the play, and, more important, the play is decidedly thin when it is not fleshed out with the peculiar charm that it had in performance. For example, the scene called “Squeezing the Land,” which was one of the more memorable scenes in the play, was a moving and dramatic condensation of the problems that led to over-farming, its consequences, and how farmers learned to treat the land with respect. The audience's attention, appropriately, was held by a grey blanket, which represented the land, as it was flung, folded, squeezed, and pleated. With the printed text, however, our attention is shifted to the words, and it is hard to avoid awareness of the flatness of the compromise attempted here between poetry and colloquialism: “The wheat grew tall and golden. You should have seen it.” So, too, in the juggling scene near the end of the second Act, the text cannot provide the excitement and suspense (will

he drop it?) of the live stage. The theatricality here, as elsewhere in the play, is part of the rhetoric. Occasionally, where the showmanship actually undermined the rhetoric—as in the “Mystery Theatre” scene, where our amusement at the antics and costumes of the radio actors actually disrupts the straight-forward narrative—the bare text restores the proper emphasis. But this is the exception.

The gap here is more than that which exists between any play script and a production. Collective plays are not usually strong in structure, or in linguistic detail. In a paper given to the *Canadian Theatre Today* conference in October 1981, and later published in *Canadian Theatre Review*, Alan Filewod argued that *Paper Wheat* “once transformed into dramatic literature, . . . would invite criticism as such, and quite possibly, it might prove a mediocre piece of dramatic literature.” His prediction is lamentably accurate, but his point was that a collective production like *Paper Wheat* belongs properly in a particular context and with a particular cast. This edition, I suggest, will be most successful with those who can bring the context to the text, with those many viewers of *Paper Wheat* who have become lovers of the play. The dressing around the text is designed largely to re-create the context, and in function as well as format, this edition seems to me to be related to the genre of the “souvenir programme,” the glossy memento of a night at the theatre.

Of the introductions, Don Kerr’s is the most valuable. Bob Bainborough’s “Recollections of the Making of *Paper Wheat*” adds little to the quite full account in Mr. Kerr’s “Epic Theatre in Saskatchewan.” The history of the co-operative movement in Saskatchewan, as told by John Archer, though interesting enough has really very little to do with the play: *Paper Wheat* is not the history of Saskatchewan any more than *Macbeth* is the history of Scotland. The history that is most pertinent is the history that Don Kerr gives of the play itself and of the company that created it. Kerr also provides us with the provenance of this particular text, and by comparing it with earlier versions argues persuasively that the third version, presented here, represents an improvement in some ways over the second version, which was toured nationally, and published in *Canadian Theatre Review*. His insights into the shifts in political nuance as the play was revised each time are particularly valuable.

The different versions of the text raise the question of the validity of publishing a collective creation at all. The play has been protean, growing and changing as the location and cast changed, and publication might seem to represent an undesirable fossilization. However, critics and historians, at least, will be glad to have a text of some authority with which to work. Moreover, that this book is easily available and provided with enticing trimmings should make it valuable to those who would like to teach the play. The apparatus, as I have

argued, does as much as can be done to evoke the living play, and Prairie Books is to be commended for producing about the best possible compromise between the living, but amorphous and inaccessible, play and a solid and accessible, but lamentably thin script.

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**The Making of a Socialist: The Recollections of T. C. Douglas** edited by Lewis H. Thomas. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1982. Pp. xiii, 400, \$21.00, cloth.

At first glance this might appear a disappointing book; for it is composed of interviews with Mr. Douglas, conducted in 1958 at the behest of the Saskatchewan Archives Board by Saskatchewan journalist Christ Higginbotham. So much has happened in the intervening quarter century, to Mr. Douglas, Saskatchewan and Canada, that one wonders if the content can avoid being stale. But once begun, the reader discovers an entertaining and perceptive chronicle of Canadian politics and society, one which although preserved in an archival time capsule proves anything but dull. Indeed, given the memoirs' format and history, the reader experiences the occasional titillation of knowing what his subject does not—the future. Thus when Mr. Douglas talks of his government's achievements in providing health care, he is unaware of the doctor's strike to come or when he disclaims national political ambition, the reader knows that eventually he will succumb and go into federal politics. It is worth saying, however, that Mr. Douglas' recollections prove no embarrassment to him—only that he is fallible—and the reason is that whatever view one might take of his political philosophy, "Tommy" Douglas is revealed here as an intelligent, reasonable and humane man.

