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For the last *Prairie Forum* issue of the twentieth century we return for the most part to traditional themes associated with historical settlement on the Prairies.

To start with, A.A. den Otter goes back to the 1857 investigation of the Hudson's Bay Company's activities, highlighting pervasive paternalistic attitudes towards Rupert's Land's First Nations as well as early conservation issues involving the Company, Britain, and Canada. Sandra Rollings-Magnusson follows with a study of patriarchal legislation in Canada between 1870 and 1930, emphasizing the disproportionate gap between women's crucial contribution to the farming economy and their low social status in rural Canada.

Next comes our very own Celtic trilogy. First, Michael Cottrell analyzes the impact of Irish immigration in Saskatchewan and the contribution of both Catholic Church and Orange Order to the emerging cohesion of frontier society. Brian Rainey follows this line of thought by exploring the relations between Irish and francophone Catholics in Saskatchewan — two groups which in spite of their common religious allegiance were often at loggerheads. Wayne Davies closes the trilogy tracing the origins of a little-known community of Welsh Americans in Alberta and describing the process of acculturation which has inexorably been affecting it since the 1930s.

Finally, Gordon Lawson and Luc Thériault provide a detailed historical account of the Saskatchewan Community Health Services Associations, placing them firmly within the context of the development of the Canadian Medicare system.

Our essay for this issue, "Another Father of Confederation?" is an appeal by Allen Ronaghan to have Louis Riel rehabilitated and given a place in the Canadian pantheon. As in the spring issue of this year, we also have a forum, focussing this time on Janine Stingel's study of anti-semitism in the Albertan Social Credit movement (*Prairie Forum* 24, no. 1).

The third millennium will have a double significance for our journal: *Prairie Forum* will turn twenty-five in the spring, and the year 2000 will be ushered in with a special issue on changing prairie landscapes. Change of century, change of millennium, change of landscape... "For all that moveth doth in Change delight" (Edmund Spencer).

Patrick C. Douaud  
Editor-in-Chief  
University of Regina

# The 1857 Parliamentary Inquiry, the Hudson's Bay Company, and Rupert's Land's Aboriginal People

*A.A. den Otter*

**ABSTRACT.** In 1857 a British parliamentary Select Committee investigated the Hudson's Bay Company. In the course of its hearings, the committee often directed its attention to Rupert's Land's First Nations. Despite an obvious polarization between supporters and opponents of the company on many issues, a consensus emerged on the fate of Rupert's Land's indigenous citizens in what all presumed to be the inevitable European settlement of the Plains and adjacent woodlands. Hudson's Bay Company officials and their opponents shared the paternalistic assumption, based on nineteenth-century liberalism, that the Native peoples would be unable to cope with the onslaught of a supposedly superior, modern, and educated population. Without consulting the objects of their concerns, the participants at the committee's hearings agreed that it was the task of the state and church to protect the aboriginal nations from and educate them into the new order. On this point, the committee's report was an important omen for the subsequent history of western Canada's Native inhabitants.

**SOMMAIRE.** En 1857 un comité parlementaire particulier de la Grande-Bretagne fit une enquête sur la Compagnie de la Baie d'Hudson. Au cours des audiences, ce comité se concentra fréquemment sur les Premières Nations de la Terre de Rupert. En dépit d'une évidente polarisation sur de nombreux points entre partisans et adversaires de la Compagnie, ce fut le consensus général que les citoyens indigènes de la Terre de Rupert verraient inévitablement une implantation européenne sur les plaines et dans les bois adjacents. Les fonctionnaires de la Compagnie partageaient avec leurs adversaires la supposition paternaliste, basée sur le libéralisme du dix-neuvième siècle, que les autochtones seraient incapables de faire face à l'assaut d'une population moderne, éduquée et supposée supérieure. Sans consulter les personnes concernées, les participants aux audiences du comité tombèrent d'accord qu'il incombait à l'état et à l'église de protéger les nations autochtones des nouvelles circonstances et de les y insérer. Le rapport qui s'ensuivit constituait un lourd présage de l'avenir des autochtones de l'ouest du Canada.

In 1857 the British Parliament appointed a Select Committee to review the activities of the Hudson's Bay Company, which had possessed a chartered fur trading monopoly in Rupert's Land since 1670.<sup>1</sup> Sitting for over forty days, the committee took testimony from nearly two dozen witnesses. The transcript of their evidence furnishes an extremely detailed snapshot of how these observers viewed ecological and cultural conditions in the region at mid-century. In particular, the committee's report offers a unique glimpse into the attitude of Europeans towards the aboriginal nations in the northwestern interior of British North America and portrays what they perceived to be the long-term future of those peoples.

The portrait of the indigenous peoples<sup>2</sup> that emerges from the pages of the Select Committee's report reflected the context of the time. Witnesses and questioners alike believed that over the past two centuries, the powerful combination of science,

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1 Under a twenty-year license granted in 1839, the Hudson's Bay Company also controlled trade in areas west of Rupert's Land, known as the Indian Territory. In fact, it was the end of the license that inspired the establishment of the Select Committee.

2 The Select Committee did not discuss the Métis at all, considering them not as indigenous people but as British citizens in no need of special attention.

technology, and capitalism, flourishing under increasingly free political and economic institutions, had created the great and wealthy British empire. To sustain the pace of economic growth and an improving standard of living, Britain's leaders scoured the globe for raw materials for the nation's machines, food for its workers, and employment for its surplus populations. They believed that the country's mandate was to develop the natural and human resources of the entire world. Thomas Carlyle, the Victorian essayist, angrily lamented the lingering remnants of poverty in industrial Britain when there was "a world where Canadian Forests stand unfelled, boundless Plains and Prairies unbroken with the plough ... green desert spaces never yet made white with corn; and to the overcrowded little western nook of Europe, our Terrestrial Planet, nine-tenth of it yet vacant or tenanted by nomades, is still crying, Come and till me, come and reap me!"<sup>3</sup> Carlyle thus eloquently articulated a powerful civilizing mission, an expansionist creed that urged western Europeans to tame the world's remaining wilderness regions and manage them for the desires of humanity. At the same time, Victorians believed that this civilizing task also included the mandate to share with other people in the world the knowledge that had produced this unprecedented wealth. Thus, a host of civil servants, entrepreneurs, teachers, and missionaries spread across the globe to bring the gospel of liberalism to uneducated people everywhere. The whole world must be civilized, they assumed; that is, peoples everywhere must be raised to the level of enlightened, Christian, industrial, and urbanizing Victorian Britain.<sup>4</sup>

The theme, that the enormous resources of Rupert's Land must be opened to private enterprise, that its indigenous peoples must be educated, and, in other words, that the days of the Hudson's Bay Company's hegemony over its resources and peoples were numbered, echoes throughout the Select Committee's report. While contemporary observers likely saw two distinct points of view emerging from the evidence placed before the committee, a modern historian, reading the manuscript a century and a half later, may notice a remarkable similarity in the statements concerning Rupert Land's resources and its aboriginal nations. Seemingly, one perspective encouraged the continuation, for as long as possible, of the monopoly and the preservation of the supposedly traditional (but post-contact) indigenous lifestyles; the other view, advocated the commencement, as soon as feasible, of the colonization of the territory's arable lands and the integration of the Native peoples into this new society. This polarization, however, mirrored specific objectives; in actual fact, both perceptions were remarkably similar as each was based on an imperialist view of the environment and the aboriginal nations.<sup>5</sup> All witnesses, as well as committee members, assumed that the resources of the vast interior were to be

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3 Cited in Michael Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men: Science, Technology, and Ideologies of Western Dominance* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989), 218.

4 Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (New York: Barnes and Noble Books, 1976), 31-36.

5 The concept of an "imperial" view of nature is developed in Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy: A History of Ecological Ideas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 29-30. Worster argues that in the imperialist schema a mechanistic, rational, and technological nature was considered to be the domain of humans, to be altered and rearranged for their purposes and needs. Alfred W. Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900-1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986) suggests that bacteria, viruses, weeds, domesticated seeds and animals as well as rodents imported from the Old to the New World partly explain the success of Europe's conquest of the American continent. John S. Galbraith, *The Hudson's Bay Company as an Imperial Factor, 1821-1869* (New York: Octagon Books, 1977) uses imperialism in the more traditional but still very useful sense.

exploited for the benefit primarily of Europeans. While Hudson's Bay Company officials and their friends seemed more sympathetic to maintaining the lifestyles of the Native peoples, and while their economic objectives differed from their opponents, all witnesses believed that the aboriginal people were uncivilized, culturally homogenous, and that their fate was to be decided in London. All the participants adopted a paternalistic attitude towards the aboriginal prairie peoples, believing that in their supposed ignorance they could not cope with either the fur trade or impending settlement without the guidance of the European newcomers. In fact, no one thought it necessary to invite anyone of the First Nations to testify at the hearings.

Not unexpectedly, the Hudson's Bay Company welcomed neither the Select Committee nor the impending settlement of the North-West. While the former would likely cast unfavourable light upon the company's activities, the latter would inevitably and unfavourably affect the company's business. Yet, the future course of events was quite clear to the company's governors and they acknowledged they must accommodate themselves to the new reality. In the meantime, they would do all in their power to persuade the committee to preserve the *status quo*. The governors informed their Canadian representative, Sir George Simpson, that "our great object before the Committee of the House of Commons will be to shew that all our regulations for the administration of the country and the conduct of our trade, have been such as were calculated to protect the Indians and prevent their demoralization, and that, as far as can be reasonably expected, we have been successful."<sup>6</sup> By demonstrating their good stewardship, company officials thought, they could, by implication, be trusted to retain the monopoly and ensure the welfare of the Natives.

The star witness defending the company's position was its Canadian governor, Sir George Simpson. Born in February 1786 or 1787, Simpson joined the Hudson's Bay Company in 1820 just prior to its merger with the North West Company. Renowned for his many incredibly fast journeys across the vast territories, he devoted most of his time capitalizing on the company's monopoly, economizing its operations, and imposing a stringent discipline on all employees. Dynamic and aggressive, Simpson was a fast learner and a very capable, shrewd manager, keeping himself well informed on all aspects of the business and adapting it quickly to new environments. Although he forbade his low-ranked employees to form relationships with the Natives, Simpson himself had short liaisons with at least three Métis women and sired four children. These associations, his sojourn in the territories, and his incessant, restless travels, gave Simpson a comprehensive knowledge of Rupert's Land and its peoples.<sup>7</sup>

Despite his relations with the Métis women, Simpson nurtured a prejudice against North America's indigenous people. Obsessed with the early Victorian ideal of the beautiful, pure, cultured, and genteel lady, he refused to marry any woman born in Rupert's Land and in 1829 abruptly ended a relationship to wed his eighteen-year-old Scottish cousin, Frances.<sup>8</sup> Even though Frances lived in Red River for nearly four years, at Simpson's insistence she socialized only with the few white women in the

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6 Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, [hereafter cited as HBCA/PAM], A7/2, Shepherd to Simpson, 2 January 1857.

7 John S. Galbraith, "Sir George Simpson," *Dictionary of Canadian Biography, 1851-1860*, 8 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985), 812-18; J.S. Galbraith, *The Little Emperor: Governor Simpson of the Hudson's Bay Company* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976); A.S. Morton, *Sir George Simpson, Overseas Governor of the Hudson's Bay Company: A Pen Picture of a Man of Action* (Toronto: Dent, 1944).

8 Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties: Women in Fur-Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1983), 183-86.

settlement and thus met no Native females and only Métis servants.<sup>9</sup> In 1833, she returned to Scotland, and in 1838 settled into Simpson's permanent residence in Lachine, Canada East.

George Simpson's testimony before the Select Committee reflected that of his Montreal and London peers. As an investor, not only in the fur trade, but also in banking, mining, and railways,<sup>10</sup> Simpson understood the mid-nineteenth-century resource development mentality. Like many of his peers, he was glad to have escaped the so-called wilderness, had cultivated a condescending antipathy to the Native people, especially their women, and had attuned himself to the restless energy of Canada's emerging technological culture and looming expansionist ambitions.<sup>11</sup> Although his testimony advocated the preservation of the traditional fur trade and the aboriginal way of life, he consciously participated in business endeavours that were central to the new order.

Sir George Simpson's contention, that the Hudson's Bay Company was best suited to protect the prosperity of Rupert's Land's Natives, was challenged by the Aborigines Protection Society, a humanitarian association, deeply concerned about the well-being of the indigenous nations. Founded in 1837 to fight the dispossession, massacre, and enslavement of aboriginal people by invading colonists, the society took a special interest in North America and persistently lobbied the imperial government to protect, educate, and integrate its First Nations into the newcomer society. From its humanitarian platform, the Aborigines Protection Society valiantly attempted to persuade church and state to shield indigenous inhabitants from the whites: it advocated that British North America's Native peoples be regarded as British subjects, that their lands not be further alienated without proper compensation, that they be educated into British culture and religion, and then integrated into the new white society.<sup>12</sup> Although the society professed itself not to be an opponent of the Hudson's Bay Company, in a pamphlet it published a year prior to the Select Committee's hearings, it accused the firm of impeding "the progress of civilization and religion," and of violating what it considered to be the "universal benefits of free trade and free communication."<sup>13</sup> Mixed in its altruistic position, the society also appealed to practical concerns by arguing that teaching the indigenous peoples the principles of contemporary industrialized society would stabilize and settle them thus creating a much larger market for British manufactures instead of, what it perceived to be, a declining, nomadic population of savage hunters.<sup>14</sup> In any case, the society assumed

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9 Frances' first-born, a son, died at eight months. See Jennifer S.H. Brown, *Strangers in Blood: Fur Trade Company Families in Indian Country* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1980), 129-30.

10 See Montreal Mining Company, *Report of the Trustees of the Montreal Mining Company* (Montreal: n.p., 1846) for Simpson's active participation in this Lake Superior mining company.

11 Works that discuss the expansionist resource development attitude are: A.A. den Otter, *The Philosophy of Railways: The Transcontinental Railway Idea in British North America* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997); Doug Oram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980); and Frederick Turner, *Beyond Geography: The Western Spirit against the Wilderness* (New York: Viking Press, 1980). Simpson's prejudices against Native women are described well in Brown, *Strangers in Blood*, and Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*.