How he came to be that way is part of the attraction of the book. The outline is well-known by now—Scottish immigrant lad, chronic knee injury, religious bent turned by economic circumstance into promotion of a social and political gospel. For this reviewer, who had just finished reading J. L. Granatstein's *The Ottawa Men: The Civil Service Mandarins, 1935–1957* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1982), the striking feature of the Douglas story is its ordinariness. No Rhodes scholar, no privileged connections; Douglas's innate talents were honed in a warm and lively family where argument and debate were as common, and as necessary, as air. Activity indeed is the hallmark of Douglas' youth, and his maturity. He was a joiner—scouts, drama club, sports (all important training in the subject's eyes for later leadership); he was a toiler—student, preacher, social worker (each opening his eyes wider to the misery and inequity that purpose-

lessly befall others); and he was a traveller. One of the unexpected revelations is how much he travelled, before and after becoming premier, and how frequently this brought him into contact with people usually associated with a larger stage of public life than the provincial. All of the trips were to Europe, often with side journeys to Scotland, and all of them stimulate political memory: the King and his ministers in the late 1940s, beginning with Atlee, "the ideal committee chairman," who told Douglas that had M. J. Coldwell stayed in England, he might have become prime minister and "made a better prime minister than I have been." Bevan, who Douglas warned not to "try so hard," and Cripps, who is apotheosized here as "J. S. Woodsworth with a beard." Another overseas trip, right after becoming premier, is recalled for contacts made with Saskatchewan military units on the continent and in Britain. It too is welcome for the unfamiliar focus it provides of a provincial politician abroad and for piquing our interest in this neglected perspective on provincial identity.

Unfortunately, from the political scientist's point of view, Higginbotham does not probe this particular recollection for its academic potential. But then at no place in the book is there evidence of the interviewer pressing the interviewee. In fact, the interlocutor is guilty of sometimes shamelessly leading his subject: "The Liberal party actually lacked organization, because it was controlled by the few who had axes to grind. It wasn't a democratic organization" (148), or "I don't think the CCF could depend upon the existing media for any kind of a satisfactory relation" (224). One expects a politician, and at the time these interviews were recorded a *practising* politician, to adjust the record to his advantage, but one depends on the chairman to probe, however politely, behind comfortable generalizations and elisions of fact. To say, as Mr. Douglas does, that "we have a long tradition of radical thinking in Saskatchewan" and to see its origins in our culturally mixed population and frontier values is really not very helpful. Why the CCF in Saskatchewan and Social Credit in Alberta? Or, to declare that "there [is] a great area of economic development in Saskatchewan into which the government couldn't possibly go" (290), because natural resource development requires risk capital, is to beg many questions and paper many ideological cracks into the socialist structure that a leader should be pressed to face, at least for posterity's benefit.

Mr. Douglas gets away with not doing what he does not want to do. Yet if these reminiscences are gilded, everyone's reputation is reburnished not just the speaker's. Douglas' years in Parliament before he entered provincial politics, a period of his career sometimes forgotten by modern commentators, provide an opportunity to evaluate colleagues and foes. Surprisingly, R. B. Bennett and, especially, Mackenzie King come away with high marks, for their parliamentary skills

and personal kindness, although Douglas learned that “you always took somebody with you” when you visited Mr. King (133). Drew too is admired for his ideal of public service and even J. G. Gardiner, who is described as “the last of the ward heelers,” is commended for his courage, honesty and common-touch. Among the cast of yesterday’s leaders, one is noticeably absent. Douglas returned to Saskatchewan in 1944 and John Diefenbaker went to Ottawa in 1940, yet there is no mention of his name during this period and scarcely any afterward.

Douglas’ criticism of such central institutions as the Senate and the Supreme Court for their regional insensitivity are remarkably topical in the context of recent constitutional discussions. They arise in his remarks on the office of Lieutenant Governor, which he also sees as needlessly immune to provincial concerns. In Lord Tweedsmuir he attributes a political acuity not common among holders of chief executive offices in Ottawa or the provinces. This Governor General appears to have anticipated Canadian political debate by thirty years when in 1936 he described Messrs. Douglas and Coldwell as “left-wing Tories,” and to have condensed Social Credit into a novel aphorism: “A Conservative’s idea of a revolution” (110).

The *Recollections* make interesting reading, for Douglas liked ideas and the people who could express them. Among Canadian contemporaries, there were few who matched his ingenuity and energy in articulating his own philosophy. Certainly, it is hard to think of a politician since to equal his skill on the platform or in the chamber. It was the CCF in Saskatchewan who introduced radio broadcasts of legislative debates to Canada and it was the CCF who tried, unsuccessfully as it turned out when it came to securing a federal operating license, to set up a crown corporation to run a provincial radio station. In one of his most penetrating comments, which unfortunately goes unchallenged, Douglas says: “One of the greatest blessings to progressive movements like ours is the radio; it gives us a counter-stroke against the newspapers” (254). William Aberhart might have echoed that sentiment; radio has not always been used for progressive ends. But that one of the great men of Canadian socialism should see the triumph of his cause in the supremacy of the oral over the written word, and this some years before Marshall McLuhan or even Harold Innis’ communication work had become known, reveals an original cast of mind rare in any politician. Equally valuable but also uncommon was a sense of humour, which in answer to an opponent’s description of him as “a stinking skunk and a dirty little thing” could reply: “I certainly resent that ‘little’.”

This is an enjoyable and useful book. Professor Thomas, who has written the foreward and concluding chapter and interlaces the text

with helpful explanatory notes, is to be congratulated for undertaking the enterprise.

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**A Sleep Full of Dreams**, by Edna Alford. Lantzville, B. C.: Oolichan Books, 1981. Pp. 155, \$8.95, paper.

Edna Alford's originality consists partly in her subject matter and partly in her treatment of it. The stories in this first collection are set in Pine Mountain Lodge, a nursing home for old women in Calgary. They are linked not only by setting and subject, but also by the character of Arla, a young woman who works as a nurse at Pine Mountain, and who is the central consciousness in all but two of the stories. Formally, then, the book has affinities with other collections of linked stories such as Margaret Laurence's *A Bird in the House* and Alice Munro's *Lives of Girls and Women*, and as a result the two stories in which Arla plays little or no part, though fine stories in themselves, sit a little oddly in this collection.

It is Arla's growing awareness of the dignity and humanity of even the most grotesque and repellent of her charges that provides a structure for individual stories and a significant moral vision to the book as a whole. Miss Bole, for example, is fat, ugly, club-footed and bed-ridden, and Arla has to use a mechanical device, a hoyer, to lift her in a sling and transport her to the bathtub. Miss Bole dislikes the procedure because it makes her feel helpless and humiliated; as a result she repeats to Arla all the stories of death and dismemberment she has witnessed, sparing no gruesome details. She presumably knows that these stories will upset Arla; she tells them in order to exert some power over her, to make her feel helpless in her turn. Furthermore, Arla is surprised to find that the provincial Department of Cultural Affairs not only wants to buy some of Miss Bole's paintings, but that three of the paintings in question have been hanging over her bed all the time. Arla has never noticed them; she can see the ugliness, but the revelation of the beauty and creativity of Miss Bole's life before she came to the Lodge is a shock.

The women deal with old age in a variety of ways—Mrs. Dawson, still in possession of her faculties and fortunate enough to have an attentive family, takes pride in her approaching hundredth birthday. Others, not so fortunate, defend themselves in other ways—Mrs. Langford retreats into senility and madness; Miss Moss scorns the

shoddiness of the present because she no longer feels valued; Mrs. Tweedsmuir collects worthless junk; Mrs. Pritchard turns to religious belief. Arla is initially scornful of all but Mrs. Dawson, but comes to appreciate them—coming to the end of hard, often unrewarding lives, these women still need to assert their own value and importance in the face of an indifferent world.

One of the funniest stories is “Half-Past Eight,” in which two old ladies get dressed up and not only go out to enjoy the Stampede parade, but end up in the bar of the Palliser Hotel, drinking beer, telling bawdy stories, and having a wonderful, rowdy time. But when they return to the Lodge late at night, Tessie’s make-up has smeared as a result of the day’s exertions, and “her moon white face appeared to project itself out of the dark, like a mask on a stick.” This is a central image of the book: old age is a mask, concealing a variety of human experience and motive.

Alford thoughtfully reminds us of the source of her title, Keats’s *Endymion*, by making Miss Moss a great quoter of Keats:

A thing of beauty is a joy forever:  
 Its loveliness increases; it will never  
 Pass into nothingness; but still will keep  
 A bower quiet for us, and a sleep  
 Full of sweet dreams, and health, and quiet breathing.

The obvious irony, that beauty does not increase at Pine Mountain Lodge, and there seems to be little in the way of health and quiet breathing, is undercut by another irony—that the human need for beauty and dignity, may manifest itself in unexpected places and eccentric forms.

In the final story, Arla witnesses the death of Mrs. Dawson and decides to leave the Lodge, move in with her fiance, and seek another job. This seems a negation of what she has learned about the value of the lives in her charge, but is also an affirmation: since we all end up in such places anyway, Arla must make the best of her youth. Herrick’s “To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time” seems as important a source as Keats. Mrs. Dawson, congratulating Arla on her engagement, “really looked at her as if she were important, as if her plans were part of the fabric of the whole world and were therefore significant.” And of course she is and they are.

Although *A Sleep Full of Dreams* has been widely and justly praised, it must be added that Alford’s machinery occasionally creaks; she has not yet attained the seamless inevitability of an Alice Munro or a Mavis Gallant. “Communion,” for example, makes its point about the relationship between religion and sex and the non-rational, ecstatic nature of both, but does so without much subtlety or shading. And Alford’s fondness for ingenious similes becomes a mannerism. Sometimes the similes work, but as often they seem merely decorative or

their implications are not fully realized: "She drew her purse up from her lap with extreme caution, as though it were filled with nitroglycerine." "Her breasts were empty, flat and wrinkled like crushed tin foil." These statements direct our attention to the author's cleverness rather than to the reality being described. And in the remark, "her eyes were enormous and gleaming, like a lover coming back from the mailbox letterless," she presumably means not that the eyes are like a lover, but like a lover's. Some editorial attention is also needed for sentences such as these: "Mrs. Langland . . . began poking disinterestedly at the oatmeal;" and "He felt badly for the old lady." Disinterested means impartial, not indifferent, and presumably he felt bad, not badly. Such carelessness and imprecision about language are disconcerting, all the more so because Edna Alford shows us in this collection that she has the dimensions of a major talent.