12 Standish Motte, *Outline of a System of Legislation for the Securing of Protection to the Aboriginal Inhabitants of all Countries Colonized by Great Britain* (London: n.p., 1840).

13 Aborigines Protection Society, *Canada West and the Hudson's-Bay Company* (London: n.p., 1856), introduction. The society's name is spelled in various ways, often with an apostrophe. This article will use the more common non-possessive form.

14 Aborigines Protection Society, *Report on the Indians of Upper Canada, 1839* (London: n.p., 1839), 21.

that the British should develop and settle the vast North American continent and that, therefore, its Native people must accommodate themselves to the new order.

The Aborigines Protection Society took a close interest in the Select Committee and placed before it a comprehensive brief which it hoped would help the committee devise measures for the “future improvement and preservation” of the aboriginal populations.<sup>15</sup> In its submission, the society charged that the activities of the Hudson’s Bay Company had adversely affected British North America’s aboriginal people. Even though the Natives were the real producers of corporate wealth, they had suffered under the company’s rule and their numbers had declined precipitously.<sup>16</sup> Although the society believed that alcohol abuse and disease were contributing factors to the problem, dwindling food supplies were the primary and most worrisome cause of the declining aboriginal population. The society acknowledged that vaccinations and prohibitions against the use of alcohol in most districts had already greatly mitigated the impact of those difficulties.<sup>17</sup> What concerned the society was that the fur trade by its very nature continued to contribute to the precipitous drop in animal numbers.<sup>18</sup>

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- 15 Aborigines Protection Society to Labouchere, undated [1857], in Great Britain, House of Commons, *Report from the Select Committee on the Hudson’s Bay Company; Together with the Proceedings of the Committee, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix and Index*, 1857, 441 [hereafter cited as *Report*].
  - 16 Shifting tribal territories and a lack of solid reference points made population estimates highly problematic. In 1844, Lieutenant-Colonel John Henry Lefroy, of the Royal Artillery, who made a two-year scientific journey through the Hudson’s Bay territories for the Royal Society, compared his figures with those of Sir John Franklin twenty years previously. Lefroy concluded that the aboriginal population was decreasing rapidly. He noted the greatest decline in the north but also in the south near Lake of the Woods, Rainy Lake, and all around Lake Superior. In the Saskatchewan district, where resources were greater, he believed the decrease was the least [*Report*, 24].

Just prior to the Select Committee’s inquiry, the Hudson’s Bay Company conducted its own census. Taking the figures to the committee, Governor George Simpson estimated the population of indigenous people in company controlled territories east of the Rockies at approximately 55,570 [*Report*, 57, 366-67]. The Aborigines Protection Society argued that if Governor George Simpson’s estimate was correct, the population was “wasting away.” It claimed that travellers were confirming this dismal reality. Moreover, citing John McLaughlin, a former resident of Red River, the society estimated that seven-eighths of the Indian population west of the Rockies had disappeared [*Report*, 442].

Arthur J. Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade: Their Role as Trappers, Hunters, and Middlemen in the Lands South of Hudson Bay, 1660-1870* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1974), 187-91, estimates that in the nineteenth century aboriginal numbers increased quite rapidly until the late 1830s when the smallpox epidemic decimated the Assiniboine. Their numbers never recovered. The Cree population, less touched by the epidemic, continued to expand. Ray’s findings corroborate Governor Simpson’s view that the population of the northern, forest Natives was increasing rather than decreasing as some supposed [*Report*, 85].

- 17 On the question of disease, see Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 187-91. Virtually all witnesses, hostile and friendly, agreed that alcohol was not used in competition-free and only sparingly in contested areas, mainly in regions bordering the United States. See for example, the testimony of John Rae, Sir George Simpson, Alexander Isbister, Reverend Griffith Corbett, Sir J. Richardson, John McLaughlin, and Richard King [*Report*, 37, 41, 58, 60-1, 65, 85, 88, 91, 122, 146-7, 154-6, 163, 272-4, 316, and 369-70]. In addition, the company’s land deed, several standing rules and resolutions, as well as official correspondence, prohibited the use of alcohol as an article of trade [*Report*, 78, 79, 361, 368, 373]. Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 198, concludes that the Hudson’s Bay Company made a diligent effort to end the alcohol trade. John Galbraith, *Hudson’s Bay Company*, agrees.
- 18 The society readily admitted that the Natives shared the blame for the dangerously reduced number of animals. They had willingly over-hunted and wantonly destroyed small game. On the general topic of over-hunting among Natives before Europeans arrived in North America see, Richard White and William Cronon, “Ecological Change and Aboriginal-White Relations,” in *Handbook of North American Indians*, 4, *History of Indian-White Relations*, ed. Wilcomb E. Washburn (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1989), 417-27. See also, William Cronon, *Changes in the Land: Indians, Colonists, and the*

Meanwhile, the demand for furs and provisions was increasing and the company was reducing expenditures on trade goods. The society believed the future appeared harsh and starvation was a grim reality. The paramount question, according to the society, therefore, was whether the Natives could survive the end of the fur trade and prospective settlement. "What is to become of the Indians," the society asked, "when their lands can no longer furnish the means of subsistence?"<sup>19</sup>

The society's penetrating question laid bare the two fundamental considerations before the Select Committee. Simply put: should the Hudson's Bay Company's monopoly be continued and should Rupert's Land be opened for settlement? In 1857, with the Canadas becoming increasingly interested in expanding into the North-West, the answers to these two queries were intricately intertwined and their answers would have enormous implications for the territories' indigenous people. On the surface, the responses that the witnesses provided appeared to be clearly and mutually exclusive, with a distinct fracture line running between the pro- and anti-company camps. Yet, coursing beneath the surface of their testimonies was a consensus, which the committee, itself divided into defence and opposition, also shared. Whether they believed in free trade or the monopoly, in colonization or a fur preserve, explicitly or implicitly questioners and respondents based their arguments on the common and erroneous assumption that the Natives were part of the uncivilized wilderness and that their savagery could not withstand the onward march of Europe's supposedly superior civilization. No one suggested that the aboriginal nations formed complex, differentiated societies and controlled their own destinies.<sup>20</sup> All the participants at the committee's hearings saw the issue only as one of timing and responsibility: how quickly could the British government permit the civilizing of the wilderness and its inhabitants to proceed and who would assume the task of educating the Natives for the civilization process?

Opening Rupert's Land to European civilization, that is, to settlement and resource development, immediately raised the question of a competitive fur trade and its impact on the aboriginal populations. While those who sided with the company neatly side-stepped the issue of profits, they pointed to the era of rivalry between the Hudson's Bay and the North West companies at the turn of the century as an example of all that could go wrong in a free trade regime. They recalled an era of violence, widespread lawlessness, general disorder, and flagrant alcohol misuse. Sir J. Richardson, who had made three journeys through the territories, one with John Franklin, testified that in 1819, when the North West and Hudson's Bay companies were at war, both firms supplied the Natives with liquor. "The Indians were spending days in drunkenness" going from fort to fort for liquor "and a contest altogether shocking to humanity was carried on," Richardson asserted, adding, "At that time it scarcely appeared that the Indians had any capability of being civilised at all."<sup>21</sup> On his

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*Ecology of New England* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983); Charles A. Bishop, *The Northern Ojibwa and the Fur Trade: An Historical and Ecological Study* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1974), 197-206 discusses the consequences of hunting techniques in Rupert's Land.

19 *Report*, 443.

20 Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992) argues that the "disappearing Indian" is one of the prevailing images of Native people in the nineteenth century. For a harsh and emotional assessment of the ideological underpinnings of the destruction of aboriginal cultures in North America see Turner, *Beyond Geography*. Arthur Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, cites numerous examples of Native hunters controlling aspects of the fur trade.

21 *Report*, 154.

second trip, the Hudson's Bay Company had re-established its monopoly and had greatly reduced liquor imports. There was a manifest improvement in life in the North-West Richardson noted, although he expressed disappointment that no aboriginal persons had become Christian, which he considered an essential step in the civilization process. Open trade, he believed, would reproduce the violent rivalries of the first decades of the century. "At present the Hudson's Bay Company's influence over the Indians is beneficial," he observed, "the natives are dependent upon the Hudson's Bay Company for supplies: but if they could get supplies elsewhere, and if spirits were brought in (for there is nothing which will prevent the introduction of spirits but the resolution of the Company not to take them in), I think it would require a strong military force to keep the Indians in subjection."<sup>22</sup>

Several witnesses bolstered Richardson's testimony.<sup>23</sup> Competition in the fur trade, they conceded, might lead to an immediate increase in prices and living standards but eventually, they added, it would destroy the indigenous people. The rivalry would lead to the re-introduction of alcohol, to an increase in crime and intertribal warfare, to starvation and hardship among the Natives, and eventually to their demoralization and decimation. It would, said David Anderson, the Anglican bishop of Assiniboia, ruin the Natives' way of life before they could be civilized.<sup>24</sup>

Not only would a competitive fur trade destroy the aboriginal people, according to Edward Ellice, the grizzled veteran of the fur trade, it would also ruin their habitat. In areas where the company did not face competition, it urged the Natives to preserve "the animals just as you do your pheasants and hares in this country. [It] ... encourage[d] the Indians only to kill a certain number of animals when in good season for their furs, and not to kill so many as to interfere with the breed."<sup>25</sup> But, in territories where the company did not have complete control over traders and aboriginal hunters, it could not impose quotas. Where two or more tribes hunted, if one preserved animals, the other would take more, Ellice explained, unless the company refused to take the fur, something it could not do if a rival would take the surpluses. To make his point, he noted that the company was able to practice conservation only north of the 60th parallel where the Natives had fixed hunting grounds. In the south, where the Plains tribes wandered over vast territories and could sell their furs to American competitors, management was impossible.<sup>26</sup> Competition,

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22 Ibid., 156.

23 See the testimony of John Ross, John Henry Lefroy, John Rae, John Ffolliott Crofton [ibid., 1-23, 23-6, 26-44, 169-84, respectively].

24 Ibid., 231-47.

25 Ibid., 327.

26 Outside the committee room, Governor Simpson explained that the company's organization in the interior assisted the conservation effort. As shareholders in the firm, the factors had a long-term stake in the trade. "It is their interest to preserve the fur-bearing animals from wanton destruction, to lessen the burdens on the business, and to increase the natural resources of the country, so as to render it independent of foreign supplies of provisions." HBCA/PAM, A12/8, Simpson to Shepherd 26 January 1857. Arthur J. Ray, supports Ellice's assertion that the company practiced conservation when feasible but "without a monopoly it was not possible to manage the fur trade on an ecological sound basis since the primary supplier of fur pelts, the Indians, did not readily support the Hudson's Bay Company's conservation programme." See his, "Some Conservation Schemes of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1821-50: An Examination of Resource Management in the Fur Trade," *Journal of Historical Geography* 1, no. 1 (1975): 58. Calvin Martin, *Keepers of the Game: Indian-Animal Relationships and the Fur Trade* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978), blames the erosion of indigenous spirituality for the high incidence of over-hunting.

he predicted, would lead to massive over-hunting and the destruction of the trade within ten years, leading to widespread starvation among the aboriginal people.

As far as Alexander Isbister, a Rupert's Land-born critic of the Hudson's Bay Company residing in England, was concerned, these were all self-serving arguments. Having lived the first twenty years of his life in Red River and served a three-year stint as a company clerk, Isbister felt that the company's only interest in the indigenous hunters was to "procure furs at the cheapest rate" it could. All that needed to be done to end the liquor trade, Isbister stated, was to adopt the American system of licensing. While enforcement of prohibition might be difficult, he argued, it was not impossible nor need it hamper the settlement of the fertile portions of the northwestern interior. Free trade would be a good inducement to settlers, he continued, attracting immigrants to the North-West by the possibility of extra earnings. Although increased settlement in Red River would inevitably lead to greater participation in the fur trade, he believed that the violence and debauchery of the Natives, alleged to have occurred during the period of rivalry between the North West and Hudson's Bay companies, would not redevelop because of the presence of missionaries in the region and public opinion in eastern Canada.<sup>27</sup>

Other witnesses agreed that an open fur trade would not lead to a bitter life-and-death struggle as had occurred at the turn of the century. Although no one made the specific reference, a growing number of Métis had already been trading in furs, pemmican, provisions, and other articles for a number of years, particularly after 1849 when four of them had been found guilty in court of violating the company's charter but were not sentenced.<sup>28</sup> With this experience in mind, some witnesses asserted that free trade would greatly benefit the Natives economically and culturally. "It is only by competition, of course, that the Indians will receive anything like fair play," argued John McLaughlin, a company critic who had lived in the North-West for about five years in the late 1840s as a private settler and merchant.<sup>29</sup> Donald Gunn, a free trader in the Lake Superior area, agreed and added that the Natives would shake off their dependence upon the Hudson's Bay Company for their supplies; they would become more self-reliant. Competition would allow them to obtain necessities like clothing and provisions more easily and more abundantly; it would lessen privation and suffering due to shortages of supplies. Referring to specific examples from the Sault Ste. Marie and Lake Superior region, Gunn demonstrated that under company control, the aboriginal peoples suffered hardship and hunger but once freed from its grip they earned more for their hunting efforts or they diversified into farming, including cattle raising and wild fruit gathering, or they worked in the mining, lumbering, or fishing industries. Exposed to "all the various industrial pursuits of civilised life," competition would "at the same time advance them to civilisation."<sup>30</sup> All these new opportunities, therefore, meant that the Natives would "no longer [be] obliged to roam over the country in search of a livelihood, families would congregate

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27 Ibid., 120-37, 353-56.

28 Provincial Archives of Manitoba, District of Assiniboia, Court Records, 17 May 1849; Irene M. Spry, "The 'Private Adventurers' of Rupert's Land," in John E. Foster (ed.), *The Developing West: Essays on Canadian History in Honor of Lewis H. Thomas* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983); A.A. den Otter, "The Sayer Trial: An Ecological Perspective" (unpublished paper presented at the Canadian Studies Conference, Edinburgh, May 1999).

29 *Report*, 276.

30 Gunn to Vankoughnet, 6 March 1857, in *ibid.*, 388, 389.

together, become tillers of land, and their condition be thus greatly improved.”<sup>31</sup> Thus, in Gunn’s opinion, free trade was part of the civilization process. Specifically, he and other critics charged, the monopoly, where it still existed, had created an impoverished society. By using an outdated credit system and excessive markups, the Hudson’s Bay Company, they censured, not only exploited the Natives, causing periodic famines, but also thwarted their education and civilization.<sup>32</sup>

The Aborigines Protection Society elaborated on this theme. Committed to the *laissez-faire*, free enterprise, capitalist economy that had reached a zenith in mid-nineteenth century Britain, the society viewed the problem not as a question of pricing or methods of exchange but as the presence of a state-sponsored monopoly. “We have given unlimited scope to the cupidity of a company of traders,” the society chided, “placing no stint on their profits, or limits to their power.”<sup>33</sup> Since it did not operate for the benefit of the Natives, the monopoly was an injustice. Not only did it deprive the hunter of fair value for his work but, from its humanitarian, paternalistic, and British supremacist perspective, the Aborigines Protection Society imputed that it barred him from contact with civilized man and the supposedly ameliorating influences needed for his advancement on the scale of humanity. The company, whose monopoly had been virtually unchallenged for the past thirty years, had squandered the opportunity to civilize the aboriginal people. What was the result, the society asked: an unhappy race of people toiling for the company’s profit; a people who were perishing in frequent famines. While the Hudson’s Bay Company was rich, prosperous, and powerful, the indigenous hunter was a slave, wandering about without a home, with little clothing, “as much a stranger to the blessings of civilisation as when the white man first landed on his shores.” Although the society did not censure individual Hudson’s Bay employees, seeing most as benevolent, humane, enterprising, and intelligent, it charged that the corporate character, the habits and the policies of the company were “unfavourable to that progressive settlement and civilisation of the country which has been going on in so remarkable a manner to the south of the British and American boundary.”<sup>34</sup> In this surprising lack of understanding of the fate of many Natives in the United States, the Aborigines Protective Society expressed its fundamental faith in nineteenth-century culture; it believed that free enterprise United States had made much greater progress in civilizing the wilderness and its indigenous human inhabitants than mercantilistic Great Britain; obviously, in its view, redemption lay not with a monopolistic company but with the state, the church, and the school. These institutions would bring the Natives to the technological level of European civilization.

Not surprisingly, company officials countered that they treated the Natives justly and paid them fairly. They pointed out that company policy required its employees [servants in the contemporary term] to treat the aboriginal hunters equitably. The governor and his council as well as the imperial government, they said, closely supervised the behaviour of the company’s servants in the interior and dismissed officers who were indolent or exploitive or took sexual advantages of aboriginal women. As Edward Ellice made clear, the company encouraged a sympathetic

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31 *Report*, 393.

32 The only witness to bringing specific examples of price gouging was John McLaughlin [*ibid.*, 262-85]. All the others spoke only in generalities.

33 *Ibid.*, 443.

34 *Ibid.*, 444.

understanding of indigenous traditions, yet fostered the adoption of European customs when suitable. The most valuable servant was one “who, by proper means and humane attention, and attempts to civilise the Indian, established an influence with the Indians.”<sup>35</sup> To prove his point, he cited the fortieth standing rule of the fur trade:

That the Indians be treated with kindness and indulgence, and mild and conciliatory means resorted to in order to encourage industry, repress vice, and inculcate morality; that the use of spirituous liquors be gradually discontinued in the very few districts in which it is yet indispensable; and that the Indians be liberally supplied with requisite necessaries, particularly with articles of ammunition, whether they have the means of paying for it or not and that no gentleman in charge of a district or post be at liberty to alter or vary the standard or usual mode of trade with the Indians, except by special permission of council.<sup>36</sup>

As the fortieth rule implied, the company’s trade policy was based on a paternalistic system in which company executives assumed the Natives to be relatively immature in business, economic, and political acumen and thus required management and protection. Except in Canada and near the United States boundary — where there was competition — the company conducted the trade entirely on credit, exchanging fur for clothing, robes, blankets, traps, guns, and ammunition. In practice, this meant that the traders were perpetually in debt to the company, which, in itself, may not necessarily have been detrimental to the hunters and their families. While they may have accumulated significant, long-term debts, most appeared to have preferred the system. As Eleanor Blain has observed in the case of the Ojibwa, the company tried on several occasions to abandon the debt system because periodically it had to forgive unreasonably high debt loads. The Ojibwa, Blain notes, always rejected such overtures.<sup>37</sup>

In somewhat legalistic terms, Governor George Simpson also explained that the company did not actually trade goods but “gave” them to the Natives and they repaid the company with fur.<sup>38</sup> Simpson’s carefully drawn, legalistic distinction between trading and giving illustrated his paternalistic and often patronizing attitude. Since the giving of gifts had a long history among North America’s aboriginal people and was an integral part of any commercial transaction,<sup>39</sup> the use of this concept showed that Simpson understood an ancient tradition, but it also demonstrated the power the company had over the hunters. By calling trade goods gifts, the company felt, for

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35 Ibid., 342.

36 Ibid., 368. In a letter to the secretary of the board of governors, Simpson reiterated the company’s paternalistic, yet self-centred policy. “Above all it is an object to secure the well-being and good-will of the natives, to encourage them to industry and to prevent the operation of those causes which in other countries have led to their degradation and the decrease of their numbers.” This policy, Simpson believed, had won the company a respect which was necessary so a few men could govern and keep order in a large territory. The policy had also resulted in an increase in population in the northern regions of Rupert’s Land and therefore more hunters, an increase in furs trapped and supplies bought. In sum, Simpson concluded, the relationship with the Natives went beyond trade: “We befriend and assist the native to the utmost of our ability; we come to their aid in every difficulty and emergency, we afford relief in times of sickness and want, we settle their quarrels and exercise a general guardianship over them.” HBCA/PAM, A12/8, Simpson to Shepherd, 26 January 1857.

37 Eleanor M. Blain, “Dependency: Charles Bishop and the Northern Ojibwa,” in Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen (eds.), *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991), 101-2.

38 *Report*, 64, 81.

39 Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 196, argues that at various times the company attempted to abandon gift giving.

example, it need not differentiate among fur species and did not have to pay a premium for more highly valued furs. Simpson argued that “the Indian[s] would never understand our varying the prices of the fur according to the prices here [in London],” and that they would concentrate on the more valuable species and hunt them to extinction. Moreover, as former trader, John Rae, opined, “the Indian is so improvident that if he were paid in the spring he would waste everything before winter.”<sup>40</sup> To what extent, one might ask, were Simpson and Rae’s assumptions, that the aboriginal hunters could not appreciate the value of cash, any different than the Aborigines Protection Society’s belief that they could not survive the onslaught of European culture?

Despite Simpson and Rae’s paternalistic justifications for the credit system, some contemporary observers noted that Native hunters fully comprehended the concept of trading. Although they may not have adequately grasped the intricacies of the market and margins, they “understood the value of every skin they had, and they had in mind everything they wanted.”<sup>41</sup> They were “perfectly shrewd” in their dealings and knew their rights; they fathomed the concept of pricing and, if feasible, would go to the outpost which offered the best prices.<sup>42</sup>

Modern historians confirm the contemporary evidence. Running through Arthur Ray’s groundbreaking analysis of the fur trade in Rupert’s Land is the theme that the Natives were active partners in the trade.<sup>43</sup> In a more specific way, Eleanor M. Blain suggests that the northern Ojibwa knew how to manipulate white traders into giving them better prices by shopping at various posts, coming back for more “essential” goods, and refusing to hunt for fur.<sup>44</sup> Similarly, John S. Milloy demonstrates compellingly that over generations the Plains Cree, as go-betweens, had developed complex trading relationships covering the Plains and had established a reputation as shrewd traders.<sup>45</sup>

In the final analysis, however, by 1857, the impact of the fur trade on the lives of the aboriginal people of still unsettled Rupert’s Land’s may actually have been relatively slight. Governor Simpson testified that the company supplied only a small portion of the Natives’ annual needs. He suggested that they did not require supplies for the summer and that even in winter their wants were limited. As hunters, they supplied most of their own food and made most of their own clothing out of fur and hides. Although he could provide no specific figures on the amount of goods traded to the Natives, he estimated that the company landed annually at York Factory, Moose, and East Main about £60,000 worth of British manufactures, such as blankets, fabrics, arms, ammunition, iron works, and axes. With about two-thirds of that amount designated as trade goods, Simpson estimated that the company distributed less than £1 per aboriginal person in Rupert’s Land.<sup>46</sup> Even if his calculations were

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40 *Report*, 35. See also the testimony by non-Hudson’s Bay witnesses such as Sir J. Richardson, Colonel John Ffolliott Crofton, Sir George Back, Lieutenant-Colonel William Caldwell, and Richard King [ibid., 150-69, 169-84, 184-90, 298-312, 312-20].

41 *Ibid.*, 37.

42 *Ibid.*, 282.

43 Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*.

44 Blain, “Dependency and the Northern Ojibwa,” 93-105.

45 John S. Milloy, *The Plains Cree: Trade, Diplomacy and War, 1790 to 1870* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1988).

46 *Report*, 62-63, 81.

based on imprecise and high population figures, the logic of Simpson's argument is compelling.

Recent scholarship on this issue seems to suggest that Governor Simpson's assertion may have been simplistic. Most historians would agree that on a macro level, and over several centuries, the fur trade contributed to altered tribal boundaries, to shifted seasonal migrations, and to specialized economic activities. Arthur Ray, for example, argues that today's aboriginal welfare syndrome has deep roots in fur trade history.<sup>47</sup> Hunting for commercial purposes encouraged Natives to concentrate on killing only certain species or to become traders only; it definitely altered their seasonal movements. Moreover, by the mid-nineteenth century, when game was becoming increasingly scarce, the Hudson's Bay Company had appropriated considerable control over food supplies in Rupert's Land. It made survival possible for its servants and many of its hunters in marginal areas by imposing sophisticated logistics on the territories, replete with fixed depots and rigid transportation schedules over set routes.<sup>48</sup> The company's labour policies, wage schedules, and trade standards, while they ensured comfortable profits, returned marginal benefits to the Natives and made credit and frequent gratuities essential to the welfare of the hunters and their families. Without losing sight of human agency in this complex process, the fur trade had been instrumental in significant economic and demographic changes in the territories. Moreover, as Calvin Martin has so eloquently argued, fur traders, along with missionaries and disease, contributed to the erosion of indigenous religious beliefs and values and thus profoundly affected Native culture and society.<sup>49</sup>

Case studies, focussing on limited regions and time periods, suggest that alterations in economic patterns and social institutions were subtle, multifarious, and geographical.<sup>50</sup> Using the Cree of eastern James Bay, for example, Toby Morantz argues for a continuous time line from pre-contact to at least the end of the nineteenth century in which few significant changes occurred in the economic and social life of her subjects. Her inland Natives, who did not specialize in hunting for the fur trade and retained their reliance on local food sources, did not materially change their subsistence lifestyle and social relationships. "In sum, given the state of historical knowledge now available for the James Bay region, one would have to favour characterizing Cree society as one of cultural and social continuity reaching back into pre-European times," Morantz writes, "The contact period and the early fur trade did not drastically or even dramatically alter their overall cultural and social configurations."<sup>51</sup> Similarly, Shepard Krech challenges the idea that the fur trade had a great

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47 Arthur Ray, "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1930," in Shepard Krech (ed.), *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984), 1-20.

48 In 1849, for example, Sir George Simpson increased inventories of supplies and ordered that in addition to regular supplies, the London office ship enough goods so that the company would have on hand at its York and Norway House depots a one-year reserve on all essential items, two-thirds of a year on those that could be curtailed without serious inconvenience, and one-half on those that traders and Natives could do without in an emergency. In addition, Simpson insisted that the country have a two-year supply of ammunition and twine. See, HBCA/PAM, A12/4, Simpson to Barclay, 30 June 1849.

49 Martin, *Keepers of the Game*.

50 Shepard Krech (ed.), *Indians, Animals, and the Fur Trade: A Critique of Keepers of the Game* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1981) offers a series of articles that question Calvin Martin's conclusions.

51 Toby Morantz, "Old Texts, Old Questions: Another Look at the Issue of Continuity and the Early Fur-Trade Period," *Canadian Historical Review* 73 (June 1992): 185. See also Morantz, "Economic and Social Accommodations of the James Bay Inlanders to the Fur Trade," in Krech, *The Subarctic Fur Trade*,

impact on the Kutchin who lived along the lower Mackenzie, Yukon, and Porcupine Rivers. Although the fur trade integrated them into a global fur market, they did not become subjugated to this intruding economic system, they did not lose their economic autonomy, nor did they depend on the Hudson's Bay Company for their survival. In fact, Krech argues that the European traders could not likely have maintained their northern posts without help from aboriginal hunters, fishers, labourers, and interpreters. Conversely, while the Kutchin desired European commodities because they were technologically superior to their own indigenous tools, they did not purchase food items. The fur trade, then, changed their material culture; it also instigated some hostilities with neighbouring tribes, turned some Natives into go-betweens, and killed many through imported diseases. But, Krech concludes, the Kutchin continued to hunt and fish as they did before the white trader had reached their grounds and they traded fur only as an extra activity. In fact, many of them did not participate in the trade at all.<sup>52</sup> Obviously, the Cree, the Kutchin, and, as Eleanor Blain argues convincingly, the northern Ojibwa, were quite capable of living for years without acquiring European trade goods.<sup>53</sup>

Contemporary observers, however, doubted whether the indigenous hunters could live indefinitely without European commodities. Both sides of the debate before the committee assumed that the Natives had become dependent upon white traders and could not survive without their products. Sir George Back, a member of two Franklin expeditions and one on his own in 1833 to 1835, thought the Natives could no longer live without the Hudson's Bay Company. Before the arrival of the company, "they were accustomed to rely upon their own exertions; they used the bow and arrow; they knew nothing of fire-arms, and consequently were self-dependent," Back claimed, "and being self-dependent, they maintained themselves at that time."<sup>54</sup> Once the Natives abandoned their traditional way of life, he insisted, they lost their ability to survive in the wilderness. Should the company leave the territories, they would die, he concluded. Sir J. Richardson, an equally inveterate traveller through the territories early in the century, agreed entirely and told the committee that the Natives could no longer live without ammunition. Lastly, Lieutenant-Colonel William Caldwell, Governor of Assiniboia until 1855, went further than Back and Richardson, arguing that the Natives had enjoyed the protection of the company's rule:

I think that the management of the Company, with the Indians, has been the means of keeping them longer than would have been the case if they had been

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55-79; and Paul C. Thistle, *Indian-European Trade Relations in the Lower Saskatchewan River Region to 1840* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1986). In Krech, *The Subarctic Fur Trade*, Carol M. Judd, "Sakie, Esquawenoe, and the Foundation of a Dual-Native Tradition at Moose Factory," 81-97, and Charles A. Bishop, "The First Century: Adaptive Changes Among Western James Bay Cree Between the Early Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries," 21-53 argue that at certain times and upon various people the trade did have a significant impact.