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**A Flannel Shirt and Liberty: British Emigrant Gentlewomen in the Canadian West, 1880–1914**, edited by Susan Jackel. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1982. Pp. xxvii, 229, \$21.95, cloth.

Since turn-of-the-century Britain was both severely overcrowded and had many more females than males, and Canada had vast expanses of territory and a chronic shortage of women, a solution seemed simple—export Britain's superfluous women to Canada. This is the theme of Jackel's *A Flannel Shirt and Liberty*. It is a book of documents—newspaper articles, personal letters, diaries, CPR promotional literature and advertisements—which gives the reader an insight into both the emigrant gentlewomen and life in Western Canada. It also reiterates time and again that what might appear to be a simple solution was in fact fraught with difficulties.

What Canada needed were women who were courageous, resourceful, appreciated the country and had practical training in "plain cooking, including bread making, laundry work, elements of dress-making, butter-making and gardening" (p. 119). What the majority of surplus British women possessed was education, culture, social graces and experience in a life of leisure. Although these differences might appear to have presented unsurmountable problems, they did not stop the promoters of genteel emigration. The colonies needed women, especially wives and they also needed the moralizing influence of the middle class. Thus, the women, Canada and Britain would all benefit.

Susan Jackel develops this theme in a well written introduction and then expands these ideas in chronologically-ordered sections—the

Beginnings: the 1880's; the Doldrums: the 1890's; and the Wheat-Boom Years: 1905–1914. Regardless of the time period the message of the letters and articles was the same: opportunities were available for the girl or woman willing to start at the bottom, work hard, adapt to the ways of a new land and who had health, humility and imagination.

Although the literature listed many opportunities available for women on the prairies, in teaching, nursing, office and shop work, dressmaking, millinery, gardening and as servants or “home help,” it was this last category that was most in demand. Perhaps this is the reason that the documents Jackel has included all relate to life on a farm or a ranch from the perspective of a wife or a “home help.” Although time and again the message that is conveyed is of numerous possibilities for women in the west, the actual experiences of a teacher or a shop worker or a stenographer are not available. Certainly the inclusion of such experiences would give a fuller picture of the possibilities and the pitfalls involved in women’s work. Because so much of the material relates to the same kind of life—the loneliness, the hard work, the lack of amenities on farms and ranches—the reader beings to acquire a “déjà vu” attitude. The articles begin to repeat themselves. There is also an assumption in the text that all ‘genteel British emigrants’ were alike—that the collective identity was the same. Since some of the women came from Ireland and Scotland as well as England perhaps this is not accurate. At least one selection by an Irish emigrant would seem to indicate a different viewpoint regarding social standing and proper use of leisure (p. 106, 107). These are minor flaws, however, as the varied experiences described, the colourful language used, and the expectations met or shattered, of these genteel British emigrants are a window on a small, but neglected aspect of Western immigration.

The real value of this work is in what it tells us about the attitudes Canadians and Britishers had about one another. The “superior” Brit coming to the “inferior” colony often found herself in for a rude awakening. Not only were many Canadian Homes well equipped and much like British homes, but the Canadian women were generally remarkably capable and efficient, able to perform all tasks well and having little use for incompetence. As one English writer phrased it: “In England I was usually looked upon as capable but here at every moment it was borne in upon me that I was very much the reverse, and this gave me a humiliating feeling of being out of my element” (p. 193). A farm hand’s advice to an English lady, “Don’t go to Canadians in your next place, they know too much” (p. 195) underscores this notion of Canadian expertise.

Jealousy and antagonism between the English and Canadians comes through in the documents. The advice to “do at Rome as Rome does” (p. 196) is repeated time and again to any who might emigrate. “Divest yourself of English prejudices,” (p. 196), “leave your pride at

home," (p. 9, 10), "be 'in touch' with novel surroundings," (p. 72) were words of advice that many were unable or unwilling to follow. "No English need apply" signs were all too frequent. And in many instances the genteel emigrants got along much better if they worked for their own kind. The equality, the capability, the efficiency of Canadian women was a bitter pill for someone from the 'motherland' to accept.

*A Flannel Shirt and Liberty* is a creditable look at a small, but significant influence on Western Canada. As Jackel points out in her introduction, perhaps some immigrants, few in number but well educated, help account for Western Canada's early interest in temperance, in suffrage, in laws relating to women and children, and in general social, educational and cultural developments. We need to know more about the lives of these women in Canada. Did they marry within their ethnic group, did they try to re-create Britain in Canada, did they resist acculturation to Canadian norms by maintaining the values, the diet and the language of home? Are they, at least in part, responsible for the imperialistic flavour found in Western Canada prior to and during World War I? Only when imaginative research into immigration has been done, when membership lists of various organizations and societies have been analysed, and when the backgrounds of professional women have been examined will we know the true story of women's influence in the development of the West. Jackel's book has provided us with an excellent starting place.