52 Shepard Krech, "The Early Fur Trade in the Northwestern Subarctic: The Kutchin and the Trade in Beads," in Bruce G. Trigger, Toby Morantz, Louise Dechêne (eds.), *Le Castor fait Tout: Selected Papers of the Fifth North American Fur Trade Conference, 1985* (Montréal: La Société historique du lac Saint-Louis, 1987). In an earlier article, "The Trade of the Slavey and Dogrib at Fort Simpson in the Early Nineteenth Century," in Krech, *The Subarctic Fur Trade*, 142, Krech had cautioned, "The effects of the trade surely varied from one individual to the next, from one band to another, and one ethnic group to the next." Yet, he maintained the thesis that the trade at Fort Simpson had not led to significant dependency.

53 Blaine, "Dependency and the Northern Ojibwa."

54 *Report*, 188.

without the aid and assistance of the Company. If there had been free trade, if the trade had been thrown open, I think that there would not have been the number of Indians which they at present have in the territory.<sup>55</sup>

Simpson's testimony also raised the question as to what extent his paternalism translated into fair prices and justice for the indigenous hunters. Under the credit system, the standard of exchange was the beaver skin; in other words, prices, set down in written scales, were expressed in terms of beaver skins; one blanket, for example, being equivalent to four beaver skins. The markup for company employees anywhere in the territories ranged from one-third to one half, depending upon rank. For white customers it approached 50 percent, but for the Natives it varied from 200 to 300 percent depending on location, local conditions, and transportation costs.<sup>56</sup> John Rae thought the company's prices reasonable and recalled that company servants could sell Hudson's Bay Company merchandise privately in the United States and still make a profit. He also explained that even though the tariff in the Mackenzie district was marked up relatively high to pay for transportation cost, it was still less than half of Russian prices. But even Rae could not escape the paternalism inherent in the fur trade by suggesting that the Natives had sufficient to clothe themselves, and, in fact, admitted that one time he had not lowered prices because they were so well dressed. Moreover, Rae, like many of the other witnesses, skirted the just price issue by concentrating on fair treatment instead. Hudson's Bay Company traders were respectable men who treated the Natives kindly and with humanity, said one witness; they "are men of simple primitive habits, leading the most hardy lives; generally speaking, contented, doing their duty faithfully to their employers, and in many instances taking sincere interest in the welfare of the Indians around them, and doing all they can to benefit them, but the Indian is a very difficult subject."<sup>57</sup> Of course, as John Rae admitted, company officers had considerable self-interest for treating their customers fairly. "It is their object both to clothe the Indians well and to give them plenty of ammunition, because the better they are fed, and the better they are clothed, the better they will hunt."<sup>58</sup> In sum, Rae thought that the aboriginal people had benefited from the commercial relationship because they received supplies from England, including "the luxury of tobacco."<sup>59</sup>

If the Hudson's Bay Company, with the support of friendly witnesses, could argue with some conviction that it treated its aboriginal partners with a measure of fairness, it had greater difficulty persuading the commissioners that starvation was not becoming a common occurrence in Rupert's Land. The most alarmist evidence of widespread hunger came from the Aborigines Protection Society. Citing Alexander Simpson, a disgruntled chief trader formerly posted in Hawaii,<sup>60</sup> the society claimed that Rupert's Land contained vast areas in which the means of subsistence was scanty. From Lake Superior to Lake Winnipeg, for example, Simpson wrote that Natives found it difficult to survive in the winter. To the north of Canada game was more abundant, but subsistence was hard and famine frequent. Fish was scarce, according to Simpson, and, during the winter, inhabitants of the region had to survive entirely

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55 Ibid., 311.

56 Ibid. 34, 393.

57 Ibid., 25-26.

58 Ibid., 29.

59 Ibid., 187.

60 Galbraith, *Hudson's Bay Company*, 319.

on rabbit, considered a wretched food. When that supply failed, the people were in real trouble. In fact, he had heard of parents who killed and ate their children. Gradually, he warned, famine was extending over the entire territory, except the Prairies. He and the Aborigines Protection Society doubted that the Hudson's Bay Company could avert imminent disaster because they thought the cause of hunger was the decline in animals rather than the company's abuses.<sup>61</sup> Nevertheless, some witnesses accused the company of being niggardly with supplies.<sup>62</sup>

Company officials dismissed the allegations of widespread starvation. They asserted that game was still plentiful in certain regions and that elsewhere the Natives could supplement their diets with agriculture or in extreme cases by relief supplies. Governor Simpson emphatically denied suggestions of extensive hunger among the Naskapi in Labrador specifically and dismissed the claims of cannibalism of children as totally exaggerated. He similarly discounted the stories of A.G.B. Ballatyne, a strong opponent of the company, that starving people north of the Arctic Circle were eating beaver skins. Ballatyne had never been north of the circle, Simpson snorted, and years ago, while he served as his secretary, "his judgment was [not] very sound upon many points."<sup>63</sup> When questioned further, Simpson denied any specific recollections of cannibalism but admitted there might have been some cases in the Athabasca district in the recent past.

Contemporary witnesses defended Simpson's contention that food supplies in Rupert's Land were still sufficient. Bishop David Anderson believed that the Prairies still supported an abundance of buffalo, fish, and fowl most of the year. He did note, however, that food shortages occurred because the Plains Natives did not store any food. "They are improvident as regards the rest of the year," he observed.<sup>64</sup> He also reminded the committee that wherever Natives adopted farming methods their food supplies were plentiful and their populations increased, but where they refused, they suffered hunger and declining numbers. John McLaughlin believed that the isolated cases of starvation were a consequence of the monopoly. In fact, he believed hunger would be worse if it was not for smuggling and illicit trading among the Natives. It provided supplemental income for many.<sup>65</sup>

Current historiography seems to support Simpson's assertion that starvation was relatively rare and limited to isolated regions. Although she does not provide a quantitative answer to the question, Mary Black-Rogers argues that historians must

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61 *Report*, 443.

62 George Gladman, a long-time company employee, charged that shortages of supplies, usually caused by local managers, were not uncommon and that the Natives frequently suffered hunger. "The treatment of the Indians, whether humane or otherwise, depends entirely on the officers in charge of posts," Gladman noted, "his liberality governed by his outfit" [*ibid.*, 393].

63 *Ibid.*, 85. Privately, Simpson explained to the board of governors that he believed the company had managed the Natives well, that the period since 1821 was characterized by the absence of crime, the gradual development and knowledge of trade, and an increase in the aboriginal population. More specifically, he argued that the Natives and environment had benefited from the fur trade. Through careful preservation of the resource, the company had been able to increase the fur trade, a fact of great benefit to the indigenous hunters as they were better able to purchase clothing, ammunition, and other necessities. In those rare cases of scarcity, the company could supply relief to all Indians at times of scarcity. But that happened only as a "result of the proverbial improvidence of the Indian race" or illness. HBCA/PAM, A12/8, Simpson to Shepherd, 26 January 1857.

64 *Ibid.*, 242.

65 *Ibid.*, 264.

place their analysis of fur trade terminology in a cultural context. She identifies three levels for the word “starving”: a literal usage implying an actual shortage of food and going without eating; a technical function suggesting that the search for scarce food did not allow time for fur hunting; and a manipulative meaning where starving included “metaphorical, deliberately ambiguous, or untruthful statements.”<sup>66</sup> More specifically, Irene M. Spry suggests that, despite occasional shortages and incidents of begging, food resources were relatively plentiful until the end of the 1860s.<sup>67</sup> Inferentially, however, both arguments imply that food shortages, even if sporadic, were a reality and were probably becoming increasingly frequent by the late 1850s. Quite possibly, then, the supply of game was diminishing in some parts of the territories; and that fact alone would place the aboriginal nations in a weak position when the agricultural frontier approached Rupert’s Land.

If the extent of the company’s responsibility for the decline of animal populations in the North-West remains an open question, its role in the relatively peaceful character of the territories went unchallenged. All witnesses agreed that the company and its employees had minimized animosity among the inhabitants of Rupert’s Land and kept crime to insignificant levels. Under the company’s protection, some noted, it was possible to travel anywhere in the region safely and securely.<sup>68</sup> This was true in part because company officials, they agreed, were respected and they supervised their employees closely.<sup>69</sup> To be sure, their task was eased by two important conditions. In the first place, they admitted, the sparseness of the white population was crucial. Hudson’s Bay personnel comprised a small minority scattered across a vast territory. On the one hand, they did not crowd the indigenous people out of traditional hunting grounds; on the other hand, their survival and their ability to maintain a profitable trade rested entirely on their ability to create a friendly, symbiotic alliance with the overwhelmingly larger Native population. As Governor Simpson put it, “They look to us for their supplies, and we study their comfort and convenience as much as possible; we assist each other.”<sup>70</sup> At the same time, this amicable relationship rested on the peaceful character of the northern tribes.<sup>71</sup> Pointing to the incessant warfare among indigenous peoples and newcomers in the United States, most witnesses concurred that the congenial nature of the northern, woodland Natives was a prime factor in the peaceful relationship.

If the company officials took credit for the tranquillity in the northern woodlands, they could not do so for the Plains. A few of the witnesses admitted that the Blackfoot were a particularly fierce and warlike tribe and did on occasion cause trouble.<sup>72</sup> This testimony presented almost as an aside, like so much of the evidence about the Native peoples, greatly oversimplified a complex reality. In fact, since the beginning of the decade, intricate cultural and economic pressures, largely caused by the fur and

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66 Mary Black-Rogers, “‘Starving’ and Survival in the Subarctic Fur Trade: A Case for Contextual Semantics,” in Trigger, Morantz and Dechêne, *“Le Castor Fait Tout,”* 618-49.

67 Irene M. Spry, “Aboriginal Resource Use in the Nineteenth Century in the Great Plains of Modern Canada,” in Abel and Friesen, *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada*, 81-84.

68 *Report*, 22.

69 *Ibid.*, 59.

70 *Ibid.*, 92. The governor neglected to mention that without the provisions of pemmican and meat which the Natives supplied, the Hudson’s Bay could not operate as efficiently in the North-West as it did.

71 *Ibid.*, 284.

72 *Ibid.*, 22-23, 117, 284.

buffalo hide trade, were shifting traditional hunting ground boundaries. The decline of all animal populations, but especially the buffalo, impelled a slow but relentless westward movement of all the indigenous Plains hunters, including the Métis. While the Cree were pushing into Blackfoot territory, the latter were squeezing tribes to their west and north and fighting back the invaders from the east. Violent clashes over control of the resource became increasingly common and, in fact, in the spring of 1857 a marauding band of young Cree stole a large number of Blackfoot horses from an encampment on the South Saskatchewan River. In the resultant chase the Blackfoot killed seventeen of the Cree.<sup>73</sup>

Most committee members and witnesses, however, were interested primarily in the incidence of natural resources in Rupert's Land and the extent of arable land; they paid only scant attention to the history of the Native peoples. They were ready to accept the evidence that conditions in Rupert's Land were comparatively stable and somewhat satisfactory. Moreover, any concerns the committee may have had were with the future of the Native peoples rather than their past. And, with the supply of game diminishing, the outlook was bleak. "What is to become of the natives when their lands can no longer furnish the means of subsistence?" the Aborigines Protection Society asked.<sup>74</sup> Others worried that the company's sudden withdrawal, whether voluntary or forced, would spell disaster for all inhabitants of the territories.<sup>75</sup> In either case, everyone recognized that the inevitable settlement of the arable sections of the North-West would likely bring considerable hardship to the Natives and significant changes to their society. The problem, all agreed, was how to prepare the aboriginal people for these far-reaching transformations. But, because all the witnesses and committee members were white and no Natives were asked or expected to testify, the answer inevitably was one-sided and simplistic: the civilization of the Natives.

Equally clear was that no one expected the Hudson's Bay Company to play a significant role in this civilization process. To be sure, some critics charged the company for having failed its obligations to educate and Christianize the Natives. Rev. Griffith Owen Corbett, a Church of England clergyman at St. Andrew's, the largest parish in Red River, from 1852 to 1855, observed that the Hudson's Bay Company had actively opposed the establishment of aboriginal settlements and missionary activities. He told the commissioners that he had tried to establish a mission at Portage la Prairie but the bishop had informed him that the company objected because it wanted to restrict settlement to the Red River region, thinking it too difficult to govern people outside that community.<sup>76</sup> Corbett did admit, however, that the Hudson's Bay Company had recently withdrawn its objections. Nevertheless, he believed that company policies still practically prohibited the establishment of missions even if Natives

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73 Milloy, *The Plains Cree*, 103-10; Robert A. Church, "Blackfeet and Fur Traders: Storm on the Northwestern Plains," *Journal of the West* 36 (April 1997): 79-84.

74 *Report*, 443.