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**Eastern and Western Perspectives**, edited by David Jay Bercuson and Phillip A. Buckner. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981. Pp. 227, \$10.00, paper.

For the past number of years the Western Canadian Studies Conference has contributed much to our understanding of prairie society. In 1978 it was combined with the Atlantic Canada Studies Conference. Two sessions were held, the first in Calgary, the second in Fredericton. Twenty-seven papers were delivered, ten of which are included in this volume edited by David Bercuson of the University of Calgary and Phillip Buckner of the University of New Brunswick. The joint conference and these published papers which resulted from it indicate the growing significance of regional history in Canada. As well they reflect the 'burden of unity' theme which many prairie and Maritime commentators were emphasizing by the late 1970s. Although one cannot point to a coherent thesis, certain implications can be drawn from the essays and the editors' preface to the book. It is shown that the

west and the Maritimes as hinterlands of central Canada have certain things in common and that the history of these two regions has been ignored or misinterpreted in studies dealing with larger 'national' themes.

In the past a comparison of Maritime and prairie society would not have seemed as logical as it does today. Historically the prairies were viewed as the land of opportunity, as the developing, progressive region of the country. During the boom which accompanied settlement, and even in the generation which followed, those who saw the west indeed believed they were seeing Canada's future. Influenced by Frederick Jackson Turner's frontier thesis, historians and sociologists were keenly interested in the progressive ideas and the radical third parties which seemed to emanate so freely from the west. The result was a wealth of historical writing, much of which depicted prairie society as unburdened by traditional constraints—a sort of social laboratory for the rest of the country.

In contrast Atlantic Canada invariably was described as conservative, stratified, or unprogressive. Consequently, the Maritime region attracted little attention from Canadian scholars. As E. R. Forbes points out in his excellent essay (p. 49), "the Maritimes were of interest only as a foil against which to demonstrate the validity of the frontier approach." If the western frontier encouraged social progress, the Maritimes, the part of the country most distant from the frontier, would be backward and bound by tradition. One would think that such a contrast would not be conducive to a collection of essays designed to point to certain parallels between the two regions.

Several of the accounts in this volume challenge this traditional approach from the perspective of the 1970s, and new interpretations begin to emerge. In particular growing regionalism in the country and social historical research, especially in the areas of labour and ethnic history, show that the supposed dichotomy between prairie and Maritime society can no longer be readily accepted. As some of the essays illustrate the essence of prairie history is not simply political radicalism and the essence of the Maritime past is not staid conservatism.

Such arguments are best made in two of the essays—E. R. Forbes' "In Search of a Post-Confederation Maritime Historiography, 1900–1967" and David Smith's "Political Culture in the West." Forbes refutes the argument that the Maritimers were innately conservative. He refers to the Maritime Rights Movement of the 1920s and the secessionist talk that accompanied it; he shows that the women's rights and suffrage movement of the 1880s and 1890s was at least as active in Atlantic Canada as elsewhere; he points to recent historical research which has shown the depth of labour discontent and radicalism in the Maritime past; and he argues that Maritime religious leaders were

imbued with the ideals of the social gospel and were active in the social gospel movement at the national level. Professor Forbes gives a number of examples to show how these aspects of Maritime history have been misinterpreted or ignored completely in many of the standard historical accounts. He makes it clear that one can no longer accept the stereotyped views of the Maritime provinces which western and other Canadians have held for so long.

David Smith's article raises questions concerning traditional views of prairie political culture. The key in his mind to understanding political developments in the west is prairie regionalism—the west's place within confederation. He argues that a cultural cleavage has existed between the west and central Canada based on a rejection of French-English dualism by westerners. French-English compromise may have been a part of the confederation pact, but the west, populated largely by Anglo-Saxons and European immigrants, the vast majority of whom significantly were non-French, was never a part of any such understanding. As well Smith refers to other aspects of economic and culture control, both from the public and private sectors, which central Canada has exerted over the west. The west has fought back with its own political parties and institutions. It is clear that Smith believes prairie radicalism was not an outgrowth of Turner's frontier but rather a regional response of a hinterland to threats to its interests and ways of life.

It is not possible to deal at length with all of the included essays, but a few brief comments can be offered. George Stanley's excellent essay on the Acadians (from 1604 to today!) offers a comprehensive analysis of the place of Acadians in Maritime and Canadian history. The late Robert Painchaud's article on the western Franco-Canadian community is somewhat parallel to Stanley's, although not nearly as extensive in scope. J. Murray Beck's paper "An Atlantic Region Political Culture: A Chimera" offers a rather traditional account of Maritime politics and, as the title implies, is in conflict with E. R. Forbes' innovative interpretation. It is unfortunate that there is no Maritime parallel to Gerald Friesen's valuable contribution on the place of prairie fiction in the west's cultural history. It is most unusual that a collection of essays on the west and the Maritimes does not contain a single paper relating directly to transportation or tariff policies. A possible explanation is that several such essays were included in a similar volume entitled *Canada and the Burden of Unity* also edited by David Bercuson) which was published in 1977. Perhaps the editors could have made reference to this in the preface.

In all, this book deserves recommendation. It makes a contribution to a study of regional history and as its editors assert Canadian

studies as a whole will benefit from a greater understanding of the regional dimension.

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**To America With the Doukhobors**, by L. A. Sulerzhitsky, translated by Michael Kalmakoff. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1982. Pp. 215, \$13.00, paper.

At long last the English language translation of Leopold Sulerzhitsky's colourful 1899–1900 diary of Canadian prairie settlement is now available to the North American public. Sulerzhitsky spent almost one year in Canada as an interpreter, mediator with the Canadian government, and organizer. As a dramatist, he sensitively, accurately, and entertainingly captured the spirit of the Doukhobor settlers with their tribulations, their sorrows, and their joys. If there was an Oscar for journalistic ethnographic writing, *To America With The Doukhobors* would be a solid contender.

When I read the original Russian diary some years ago, I was impressed by the fluid narrative which magically activated all of my senses so that I not only could hear the sounds of the ship's voyage across the Atlantic, see the women plowing the stubborn prairie turf; I felt these experiences in my bones. A portion of the diary (published in 1905)\* was reprinted in the USSR in 1970\*\* as a tribute to Sulerzhitsky as a sensitive ethnographer, an artist, a sailor, a dramatist with the Stanislavsky Art Theatre, a gardner, a writer, a labourer amongst poor peasants, a friend of Lev N. Tolstoy, and an organizer of an underground press.

The translator Michael Kalmakoff has done well in rendering the original Russian into English—although some minor difficulties remain. “Oven-dried bread” for “sukhari” would have been better than “bread crusts”; the transliteration of “Hilkov” is better than “Hilcoff”; “Rezansov” is better than “Resantsev,” and “Olkhovsky” is more accurate than “Olchowsky.”

Mark Mealing's Introduction, however, is not as consistent. The judgemental use of terms like “godless state” and “pagan Tartars” are best omitted. They serve no scholarly purpose. Furthermore, Dr. Mealing's analysis of the leadership question is confusing. The concept of “God in every person,” which Dr. Mealing accurately describes, is a

\*L. A. Sulerzhitsky, *V Ameriku s Dukhoborami* (Moscow, Russia: I. N. Kushnerev, publication of Posrednik, 1905), 331 pp. (Iz zapisnoi knigi).

\*\*Ivanova, E. G. (ed.), *Leopold Antonovich Sulerzhitsky—Povesti i rasskazi stat'i i zametki o teatre. Perepiska. Vospominaniia o L.A. Sulerzhitskom* (Moscow, USSR: Izdatel'stvo “Iskusstvo,” 1970), 708 pp.

universal statement of the Doukhobors. According to the original and dominant mainstream view of the Doukhobors, this concept rejects the principle of primogeniture or divine leadership. As with some of the faulty Doukhobor views espoused today, Dr. Mealing fails to grasp this wider equalitarian interpretation.

Faulty analysis also creeps into the “murders and mass graves” incident of the early 1800s. Although the case was investigated no conclusive evidence was found. Nevertheless, Dr. Mealing lifts this incident into legend. But the legend is in Dr. Mealing’s not the Doukhobor mind. (This same type of faulty logic has been perpetrated by the mass media in reference to many anonymous burnings and bombings that have rocked the Kootenays of British Columbia for several decades.)

For the curious reader, the book provides the flesh and bones of the migration and settlement pattern; the process of adjustment and survival in a new environment. Encapsulated by human-nature metaphors, picture, hear, and feel the experiences of the following scenes from Sulerzhitsky’s diary:

On board the Lake Huron: The ship “continually squeeled and groaned in all its joints like a wounded animal. Despondency began to overcome us all. . . . Every wave was a new giant blow in the shaken wounded breast of the old ship. And how many were there beyond the horizon? We felt ourselves to be lost, abandoned, in this frightful waste. . . . It seemed the old ocean laughed angrily, showing his white teeth, growling, and spattering cold salt spittle” (p. 78).

On the prairies, Sulerzhitsky warns us of man’s careless destruction of nature: “. . . Crossing a river, we again went through forest. Here apparently there had been a big fire! As far as the eye could see stood huge smooth trunks shining with a bluish light. The bark had fallen off a long time ago. Rain and wind had washed and dried them many times. Charred at the bottom, deformed broken branches at the sides, these stumps stood shining with their dark-colored bodies, and among them lay those comrades unable to withstand the all-consuming flames. It is said the forest was burned by the Indians during a war with the whites. It is horrible here! These corpses rock dismally, crashing, rattling their deformed branches as skeletons do their bones.

The greater part of the day we passed among these sad corpses, telling us of people’s ingratitude, their senseless enmity and greed for self-destruction . . .” (p. 121).