75 Alexander Isbister argued that the denser populations of both white and Native people in the United States was a crucial factor in that country's more violent history. Beginning with relatively sparse populations, government could carefully control the rate of settlement and avoid wars between Indians and whites [*ibid.*, 122].

76 Lieutenant-Colonel William Caldwell, commander of a pensioner corps in Red River, confirmed that he had discouraged the establishment of a mission at Portage la Prairie because it would be outside his jurisdiction [*ibid.*, 309]. See also the testimony of Alexander Isbister and the letter of an aboriginal chief, called Peguis [*ibid.*, 120-37, 353-6, and 445].

desired them, citing an aborted mission at Fort Alexander, near Lake Winnipeg, where the company ordered a missionary to confine himself to the fort and “not to civilise and evangelise the heathen; not to form a locality or permanent dwelling for the Indians.” When asked, Corbett charged that the company opposed settlement because “if missionaries and missionary settlements increase, chief factors and fur trading posts must decrease.”<sup>77</sup>

Meanwhile, Sir George Simpson vigorously denied the charge that the Hudson’s Bay Company had thwarted “the settlement of Amerindians as agricultural labourers or as a Christian community.”<sup>78</sup> The Natives could occupy any piece of land [except that which had been purchased by Lord Selkirk] without payment to the company, he added gratuitously; moreover, the company had encouraged agricultural pursuits at its Rainy Lake, Cumberland, Swan River, and Norway House posts as well as at various missions by supplying the Natives with tools and seed potatoes and grain. “We are exceedingly anxious that ... [the Natives] should give their attention to agriculture,”<sup>79</sup> he asserted, quickly appending that the conspicuous lack of success was due not to company policy but to the aboriginal people’s distinct distaste for field labour. As for the criticism that the company discouraged the task of instructing the Natives in European ways, Simpson argued that “as a Company [we are not] charged with the education or civilization” of the Natives.<sup>80</sup> Yet, the company had voluntarily assisted the Church Missionary Society because “we are anxious to improve the condition of the Indians.”<sup>81</sup> It had built schools at York Factory, Norway House, and other posts; it had provided free passage to missionaries, their goods, and their school supplies; and, it had paid salaries for some schoolmasters and missionaries. The evident lack of success was due not to company recalcitrance but to the isolation of the posts, the sparse populations, and the reluctance of parents to leave their children at the schools.

Despite the differing opinions on the amount of effort the Hudson’s Bay Company had put into the education and evangelization of the aboriginal nations, the members of the Select Committee could sense the elements of a consensus in the testimony placed before them. All parties agreed that if the Hudson’s Bay Company were forced to withdraw from the territories quickly or if the region were opened to free trade completely, the Native people would not be able to cope with the resultant settlement process. A rapid, unchecked flow of white colonists, they believed, would be devastating and likely lead to bloody confrontations. “If you take a very large extent of territory, and by doing so take away the employment which the Hudson’s Bay at present give to tribes of Indians, and leave them in want,” John Ross, a Canadian representative warned, not without some self-interest, “they may perhaps find means of helping themselves, and they may come down upon the border settlements.”<sup>82</sup> Instead, many

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77 Ibid., 139. The attitude of the company to missionaries was ambivalent. While it supported a number of missionaries of various faiths with free transportation and board and room, it exerted a measure of control over their expansion and actively opposed competition among the faiths. See, for only one example, Gerald M. Hutchinson, Introduction and Notes, *The Rundell Journals, 1840-1848* (Calgary: Alberta Records Publication Board, Historical Society of Alberta, 1977), xiv-xvi.

78 Ibid., 63.

79 Ibid., 58.

80 Ibid., 105.

81 Ibid., 64.

82 Ibid., 285.

of the witnesses agreed that the company and the aboriginal hunters should withdraw gradually and in stages from the fertile southern plains and river valleys to the northern forests. John McLaughlin, who expressed perhaps the most advanced of the apartheid schemes, suggested that settlement would extend no further than the northern limits of arable land. "There is a certain portion of the country which, of course, is so inhospitable that it would be impossible to colonize or cultivate it," McLaughlin declared. The far northern reaches of the territories should remain as a fur trade preserve he thought, but he too accepted the notion that once the Natives were prepared they should gradually move back into the newly settled areas and be integrated into the new society. In time, he believed, "the Indians ... might be all drawn down to the more habitable portions as they are such a race that they might amalgamate with others."<sup>83</sup> Judiciously handled and carefully controlled, the gradual settlement of the North-West, most witnesses echoed McLaughlin, could occur without the bloodshed witnessed in the United States. "Any settlement from Canada must come up naturally, and very gradually indeed."<sup>84</sup>

Meanwhile, the opinion surfaced, that church and state should devise policies to prepare the remaining Natives for the encroaching white society. As Bishop David Anderson put it, there should be programs "which might at once be sound and salutary, and in accordance with the spirit of the present age; such as may tend to the good of all committed to ... [the company's] care, whether Europeans or Indian; their temporal advantages in the present world, and their higher interests as immortal beings, to be trained for another and an unending state."<sup>85</sup> Although his experience in Red River caused him to believe that the "brown man can resist the encroachments of the white man," Anderson hoped "that the Indian may be raised in the interval before ... civilization sweeps westward, as it must."<sup>86</sup> By "raised" he meant not merely Christianizing but also integrating the aboriginal peoples into the advancing western European, mid-nineteenth-century lifestyle. With rhetorical hyperbole, Anderson painted a Utopian vision. "The perfection of work is a European and an Indian together," he suggested, but added with some feelings of superiority "that there should be the European head, and the Indian as the mouthpiece."<sup>87</sup> In other words, despite all their humanitarian compassion, the advocates of settlement believed that there was no room in the proposed agrarian society for what they perceived to be an inferior savage way of life. The Native inhabitants of Rupert's Land had to accommodate themselves to the new order.

Bishop Anderson's opinion reflected current belief among many expansionists, missionaries, and humanitarians that the indigenous inhabitants of the region should be educated into accepting the newcomer's culture because the agrarian settlement of the Plains was inevitable and desirable. Not only was the civilization of the Natives appropriate but as witnesses were eager to demonstrate, it was possible. Some noted that limited progress in training Natives to be farmers had been achieved already in Red River, at The Pas, and at some posts like Norway House and Moose Factory. The Aborigines Protection Society forwarded a letter from a Peguis, a Saulteaux chief, as proof of the "Indian capacity" to adapt to the agrarian way of life. The society's

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83 Ibid., 275.

84 Ibid., 285.

85 Ibid., 239.

86 Ibid., 245.

87 Ibid., 235.

secretary observed that the Red River settlement was a “remarkable example of the improvement of which the Indian race is capable.”<sup>88</sup> In addition to becoming farmers, one Native had become a harness maker and another a tinsmith. Moreover, the secretary noted with obvious pride, the fact that in a settlement with considerable poverty there was not a locked door was clear proof that the moral standards of the Natives could also be improved.

When pressed, those witnesses before the committee who had lived or travelled in the North-West were not as sanguine in their hopes for farm training. John Rae, for example, very much approved “of settling and attempting to civilise” the aboriginal people but observed that agricultural settlements “would be beneficial” only as a supplement to the winter’s hunt. The Natives will “never become great farmers” because of their fondness for hunting and their opposition to “civilised life,” he thought.<sup>89</sup> At best, then, cultivation would be an additional income to the fur trade, only complementing it “because the time when ... [the Natives] would be employed in the settlements is not the time when they hunt.”<sup>90</sup> Rae, therefore, did not expect the Natives to become full-time farmers.

Similarly, Rev. Griffith Corbett also expressed some reservations. Even though he thought that those who had turned to farming had improved their lives remarkably, converting an entire independent, hunting people into a sedentary agrarian society would be extremely difficult. Corbett noted that while some Indian tribes had been agriculturalists in the past, they had never grown sufficient vegetables to sustain themselves nor would they ever want to live on vegetables. By way of illustration, he noted that most Chippewas and many Natives at Red River inhabited fertile lands and had received training and assistance; nevertheless, the vast majority refused to adopt agrarian lifestyles, preferring to fish, hunt, and harvest wild rice. When asked, Corbett could not explain why some settlements were successful and others not but speculated that those Natives who were most independent of the Hudson’s Bay, who had plenty of fish and rice and who did not need ammunition and clothing, were least likely to adopt farming. On the other hand, he predicted that the Swampy and Saskatchewan Cree were the most likely to accept “habits of civilised life” because they had long been dependent upon the company and needed their supplies. Thus, he reasoned, they would be more ready to accept “civilisation.”<sup>91</sup>

The debate, whether or not the indigenous hunting society could adapt to an agricultural economy, was framed in the common nineteenth-century assumption that North Americans had a mandate to colonize the continent by cultivating the soil, or more specifically, that the Prairies were an expansive, non-productive wilderness that needed to be civilized through agriculture. As Frieda Knobloch has argued, agriculture, as its name implied, meant bringing culture to the wilderness.<sup>92</sup> In Red River, for example, Alexander Ross, a prominent leader, felt a divine calling to toil in

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88 Ibid., 444.

89 Ibid., 30, 42.

90 Ibid., 41.

91 The assumption that the Natives were unwilling to take up farming, held by many authorities even to the present, is challenged by Sarah Carter, “‘We Must Farm to Enable us to Live’: The Plains Cree and Agriculture to 1900,” in R. Bruce Morrison and C. Roderick Wilson (eds.), *Native Peoples: The Canadian Experience* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1995).

92 Frieda Knobloch, *The Culture of Wilderness: Agriculture as Colonization in the American West* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 5.

the fields as the vanguard of civilization in a vast wasteland and he criticized those Métis who preferred “indolence to industry, and their own roving habits to agricultural or other pursuits of civilized life.”<sup>93</sup> In other words, farming was a superior economic endeavour to hunting because it was part of a civilizing process. More to the point, Rupert’s Land’s Native hunters had to become part of this civilizing strategy. All the participants in the Select Committee’s hearings — none of whom were Native — agreed on this point; they only quarrelled about timing and procedures.

Turning the aboriginal citizens of the North-West into agriculturalists, all witnesses agreed, was only one aspect of the required civilizing process. The strategy also required a general education, which in turn was closely connected with evangelization. In other words, the Select Committee, its speakers and listeners, enamoured by the perceived glory of mid-nineteenth-century British culture, sought to spread its mentality to the farthest reaches of the empire.<sup>94</sup> Swept by the euphoria of the economic and social progress that the industrial revolution apparently had brought, Victorian Britons wanted to propagate their successful achievements across the globe. The free-trade doctrine that accompanied industrialization was not simply about the unfettered exchange of commodities, it also included the unhampered transmission of ideas, the message that Britain’s industrial, technological, and Christian culture was the pinnacle of human civilization.<sup>95</sup> From this supposedly lofty perspective, the notion that the vast North American interior should be preserved to sustain an aboriginal way of life and yield only furs instead of agricultural crops, minerals and precious metals seemed absurd. Humans were destined to dominate the wilderness, to civilize it, to remove its natural cover and inhabitants, and to prepare its soil for profitable, cultivated crops. The Natives, according to this view, were savages: like the wilderness, they needed to be civilized; they had to be separated from unredeemed nature and inducted into the marvels of the industrializing, urbanizing civilization.<sup>96</sup>

Working from this model, the criticism directed against the Hudson’s Bay Company was more than a tirade against an outdated monopolistic enterprise; it considered the company to be a representative of an outdated culture, an obsolete way of life. Various critics charged that the Hudson’s Bay Company had not only failed to inculcate modern European ideals into North America’s aboriginal societies but had actively opposed settlement and evangelization.<sup>97</sup> The latter charge was contradicted by church officials who noted that the company provided adequate subsidies to missionary efforts.<sup>98</sup> In fact, Bishop David Anderson believed that the company’s “disposition latterly has been to do much more for the Indians in carrying out civilization”; but he was quick to point out, “of course the direct object of the

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93 Alexander Ross, *The Red River Settlement: Its Rise, Progress, and Present State...* (1856; Minneapolis, 1957), 194; see also 78-80, 84-85, 98-99, 193-6, 203-23.

94 Walter E. Houghton, *The Victorian Frame of Mind 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957).

95 John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, “The Imperialism of Free Trade,” *The Economic History Review* 6, no. 1 (1953): 1-15. This seminal article has launched a furious debate among historians. A dated, but useful, introduction to the discussion is Roger Louis, *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York: New Viewpoints, 1976). An excellent overview of Britain’s cultural expansionism is Ronald Hyam, *Britain’s Imperial Century 1815-1914*, 31-36. As its title implies, Alfred Crosby’s *Ecological Imperialism* argues that disease, plants, and animals acted as shock troops preparing the way of Europe’s invasion of North America and other New World continents.

96 Adas, *Machines as the Measure of Men*; Turner, *Beyond Geography*.

97 See testimony of Alexander Isbister and John McLaughlin, *Report*, 127 and 264.

98 *Report*, 157-58, 231, and 237.

Company would not be to colonise or to settle.”<sup>99</sup> By the dictates of its corporate mandate, its activities would not be conducive to settlement, nor to “the civilisation and improvement of the inhabitants.”<sup>100</sup>

Bishop Anderson’s position, set between the extremes taken by the supporters and detractors of the Hudson’s Bay Company, exemplified the well-intentioned, yet patronizing position of many Victorian contemporaries. He suggested that without the company the Natives would not have advanced much “beyond that state of nature which may have existed for a very lengthened period.”<sup>101</sup> By using the phrase, “state of nature,” Anderson alluded to more than the sinful condition of the aboriginal tribes. He also implied that they were an integral part of the wilderness, which was still untamed and uncivilized. Both the landscape and its indigenous inhabitants needed to be redeemed, that is, to be civilized. Speaking from his European-centred platform, the bishop firmly believed in the objective of turning the territory into a rural English countryside and he wanted the aboriginal inhabitants to be a part of this British society. “My own desire and endeavour would be to raise and rescue them as a people, and to prepare them to be able to stem the current when civilisation, as it gradually must, spreads westward from Canada over this mighty territory.”<sup>102</sup> Although he reluctantly admitted that the saying “the brown population dies out as the white population advances” was likely true, he optimistically hoped that “the experiment [of Anglican missions] may yet save the Indian.”<sup>103</sup> Bishop Anderson, therefore, was concerned not only with the souls of the Natives, but also their society, culture, and life.