En route to Fort Pelly on an Indian tobaggan, Sulerzhitsky describes the health-giving hypnotic quality of the endless winter prairie: “. . . On the endless, deserted perspective, the monotonous background of the prairie, the weary eye draws shimmering patterns from the light twinkling points. . . . You close your eyes and again come

gentle harmonic sighs. All this seems unusual, like a fairytale, and you surrender yourself to the power of caressing nature; oppressive thoughts go away one by one and mental pain abates; rocking gently with the steps of the horse, you forget yourself in some kind of sweet drowsiness” (p. 125).

Women hitched in tandem pairs to an iron plough, preparing a field for potatoes and wheat during the first year on the prairies, presents an unforgettable picture: “. . . It became quite awesome when, stepping heavily on the wet grass, this sombre procession began to approach me. There was something solemn, deeply moving, in the figures of these straining women pulling the heavy plough. The heavy sticks to which the rope was tied cut into their breasts and stomachs. With sunburnt hands the women pushed the plough trying to reduce the pain.”

In the lead, an older woman moved with heavy but measured steps: “. . . With her melancholy wide-open eyes she looked into the depth of the clear spring sky as if looking for something that would reconcile her to this coarse unfair life. In her eyes filled with sadness could be seen a child’s perplexity and sadness and thirst for love and happiness. . . . From the distance I heard their song. It was a song of weeping; it was more a groan escaping at last from the chests exhausted and over-strained by long suffering, the groan of reproach, the wail calling for righteousness, for all that is human in man. . . .

“And the brilliant river laughed in the sun, sparkling through the leaves with its fast running streams. It laughed at the two-legged creatures calling themselves with the proud name of humans, able till now to do nothing to deserve the name, nothing; otherwise, they would not be witnesses to such a scene. And the frightened aspen trembled with fear from head to foot. . . . Several birds shook their heads in bewilderment as they looked with curiosity at the sight never seen before and which they would not explain themselves” (pp. 153–154).

In the hands of this literary craftsman, his metaphoric image of the coming of winter draws us into its bosom: “The winter stole up unnoticed. The trees have dropped their golden dress and now stand bare like brooms. Through them whistles a penetrating cold wind. The earth has stiffened in the embrace of a fresh frost. On the prairies, wolves (coyotes) appear. At night they come close to the village, flashing their burning eyes in the darkness to examine the dark, hitherto unseen, buildings from which come such appetizing aromas; they yelp from hunger” (p. 205).

Sulerzhitsky’s diary reveals other appetizing and memorable descriptions of what it was like to step into the shoes of the Doukhobor settlers at the turn of the century. His keen observations, his humorous/pleasant style, and his search for respect to both humanity and nature all challenge us to become artistic and passionate observers,

writers, and participants in the *full* life. Full, that is, of varied aroma, of beauty, of sounds and feelings that make up our vibrant emerging society on our western plains.

So take up your tools (esp. your senses and your metaphors), your diary, and go to work. . . . Who knows, there may yet emerge a Sulerzhitsky in your midst!

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**Long Lance: The True Story of an Imposter**, by Donald B. Smith. Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1982. Pp. xii, 304, illustrations. \$17.95, cloth.

This is a book about Sylvester Long, a.k.a. Long Lance, a.k.a. Buffalo Child, a.k.a. Chief Buffalo Child Long Lance, a fascinating individual who spent many of his adult years in the Canadian West. As the subtitle of the volume indicates, Long Lance was not the person he usually seemed to be. He consistently either told or allowed to go unchallenged lies and half truths about his past, and did so to such an extent that by the time he died he himself hardly knew who he was. Because he was able to rearrange his identity so frequently and successfully, the story of his life is interesting and, to a lesser extent, instructive.

Sylvester Clark Long was born in Winston, North Carolina in 1890. He was 3/8 Indian and 5/8 white but, partly because his skin was quite dark and partly because he grew up in a part of the American South where the only recognized "races" were the white and the "coloured," he was often regarded and treated as a Negro. He received a good formal education, in part through a Negro school in Winston, but primarily through the famous Carlisle Indian Residential School in Pennsylvania (where he was given and happily accepted the name Long Lance) and the St. John's Military Academy in New York. Upon failing his entrance examinations for the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, he enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force and served overseas in the last two years of World War I. On his discharge in 1919 he headed for Alberta, landed a job as a reporter for the *Calgary Herald*, then spent most of the next seven or eight years living in various western Canadian cities, making a name for himself as a journalist, as a lecturer and, for a few summers, as a kind of public relations man for the CPR's Banff Springs Hotel. In the late twenties he wrote a very popular autobiography and starred in a critically acclaimed silent movie on Indians. By 1929 he had for some time been recognized as an expert on the history and affairs of North America's native peoples, and for the next couple of years he was able to live in the

city of New York as a celebrity, picking up as much money as he needed by lecturing and by endorsing the running shoes made by the B. F. Goodrich Company.

The success and notoriety that Long Lance had achieved to this point were to some extent attributable to his ambition, his handsome physique and features, his ebullience and his skill at handling both casual and intimate friendships. Primarily, however, they resulted from his ability to lead the people of one community to believe that, among the people of another, he was much more respected and influential than he actually was. Over the years he had repeatedly either camouflaged or lied about this birthdate and birthplace, his family, his academic and athletic performance and reputation, his war record, and especially his status among the Indians of Canada and the United States. Incredibly, he had yet to pay very much of a price for his deceitfulness.