Ever the optimist, Bishop Anderson observed with some satisfaction that the church had already experienced some success in this endeavour, particularly in Red River. There, he claimed, many Natives “have been induced [by missionaries] to adopt settled and industrious habits” and some of their settlements were like English parishes with little farms and all the comforts of life. Obviously, Anderson added with regret, in more northern, isolated regions, the harsh climate, low temperatures, and poor soil were less likely to yield satisfactory results. Moreover, seasonal migrations would also make missionary work more difficult. Nevertheless, he concluded, wherever Native people had settled in communities and converted to Christianity, the results had been dramatic. “Wherever they are Christianised and settled,” he observed, the population had increased. Even as hunters, Christian aboriginal people “socially, as regards their position in life ... are much improved”; their moral and social character had advanced from their “primitive state.”<sup>104</sup> They had become like Victorian families, conducting family worship twice daily and attending church regularly.<sup>105</sup> Noting with considerable pride that two of the missionaries under his jurisdiction were Natives and that another was a Métis, Bishop Anderson, therefore,

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99 Ibid., 240.

100 Ibid., 237.

101 Ibid.

102 Ibid., 237-38.

103 Ibid., 246.

104 Ibid., 240.

105 Lieutenant-Colonel William Caldwell supported Anderson’s view. He was very pleased with the progress of the aboriginal mission in Red River. He complimented the Natives on their mode of Sunday worship observances, adding that “they were as devotional in appearance as any congregation I ever was in” [ibid., 309].

believed that civilizing the Native through missionary activity had already met with considerable success.

Anderson's optimistic assessment received support from Peguis, the Saulteaux chief who in 1817 had signed a treaty with Lord Selkirk supposedly releasing title to a large parcel of land straddling the Red River. Subsequently, Peguis assisted the early colonist and even settled some of his people at Netley Creek on the river. Eventually, however, he came to realize that the treaty favoured the newcomers and not the indigenous people and he claimed that the four Native signatories to the treaty did not have the authority to extinguish aboriginal title to the land.<sup>106</sup> Peguis' evidence, obtained indirectly through a letter attached to the Aborigines Protection Society's written submission, was the only statement from an aboriginal inhabitant of the North-West.

Unwittingly, the sole voice for several First Nations, Peguis condemned the fur traders for robbing him and his fellow Natives and keeping them poor; but he praised the settlers and missionaries for teaching them agricultural techniques and the values of Christianity. On the one hand, the colonists had taught them how to cultivate the soil and raise cattle; on the other hand, the missionaries had shown them how to pray, to be industrious, honest, sober, and truthful; they had explicated the truth and peace of Christ. Many of his fellows, he explained, wanted to practice this religious ideal. While his commendation of farmers and missionaries may have been obsequious and fawning, it may also have been driven by a pragmatic trait and a dawning understanding of the implications of European settlement. He and his fellow Natives were not against further settlement, Peguis insisted, but before more white settlers would be permitted to take lands, a fair and mutually advantageous treaty must be negotiated. The indigenous inhabitants of the territories expected to be paid for the alienated lands. Moreover, they asked that the imperial government appoint a fair-minded person as their advocate in the bargaining. Since the Select Committee had not bothered to invite any Natives to express their opinions and feelings, Peguis' letter was but a footnote, a passing reminder that the aboriginal people understood the value of the land which they inhabited.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, it indicated a willingness to adapt to changing conditions and adopt an agricultural economy.

Canadian expansionists, who had their eyes on the enormous northwestern plains and contiguous forest, assured the committee that they understood that the Natives would have to be compensated for the loss of their property. William Henry Draper, chief justice of the Common Pleas of Upper Canada and official Canadian delegate, assured the committee that the aboriginal people would have to be recompensed. "I do not think they can be plundered with impunity."<sup>108</sup> Although Draper appealed to the British tradition of treating North America's aboriginal nations as diplomatic equals, he did not mention that more recently his province had departed on a different course. While the Select Committee was sitting, the colonial legislature passed the Gradual Civilization Act with the express purpose of Christianizing and civilizing the Natives by taking them from their communal reserves and placing them on smaller individual, freehold plots near white communities. Here they supposedly

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106 W.L. Morton, *Manitoba: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1957), 55, 72; Olive Patricia Dickason, *Canada's First Nations: A History of the Founding Peoples from Earliest Time* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1997), 213, 239.

107 *Report*, 446.

108 *Ibid.*, 225.

could observe at firsthand industrious, civilized life. For the first time, however, legislation allowed the government to erase any legal distinctions between Native and non-Native peoples, to appropriate reserve lands, to intervene in tribal affairs, and to actively promote the integration of Natives into white society. In short, the 1857 Canadian legislation, based on the belief that aboriginal leaders were strengthening rather than eroding indigenous culture, legalized a new policy of forced civilization and assimilation.<sup>109</sup> Although the act did not in any way anticipate the future annexation of Rupert's Land, it did indicate the civilizing and assimilating intentions of government policy.

The expansionists also believed that violence could be prevented by a gradualist approach. John McLaughlin, for example, believed that Canada could avoid the violence experienced in the United States with proper planning. Suggesting that northern Natives were not as warlike and easily insulted as those in the United States, McLaughlin believed that proper legislation and the establishment of law and order could mitigate disputes and prevent violence.<sup>110</sup> Similarly, supposing that the fur trade had kept the Natives in helpless dependency upon the company for many goods, like guns, ammunition, and blankets, Justice Draper argued that the Hudson's Bay Company could not be ejected suddenly nor replaced easily. Returning to the segregationist argument, he proposed that settlement be limited to the southern, arable territories and the fur trade be preserved in the northern regions. Separation, he believed, would prevent the violence seen in the United States; it would ensure peaceful relations with the Indians.<sup>111</sup> Bishop Anderson, who believed that the greatest obstacle to the assimilation of the Native was alcohol, also advocated secluding the Natives in the northern territories while permitting free trade and settlement in the south. The aboriginal peoples were threatened, he opined simplistically, not because "a more energetic, a more civilized, and in fact, a more intellectual man would come in competition with him," but because the Native, as a less civilized being, was more subject to the temptation of alcohol. In other words, until liquor could be eliminated entirely from the North-West and until the indigenous tribes could be elevated to the bishop's British standards, he hoped the government would limit settlement to the southern portion of the territories and allow the Natives to live a protected existence in the northern forests.<sup>112</sup>

Company officials took a realistic attitude, which did not differ much from that of the bishop. Having lived among the Natives in the North-West for decades, their perspective was perhaps less sanguine. It would not be the fur trade that would destroy aboriginal culture Edward Ellice suggested, but the "the march of civilisation."<sup>113</sup> Thus, he and Governor Simpson recommended the preservation of the indigenous way of life as long as possible. Simpson, an investor in modern transportation technologies and conscious of the rapid advance of the railway across the North American continent, understood that the settlement of the southern plains and Saskatchewan

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109 John S. Milloy, "The Early Indian Acts: Developmental Strategy and Constitutional Change," in Ian A.L. Getty and Antoine S. Lussier (eds.), *As Long as the Sun Shines and Water Flows* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1983), 58-9; John L. Tobias, "Protection, Civilization, Assimilation: An Outline History of Canada's Indian Policy," in *ibid.*, 42.

110 *Report*, 285.

111 *Ibid.*, 216, 227-28.

112 *Ibid.*, 252-54.

113 *Ibid.*, 342.

River valley was inevitable. Based on past experience, he argued, the result would be intemperance and disease for the First Nations and “little or no progress in education or civilisation.” In other words, like Bishop Anderson, he had no confidence in the Natives’ ability to adapt to new circumstances. But, for him personally, the issue was simply a business proposition. Limited by its mandate to conduct a profitable fur trade, the Hudson’s Bay Company was able to administer a sparsely peopled fur empire but was not equipped to govern a large, heavily populated colony. A private company, he was quick to point out, did not have the financial resources nor bureaucratic experience to direct a colonizing effort. Thus, he had no objections to Canada annexing the southern, apparently arable, portion of Rupert’s Land and providing for its settlement and administration, granted the Hudson’s Bay Company received compensation for the loss of trade and territory. “I think there would be no objection to it, provided the Company were satisfied,” he stated tersely but reminded the committee that the shareholders “consider themselves lords of the soil, proprietors of the country, in their own special territory.”<sup>114</sup> In the end, the company was interested only in sufficient compensation for the land and business it would be asked to surrender and the retention of a trading monopoly in the remaining regions.

As far as the aboriginal people were concerned, Simpson privately argued that if the British government’s objective was “the preservation of the Indian race,” then he believed “that it can only be attained by preserving them from the contaminating influence of bad example and the use of ardent spirits, and by allowing them to retain their primitive habits, following the occupations for which alone they appear to be suited by nature — that of hunters.”<sup>115</sup> Personally, he believed that assimilation was a dubious prospect. Whenever they had integrated among settlers, the Natives had “cast aside their simple habits of life,” he suggested, “and follow[ed] the, by no means beneficial example of whites and half-castes.” To save the aboriginal way of life, Simpson recommended that the imperial government limit settlement to the southern portion of Rupert’s Land and set aside a northern fur reserve, where the company could continue a profitable business and meanwhile maintain what it considered to be the traditional way of life of the original inhabitants of the territories. This did not mean, said Simpson, that the Natives were “to be left in a state of ignorance and barbarism.” Indeed, it was the European’s “duty to instruct and civilize them.” Simpson’s approach, as condescending in its supposed superiority as the other witnesses, was not, however, as thorough-going as that of the expansionists. “Without attempting to force upon them white man’s habits and feelings,” company employees, with the help of missionaries must prepare the Natives for the impending change by “a gradual development of their mental faculties, naturally almost dormant.” But, the intent of this education would not be to alter their basic lifestyles, but to cope with the new technological culture. Still, this corporate manager, personally involved in the exploitation of the territories’ resources, be they fur or minerals, understood the virtual inevitability of the settlement and development process and he was but proposing a temporary reprieve for an old way of life.

In the end, the Select Committee accepted the obvious compromise. It decided that it was in the imperial interest that, when it was ready, Canada should be permitted to annex all the lands it needed for colonization. At that time, the imperial government should make equitable arrangements with the Hudson’s Bay Company and

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114 *Ibid.*, 87. See also HBCA/PAM, A7/2, Shepherd to Labouchere, 18 July 1857.

115 HBCA/PAM, A12/8, Simpson to Shepherd, 26 January 1857.

Canada for the surrender of the designated lands. Meanwhile, the committee recommended that in the interim it was important to maintain law and order in the region, to curb the liquor trade, and to stop “the indiscriminate destruction of the more valuable fur-bearing animals”; therefore, the company should retain its exclusive trading rights. This, according to the committee, was best “to the prosperity and contentment of our North American fellow-subjects; and especially in the mode which is best calculated to add strength to the great colony of Canada.”<sup>116</sup> The committee also believed that action in the North-West must be quick and decisive to demonstrate to the United States that Great Britain had a determined interest in the region. “The rapid extension of settlement which had been going on in so remarkable a manner to the south of the American boundary line, renders it a matter of great importance to establish within our own territory a counterpoise favourable to British interests, and modelled upon British institutions.”<sup>117</sup> To the committee, then, the settlement of the southern portion of the North-West was imperative and the Native peoples had to be fitted into the mould.

The Select Committee’s recommendation and the Hudson’s Bay Company’s ready acquiescence demonstrated how closely all the participants in the process had followed the same score. While every witness and member had played their distinctive and at times discordant parts, they had all rendered the same theme. Rupert’s Land was a vast, isolated and untamed wilderness. Modern scientific knowledge, consummated in current farming and transportation technologies, would enable European newcomers to turn the still hostile wasteland into a productive landscape. The great expanse, which so far had only spawned fur, could generate much more valuable cash crops. The unorganized territories must be subdivided, fenced, and hedged in; they must nourish millions of people. Trees must be planted and bogs drained, minerals mined, and soils cultivated.

Viewed from this perspective, the original human inhabitants of the northern expanse were but components of an uncivilized nature. They, like the wilderness, needed to be redeemed, that is civilized. That assumption was predicated on the notion that the First Nations, living in Rupert’s Land, were a homogenous people with a simple, undiversified culture. The testimony before the Select Committee overlooked the complexity of the many different nations that lived on the prairies and in the woodlands. It did not recognize that the Native peoples were more than savage hunters, but that their movements also accorded with the ripening of fruits and the availability of tubers, and, that in some cases, tribes engaged in agriculture.<sup>118</sup> Since the aboriginal nations had no written history, the witnesses disregarded the rich diplomatic and cultural relations between the various tribes; since they did not share the capitalist ideology, the testimony ignored the trade and commerce among the indigenous peoples that pre-dated the arrival of the white fur traders. Most importantly, the participants in the committee’s hearings did not recognize that the Natives were active participants in the history of Rupert’s Land. Thus they resorted to a paternalism, which despite its arguably good and humanitarian intentions, sought to manage and control the future of the original citizens. In short, the committee failed to accept them as equals, as people whose participation in the development of the North-West was important.

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116 *Report*, xi.

117 *Ibid.*, xiii.

118 Carter, “Plains Cree and Agriculture,” 447.

Despite its obvious flaws, the committee's report is an important document because it mirrored the Victorian attitude to aboriginal people and because it was an omen of what was in store for Rupert's Land's first citizens. The directors of the Hudson's Bay Company, like many of their critics, may not have fully appreciated the rich cultural heritage of Rupert's Land's Native people, but they, and particularly their North American governor, understood the expansionist ideology. As shrewd, literate businesspeople, they were active participants in their emerging technological society. Closely connected to government circles, they were fully cognizant of the new realities and of imperial ambitions. As they explained to the colonial secretary,

We are convinced, notwithstanding the hostile agitation of parties in Canada against our Company, that our prosperity is not opposed to that of Canada, neither is the advancement of Canadian interests incompatible with ours, but, on the contrary, that in all matters of essential importance our joint interests are mutual and identical. It requires but a small degree of knowledge of the existing state of British North America, and more particularly of the policy which guides the adjoining Government of the United States to perceive that the honor and reputation of Great Britain and the interests of her subjects can be best preserved by the cordial union of all those in that locality who are bound to it by the ties of birth and affection.<sup>119</sup>

This appeal to an imperialist duty, that equated a commercial mandate with an implied ecological as well as territorial mission, did not preclude a strong dedication to trade and profit. Although the Hudson's Bay Company was ready to accept the recommendations of the Select Committee, it expected to be compensated for the loss of its territories. Provided Canada paid appropriate compensation, the company was prepared to withdraw from the arable portions of their enormous holdings and leave the civilization of that portion of the wilderness to settlers and the state. Meanwhile government, school, and church could attend to the refinement of the aboriginal nations. Thus the company and the Canadian government of the day accepted the report of the Select Committee as a prelude, an articulation of a theme that would dominate the impending settlement of western Canada.



# Hidden Homesteaders: Women, the State and Patriarchy in the Saskatchewan Wheat Economy, 1870-1930

*Sandra Rollings-Magnusson*

**ABSTRACT.** Pioneer women were vital to the family farm, both directly through their contribution to production and indirectly through the reproduction of farm labour. The family farm, in turn, played the key role in establishing wheat as a viable staple export on the Canadian Prairies. It is argued that to ensure that women would remain tied to the farm and contribute to the growth of the wheat economy, the federal and provincial governments supported the patriarchal nature of society by enacting and maintaining legislation that limited the independence of women. A review of federal, territorial and provincial legislation in Saskatchewan during the period from 1870 to 1930 is utilized to illustrate this argument.

**SOMMAIRE.** Les pionnières étaient indispensables à la ferme familiale: directement par leur contribution à la production, et indirectement par la reproduction de main d'oeuvre. La ferme familiale, en retour, joua un rôle essentiel dans l'établissement du blé comme denrée d'exportation viable pour les prairies canadiennes. La thèse de cet article est que, dans le but de forcer les femmes à rester à la ferme et à contribuer à l'essor de l'économie du blé, les gouvernements provincial et fédéral soutenaient la nature patriarcale de la société en promulguant et en maintenant une législation qui limitait leur indépendance. Un examen de la législation fédérale, territoriale et provinciale en Saskatchewan pendant la période 1870-1930 est utilisé comme illustration.

## Introduction

Nellie McClung (1992:114), an outspoken supporter of women's rights in the early 1900s, detailed the necessity of women's work and the double duty of women on the farm. She recounts the reaction to the sudden death of Jane, a farm wife who cared for a family of six children, her husband, and three hired hands. Three days after the birth of her seventh child, Jane died and "[t]he bereaved husband was the most astonished man in the world. He had never known Jane to do a thing like that before, and he could not get over it. In threshing time too!" Whether the reaction of Jane's husband related to the loss of her labour for the harvest, or the necessity of finding someone to care for the house and children, it is clear that he relied on Jane's efforts to maintain the efficient functioning of the farm household and productive operations. However, despite the apparent need for his wife's assistance, it is unlikely that her contribution would have been recognized with a share in the assets of "his" farming operation.

In the "last best west,"<sup>1</sup> women were subjected to economic and political constraints as a result of their gender and seldom had the chance to take advantage of the opportunities made available to male homesteaders. These constraints were based on prevailing patriarchal ideologies of male superiority that had evolved historically to the point that they permeated the structure of society, the economy and the state. As suggested by Folbre (1982), it is not surprising that institutions existed that enabled men to dominate and exploit women and children, given that it was men who

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1 The western prairie region was referred to as "the last best west" as the land in Canada West (western Ontario) and the American Plains area had been almost completely occupied. Thus, the Prairies were seen as the last opportunity to obtain free homesteads in North America. See Bruce (1976).

generally created and enforced laws and possessed greater power in a capitalist society. With their options for an independent livelihood being limited, women had little choice but to accept the essential unfairness of a matrimonial arrangement in which the wife worked for the benefit of her husband and bore children who would eventually contribute to the family income as well.

Similar points were raised by writers such as McIntosh (1978) and Ursel (1992), who both dealt with the impact of patriarchy on the state in a capitalist society and the support that the state could directly or indirectly provide for the continuation of male dominance. While McIntosh argues at a highly theoretical level, Ursel based a portion of her discussion on the Canadian historical situation. Thus, Ursel's comments may be of greater direct relevance here; but it is important to note that both authors trace the link between the state, the capitalist economy and women to the family. By manipulating the status of women through the regulation of employment rights, marriage and divorce laws, contraception and abortion availability, or other aspects of life that impact on the family, the state may influence the continuance of male dominance and female dependence. McIntosh proposed that state intervention was indirect and accomplished by supporting the existence of the male-dominated family household structure to encourage the reproduction of future workers for the capitalist economy. Ursel, on the other hand, proposed that the state would intervene directly in the lives of women to preserve the patriarchal nature of the family and ensure the reproduction of the work force necessary for the maintenance of the economic system. She argued that this had been accomplished historically by hampering the ability of women to support themselves, thereby making a husband the most reliable source of support. As Ursel (1992: 22-23) states:

The essential condition for the subordination of women within any patriarchal system is *control of women's access to the means of their livelihood*. By making women's access to subsistence contingent on entry into particular reproductive relations or by restricting their ability to be self-sufficient, women's labour, both productive and reproductive, becomes subject to comprehensive control. This control is the essence of patriarchy.

Thus, female subordination and reproduction were linked in a structure of patriarchy that existed to organize and control reproductive activity, which was in turn connected with the capitalist organization of production in society. Relations of production controlled the distribution of wealth, and the long-term reproduction of labour could be assured only so long as the dominant class allowed sufficient resources to be utilized to reproduce working families rather than sustaining only the worker. Ursel therefore theorized that the state had a second, equally vital, role in maintaining the balance within society. Intervention into the economic sphere might be required to preserve a balance of resource distribution between production in the workplace and reproduction in the household through the "socializing" of costs of reproduction.

A review of the positions put forward by Folbre, McIntosh and Ursel reveals that each theorist proposes that the state will, presumably through legislation, intervene in the lives of women by supporting the patriarchal nature of the family. Whether one argues that the apparatus and power of the state became the instrument or tool of men as the politically and socially dominant group, or that the ideology of patriarchy permeated the structure of the state and thereby determined the nature of policies that would be adopted, it is clear that state intervention supporting male dominance occurred as part of the Canadian development process. As the Canadian economy was largely built on the exportation of commodities as a primary source of wealth, a bias favouring resource extraction existed as part of the underlying

structure of governmental policy. State action tended to be geared towards enhancing the development of regions in which commodities were located, resulting in legislation that would ensure successful extraction.

For women settlers on the Prairies, this suggests that women would be affected by the wheat economy both directly and indirectly. Their productive and non-productive labour on a family grain farm would tie them directly to the economy, but indirect effects would also exist as the staple economy impacted the state which in turn enacted laws supporting the economic system. While it is unlikely that attention was specifically directed at creating legislation to deliberately hitch women to the homestead, the patriarchal nature of society worked hand in hand with this outcome. For example, limiting women's ability to support themselves, encouraging high birth rates by prohibiting access to family planning measures, restricting divorces, and supporting male inheritance of property would all have a tendency to keep women as invisible and constrained workers on the farms.

### **Data Sources and Methods**

A review of relevant government legislation from 1870 to 1930 not only discloses the social attitudes that were ingrained in the legal system, but also identifies how the government did in fact maintain the *status quo* of male rights and ultimately supported the structure of the family farm. Concentrating on federal, territorial and Saskatchewan provincial laws, an extensive chronological search for all legislation that appeared to have a connection to issues of women's work, reproductive roles, marriage, inheritance and property rights was conducted. An attempt was made to trace points of interest back to the first statute in which they appeared, and then to follow up on subsequent significant changes.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Impact of Legislation on Saskatchewan Women**

As federal, territorial and Saskatchewan provincial laws were based on legal principles inherited from England, it is necessary to briefly review the legal position of English women to gain an understanding of the patriarchal principles that were imported into the western prairie region.

Under the English Common Law in effect in 1765, a husband and wife were seen as one legal person. Her rights merged with those of her husband and he, as her "lord," had a duty to protect and support her during their marriage. At the same time, the husband became entitled to all property and income of the wife during their marriage, was allowed to discipline her physically as though she were a child or apprentice, was liable for her debts, and could not be held responsible for abusing or raping her as it was legally impossible to abuse one's self. Similarly, contracts between married people were unenforceable unless a trustee was appointed for one of the spouses. In terms of bequeathing property, a wife was seen to be under the control of her husband and thus she could not legally leave land to him. In the absence of a will, all of her property would pass to her heir. The husband could leave a gift to his wife on his death, but in the absence of a will, his property would pass to his children and the wife would only be entitled to support for the balance of her life. If the wife was found to have committed adultery and lived with another man, all financial claims against the husband would be eliminated as, in a sense, she would have committed

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<sup>2</sup> It should be noted that several researchers have studied early legislation and its effects on women but from different perspectives. See for example Ursel's (1992) examination of the situation in Manitoba and Cohen's (1988) analysis of Ontario.

“treason” against her lord and she would presumably have another man to provide support for her. However, if the wife’s promiscuity led to divorce but she did not live with another man, an order could be made granting the wife property so “that she may not be driven by want to continue in a course of vice” (Blackstone 1902: 410-18). These traditional laws were binding in western Canada and remained in effect until changed by appropriate authority after Rupert’s Land became part of the Dominion of Canada in 1870.

The general restrictions on the legal rights of women, and particularly married women, were extremely far-ranging and remained part of the laws of Canada for many years. Virtually all aspects of women’s lives were affected by legislation at the federal, territorial or provincial governmental levels as political authority evolved in western Canada. It can be argued that the common thread running through the laws that affected women’s rights was the imperative to preserve male dominance and the family structure. Preventing women from gaining too large a degree of economic independence or the power to influence the future direction of legislation would maintain the *status quo*.

The most effective method of preventing any person from exerting influence in a purportedly democratic political system is to restrict those portions of the population from participating in the governing process. Most Ordinances and Statutes in effect during the period of western prairie settlement performed this function by expressly preventing women from voting in elections or running for any type of public office from the federal parliament to local school boards and town councils. This was accomplished by defining voters to be “persons” with specific characteristics, namely, being male and usually over 21 years of age. Quite often, ethnic restrictions were also imposed along with property ownership requirements. As women were not defined to be “persons” they could not vote and thus were included in a group made up of children, criminals, “undesirable” foreigners and the insane. It is interesting to note, however, that the land holdings of married women could be used by their husbands to qualify themselves for voting. Eventually, single women and widows were deemed to be “*feme soles*,” that is, women independent of men, and received voting rights as restrictions on women were lifted over time. Aside from people restricted by race, married women were the last to be enfranchised. (See, for example, The Electoral Franchise Act, 1885; An Ordinance to Amend and Consolidate as Amended the School Ordinance of 1884, 1885; An Act to Amend the Saskatchewan Election Act, 1917; The Dominion By-Elections Act, 1919.<sup>3</sup>)

Given the prevailing social standards and the provisions of legislation dealing with the ownership, devolution and division of property between spouses, it was a rare occurrence for women to own land, particularly on the Prairies. The Dominion Lands Act of 1872 was specifically designed by the federal government to prevent most women from acquiring free homestead property. Section 33 allowed only those people who were the head of a family or males of at least 21 years of age to apply for a homestead. The intent of the government was to encourage rapid population growth and it was believed that this could best be done by deterring women from establishing operations independent of mates.<sup>4</sup> Widows, divorcees or deserted wives with children, assuming they could pass a vigorous examination of their status as the head of a

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3 Under section 5 of this federal statute, Indian women, married or single, who lived on a reserve were still deprived of the right to vote.

4 See McClung (1992: 87).

household, could obtain a homestead, presumably because they were already contributing to a population increase.

With these restrictions, women could not compete equally with men as they would have to purchase land at market prices and begin their farming endeavours from a negative position. Renting land was an option for women who could not raise sufficient funds to buy a farm, but this still left them facing a financial burden that did not apply to their male competitors. The unfairness of this situation was evident even to some men. As McMaster, a male reader indicated in a letter to the *Grain Grower's Guide* published on 20 July 1910:

I know two women myself who do as much work out-doors as any three men. These women have horses and cattle of their own and work the land themselves; but they have to rent it. They cannot yet afford to buy it and the law forbids them to homestead and so they have to pay rent. They have not got an even chance with men and yet we always call them the "weaker sex." Is it because they are weaker that we find it safe to take advantage of them and make life harder for them than for ourselves? How manly we are. If these two women had homesteads of their own, the money they pay in rent would hire men to do the work for them.

If women did manage to acquire farms and later wished to expand their operation or raised a daughter who wished to farm, they once again paid market prices rather than being able to take part in the pre-emption program that provided low-cost land to male homesteaders.

Some women were able to beat these odds and succeed despite the unfairness of the situation. One of the best-known independent female Saskatchewan pioneers was Georgina Binnie-Clark, who farmed in the Qu'Appelle region in the early 1900s. In her autobiography, *Wheat and Woman* (1979: 300), she described her fight for a living, waged against the elements, social attitudes and government policies:

[Farming] should be a highly profitable means of independence and wealth for women as it has always proved for men. But on every side my neighbours had obtained their land as a gift from the government, or at least one hundred and sixty acres of it, and a further hundred and sixty had been added on the condition of pre-emption, which is by payment of three dollars an acre in addition to the performance of the homestead duties; in this way a farm in every way equal to the one which had cost me five thousand dollars was to be obtained by any man for nine hundred and seventy dollars.... [S]he has the killing weight of extra payment thrust on her at the very outset. She may be the best farmer in Canada, she may buy land, work it, take prizes for seed and stock, but she is denied the right to claim from the government the hundred and sixty acres of land held out as a bait to every man.

The unfairness of the homestead laws irked Binnie-Clark to such a degree that she became a vocal opponent of the male preference and opposed it at every possible opportunity. While she did not succeed in changing the law, her farm was a success and she became famous throughout the district as a woman who succeeded against the odds.