In 1931 and 1932 however, Long Lance was forced to reap what he had sown. Many of his New York acquaintances had become aware that he had repeatedly misled them; they were offended, and not surprisingly many of them chose to believe the rumours that had begun to circulate about Long Lance's "nigger" ancestry. The only woman he had ever really loved decided to marry another man, primarily because Long Lance had falsely led her to believe that he would never be free to commit himself to her. His physical and sexual prowess were evidently beginning to decline. He could not bring himself to go home to his family in North Carolina, but there was no one who cared about him anywhere else. Faced with a future that seemed likely to be filled with unhappiness, he apparently took his own life on March 20, 1932.

Long Lance was a memorable character, and for the most part Donald B. Smith has told the story of his life skillfully. It is true that this book can be unnecessarily confusing. The author's reluctance to use the past perfect tense occasionally makes it difficult for the reader to know just which year or time period he is supposed to be located in; passages such as the first four sentences in the dust jacket or the first sentence on page 151 create the unjustifiable impression (if chapters 2 and 17 contain the accurate information) that Long Lance was part Negro. But on balance this is a well written volume.

It is not, however, an important one. Long Lance was never a very influential man, and his life was certainly not a typical one; therefore, though the author of this volume is obviously well read in North American native and social history, he can not and does not provide a weighty treatment of such significant themes in these fields as the nature of Indian cultures or the history of Indian-white relationships. The most noteworthy and suggestive points he makes are those that are never discussed at length and only materialize if one searches for them. They are that individual identities and reputations are incredibly easy

to manipulate, and that therefore scholars in general and historians in particular must be very careful, even tentative, when they offer assessments of or comments on "character." To a greater extent than we usually recognize, personalities and attributes are masks that individuals both choose to wear and are obliged to wear<sup>1</sup> If this captivating story of the life of Long Lance tells us anything significant, it is this.

NOTE

<sup>1</sup> Readers who are interested in full discussions of this observation will be interested in almost all of the many books and articles written by Erving Goffman, and in Peter Bailey's " 'Will the Real Bill Banks Please Stand Up?' Towards a Role Analysis of Mid-Victorian Working-Class Respectability," *Journal of Social History* 12 (1979), 336-353.

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**Regionalism: Territorial Politics in Canada and the United States**, by Roger Gibbins. Toronto: Butterworth and Co., 1982. Pp. 217, \$16.95, paper.

Professor Gibbins has presented us with a fairly heavy study of regionalism, or 'territorial politics' (defined as "the intrusion of territorial cleavages into national politics"). The framework in which the analysis is conducted is based on Stein Rokkan's and S. M. Lipset's model of political modernization. Simplified, this model holds that territorial politics date from the initiation of nations. With the survival of the state and the growth of industrialization and urbanization citizens are mobilized into a national political community. This mobilization is accompanied by the decline of territorial conflict, and the growth of class conflict.

Prof. Gibbins sets three objectives for the study: first, to highlight Canadian-American differences through a detailed comparative analysis of territorial politics of the two countries; second, to account for such differences in terms of factors in the political system which affect territorial politics; and third, to expand the model of Rokkan and Lipset, by identifying political factors which account for nations keeping to, or diverging from, the model path of development. Throughout the analysis, one must remember that the focus is on *political* factors, as opposed to cultural, ethnic, or economic factors.

A detailed examination of the evolution of federal systems in Canada and the United States opens the discussion. The United States evolved from a decentralized, state-oriented framework in the late 1700s to a more national and centralized structure. In Canada, the trend has been away from the centralized forms of 1867 toward a decentralized system. Political institutions in the U.S. facilitated the

representation of territorial interests within the national government through fixed elections, weak party discipline, and the committee and seniority systems in the federal government. The effective territorial representation in turn helped produce a strong and relatively centralized national government. In Canada, on the other hand, the parliamentary structure acted to concentrate power to a degree which is incompatible with effective territorial representation, and federal-provincial conflict became one of the few checks on the power of the national government.

This federal-provincial struggle is highlighted by a formal, diplomatic approach to intergovernmental relations. This both halted the federal incursion into provincial jurisdictions, and encouraged the provinces to place pressure on federal policies. In the U.S. on the other hand intergovernmental relations are conducted by local, state, and regional interest groups through a well developed lobby system.

The structure of political parties is also thought to be a factor in the differing response to territorial concerns. In the United States, political parties are decentralized and loosely structured, national in outlook; in Canada, the parties are cohesive and disciplined (in the parliamentary tradition) but regional and provincial in outlook. Gibbins also finds the political cultures of the United States and Canada exhibit similar differences: the United States has a more national identity, while Canada's identity is more regional.

Overall, the book provides a broad, theoretical discussion of the process of 'territorial politics' rather than a specific focus on a particular region such as the West or Prairies. It will prove quite useful for the political scientist, but less so for the lay reader.

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