However, for those women who did not hold property in their own names but were married to men who had acquired a homestead or other property, the law was even less equitable upon the husband's death. While a husband could leave real estate or other property to his wife by will, this practice was uncommon. Rather, the accepted social practice, as reflected in intestate laws, was for the husband to grant his wife a life interest in his property so that she would have money to support her until she died, but at that point ownership would pass to his children. This practice essentially reflected the laws of "dower" that existed in English law and were carried forward into the territorial statutes. If the husband had no children, ownership of the property

would then pass to his father, not the wife (The North West Territories Act, 1875). In essence, the wife was the last choice for ownership of property, after all of the husband's immediate blood relations, unless she had been provided for in a will. On the other hand, the same statute also indicated that a husband would have no claim to the land or personal property of his wife, not even a life interest. A wife was made free to deal with her own property as if she were a "*feme sole*." Further, a husband's control over his wife's wages from work or a business was eliminated.

However, even though the law stated a husband had no claim to his wife's property or income, the practical effect of the patriarchal social standards of the day was to allow the husband complete control over all family money. In some cases this was carried to the extreme, and some wives who worked all year on the farm producing goods for sale would not receive any money at all for their own use. As one woman pen-named "Discontented" wrote to *The Grain Growers' Guide* (1913: 9):

I never see one cent the whole year around. He does all the shopping himself, and then keeps an account of every five cents that is spent. Eggs and butter that I send up to town in summer go for groceries, I never see it. If I do happen to get to the town once in a while, I get what I want in the store, my husband comes in after me and pays the bill and asks for the receipt for goods got.

Other women were allowed to retain their profits, but were constrained as to what they could purchase. A woman named Mrs. Fletcher Howard wrote to *The Nor'-West Farmer* (1900: 927) and indicated that:

[We] find the same or greater inequality, the husband receiving, holding and keeping all the revenues of the farm, with the exception of the profit accruing from the poultry, which are allowed not as pin money, but for wardrobe expenses for mother and the girls. This condition is both unjust and unkind.

In other cases, husbands would give their wives an allowance to cover household and personal expenses or permit them to retain their profits ("The Wife and Her Money" 1908: 25-26; Isobel 1910: 28, 1911: 28).

Eleven years later, dower rights for wives were abolished in the territories by section 8 of The Territories Real Property Act, 1886. However, at the same time, the legislature established a widow's right to receive ownership of up to one-third of her husband's assets whether or not a will existed. The husband had the same rights against the wife's estate, but each spouse could lose their interest in the estate of the other if they were separated and had committed adultery prior to the husband or wife's death. These rules changed in 1901 with the passing of an ordinance dealing with the devolution of land or personal property where no will existed. If the deceased husband had no children, his entire estate would pass to the widow so long as she had not committed adultery before his death (An Ordinance Respecting the Devolution of Estates, 1901). In effect, women's property rights improved slowly over time.

By 1919, the province of Saskatchewan proclaimed the Devolution of Estates Act, and this legislation significantly altered the existing laws. While no right of dower or courtesy (a husband's right to dower) existed, this law provided that even in circumstances where the husband had prepared a will, a wife was entitled to claim a portion of his property as though he had been intestate. She would receive all of his property if there were no children involved, one-half if one child was alive, and one-third if there were two or more children. The restriction on the wife's right to receive a share of her husband's property if she had committed adultery had already been removed in 1907 (Devolution of Estates Act, 1907). Dower rights were never restored in the province of Saskatchewan, but in 1915 a new law was passed that essentially gave a wife whose name was not on the title to property a veto over the sale, lease or mortgaging

would be valid unless she gave up her homestead rights and confirmed that she was doing this of her own free will in front of a judge, justice of the peace or other designated officials (An Act Respecting Homesteads, 1915).

While a wife's interest in marital assets on the death of her husband gradually improved over time, a separation or divorce could still be financially disastrous for her. As indicated earlier, most land and personal property, particularly in farming operations, was held in the name of the husband and no law existed that would enable the wife to claim any part of the assets while her husband lived. In the event of a divorce granted by the federal Parliament,<sup>5</sup> she could take property in her own name and would generally be entitled to court-ordered support payments so long as she did not commit adultery (Dranoff 1977). Unfortunately, if the husband did not voluntarily make the payments, there was little that could be done on a practical basis as few women had funds available to sue their husbands. As such, the law, by failing to provide a realistic solution to financial problems, discouraged family breakdown.

Perhaps the most serious legislative constraints imposed on women to support the *status quo* were the criminal laws passed by the federal government to criminalize abortion and to restrict access to birth control. The physical toll of bearing children and a shortage of medical care sometimes resulted in illness or early deaths for both the mother and the newborn; yet the performance of an abortion was defined as a criminal offence by the new Dominion government in 1869. Both the mother and the abortionist could be sent to jail for life, and a person who assisted in the process or supplied the drugs or instruments used in an abortion could receive up to two years in prison (An Act Respecting Offenses Against the Person, 1869).

Advertising or selling a drug or item purporting to assist in preventing pregnancy was made a specific criminal offence in 1892. A penalty of up to two years in prison could be imposed for this offence as well (The Criminal Code Amendment Act, 1892). These legal prohibitions, in combination with a social taboo against discussing contraceptive information, made it extremely difficult for isolated farm women to control unwanted pregnancies. However, contraceptive information was desperately needed by women who were not prepared to accept a continuous string of births throughout their reproductive years. Thus, home remedies such as using boric acid, tannic acid or vinegar as spermicides, or preparing solutions out of elm bark to cause miscarriages, were traded among women (Rasmussen et al. 1976; Silverman 1984).

The women who did bear children as expected by God, state and social convention found that they had no legal rights whatsoever to interfere with their husband's decisions with respect to the raising of the family.<sup>6</sup> The necessary work involved in rearing the children was the responsibility of the mother, but control was ultimately held by the father. Decisions as to schooling, religious training, a child's chores on the farm, whether the children would be sent out to work to raise money for the farm, and the choice of guardians for the children in the event of his death were all made by the

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5 Divorces were generally very difficult to obtain, particularly for women as they had to prove that their husband "had been guilty of incestuous adultery, or of bigamy with adultery, or of rape, or of sodomy, or bestiality, or of adultery coupled with extreme cruelty, or of adultery coupled with desertion without reasonably excuse for two years" (Dranoff 1977: 62). For men, however, the process was simpler as they merely had to prove that their wife had committed adultery.

6 As one woman stated in *The Grain Growers' Guide* ("Are Women to Blame?" 1911: 36) "The state, which is another name for man, demands that women shall be mothers, and being mothers, the state, or man, breaks our hearts in their abuse of our offspring."

father. The farm wife could literally be forced to become pregnant,<sup>7</sup> would be prohibited from ending the pregnancy, and was expected to raise the children. Yet by law, this same wife was not seen to be qualified to act as the legal guardian of her children if her husband died. She could be forced to obey the guardian chosen by her husband or lose complete control of the children if that was the husband's wish. This position was set out in An Ordinance Respecting the Administration of Civil Justice, 1886, but the court did have the authority to provide a mother with some relief. In appropriate circumstances, a mother might be granted custody of children under the age of twelve years, be granted access to children outside of her custody, and a father could be ordered to pay maintenance and the costs of educating his children. This was not an automatic process: rather the wife would have to apply and convince a judge that she was a suitable guardian and that she had not committed adultery, as the court could refuse her application due to her "improper conduct or habits of life" (section 366). No mention was made of removing children from the custody of an immoral father.

As with other laws dealing with women's rights, custody and guardianship issues were slowly changed. By 1918, a father was still given primary control of his children but standards were amended so that court decisions were to be based on the welfare of the child rather than the rights or wishes of the parents. A mother was given the right to appoint a guardian under her will, and the court could accept her decision in preference to the father's (The Infants Act, 1918-19). Approximately one year later, a mother was granted a primary right to custody of her children until they reached the age of 14, but at that age the children were to be turned over to the father (An Act to Amend the Infants Act, 1919-20).

In addition to the restrictions and regulations that affected women's rights to vote, obtain free homesteads, share in matrimonial property on death or divorce, and to control their own reproductive life, society and the state also interfered with any attempt that a woman might make to participate in the work force. Social standards respecting the type of employment that was suitable for women were legitimated by laws that limited the places where they might be employed. For example, females were not permitted to work in coal mines after 1898, and they were restricted from operating steam boilers in 1906 (The Coal Mines Act, 1898; The Steam Boilers Act, 1906). White women were also prohibited in 1912 from working in restaurants, laundries or other businesses managed by Oriental people, but this restriction was lifted in 1918 so that they could be employed if the municipality licensed the workplace as suitable (The Female Employment Act, 1918-19).

Aside from protecting women by stopping them from working in particular businesses, paternalistic protection was also made evident in The Factories Act of 1909, which established work standards favourable to women, youths and young girls. Work was limited to eight hours per day, forty-five hours per week, and the working day had to end by 6:30 p.m. These employees had to be given a one-hour lunch break, separate washrooms had to be built, and they could not be expected to work on certain machinery or under any condition that might permanently injure their health. These rules were amended in 1919 to extend the hours of work beyond eight hours per day so long as the workday ended no later than 6:30 p.m. (An Act to Amend

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<sup>7</sup> A man could not be charged with raping his own wife and she could therefore be made pregnant against her will. The crime of rape was defined as having unlawful carnal knowledge of a woman who was not the man's wife (An Act Respecting Offenses Against the Person, 1886).

the Factories Act, 1919-20). The Minimum Wage Act of 1918-19 was also designed to ensure that minimum standards were met by businesses that employed female workers. Manufacturing operations, retail stores, hotels, restaurants, auction houses, tobacco stores and newspaper shops were all subject to control by a government board that would set wages, hours of work and other employment conditions. Women could sue any employer who did not meet these conditions.

While these laws concerning women's work were very beneficial on the surface, it seems clear that they could also have a negative effect on the ability of women to work outside of the home and compete with men in the employment market. No special rules or regulations affected the employment of men at that point in time, and basic economics would therefore suggest that men would be more readily employed than women. The cost of employing them would be lower and no special facilities or safety features would have to be built or implemented. While the government may have genuinely intended to protect women from harm and exploitation, their endeavour had the potential to impair women's efforts to move beyond employment in socially accepted fields. Thus, women tended to find work in areas that complemented their socially defined "natural" skills.<sup>8</sup> In Saskatchewan, for example, work in domestic service and teaching were the areas in which the largest number of women found external employment. The 1911 census indicated that approximately 54 percent of the women employed in the province were classified as working in domestic or personal service, 10 percent were teachers and 6 percent worked in jobs related to sewing and millinery. Of the domestic servants, 60 percent were labelled as servants, 15 percent worked for hotels and boarding houses, 6 percent as housekeepers and 5 percent worked in restaurants (Fifth Census of Canada 1911: volume 6, table V).

Overall, it may be said that the state acted to support and enforce historical social standards that relegated women to a dependent subordinate position in relation to men. This subordination of women was also reflected in the criminal laws of Canada which allowed husbands, in accordance with English Common Law principles, to physically correct their wives as though they were children. The so-called "rule of thumb," that it was permissible to beat a wife with a stick so long as it was not thicker than a thumb, was recognized as a Common Law principle by courts in the United States, but if this right ever existed in Canada it was eliminated as attitudes changed (Blackstone 1902). By 1906, the Criminal Code imposed penalties of one year in jail for common assault and three years for an assault that caused bodily harm to a spouse. The penalty for causing bodily harm to one's wife was changed to a prison term of up to two years, plus whipping, in a 1909 amendment to the Criminal Code.<sup>9</sup> Although the 1906 Criminal Code did reveal some degree of change in attitudes towards women by including protection from physical abuse by their husbands, the laws that were not changed also disclose a great deal about the value of women to society. Most offenses that related to harm done to women such as seducing young girls, seduction through the promise of marriage, enticing women who were not previously immoral to become prostitutes, or indecently assaulting a female were punished by a sentence of up to two years in prison. Abduction of unmarried girls under the age of 16 drew the

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8 Numerous references exist with respect to the standard types of work for which women were believed to be suited. Teaching, nursing, sewing, and performing various domestic duties in private homes or in service industries all fit within the popular conception of "women's work" (Broadfoot 1976; Prentice et al. 1988; Rasmussen 1976; Barber 1991).

9 It is interesting to note that no matter what offence they committed, women were not allowed to be whipped, as set out in subsection 1060(4) of the Criminal Code, 1906.

slightly stiffer penalty of five years in jail (sections 211, 212, 216, 292, 313). Property offenses, however, attracted much higher penalties. Stealing even a simple letter from a mailbag carried a minimum penalty of three years in jail, with a maximum of seven years. If money or some other valuable property was enclosed in the letter or parcel or if the thief stole the entire mailbag, the maximum penalty increased to life imprisonment (section 364). Stealing any item from a safe or a dwelling carried a penalty of fourteen years, as did the theft of cattle or property from a railway station or train (sections 381, 380, 369, 384). Clearly, property was valued more highly than women<sup>10</sup> at the turn of the century, and this is also confirmed by provincial laws that prevented a wife from suing her husband for any injury that he did to her. She could, however, sue for the value of any property that he damaged at the same time (The Married Woman's Property Act, 1907).

Changes to the numerous laws that assisted in maintaining male dominance in Saskatchewan and throughout Canada only came about after many years of argument and agitation by women and their supporters. As indicated above, changes were made in increments to protect a woman's property, income and guardianship of children; however, major successes were few and far between. The right to vote, for instance, was highly divisive as opinions were strongly held. Some men accepted that women were entitled to equal rights, and saw this as a positive step that would improve the lives of their wives and daughters (McMaster 1910: 28). Others argued that women should be above petty politics and that voting would detract from a woman's performance of her domestic duties, while still others held condescending attitudes as to a woman's mental ability to logically choose a position (McClung 1945; Bait 1911; Mason, 1911). Some were so violently opposed to women attaining the vote that they fantasized about how to do away with the suffragettes. One contributor named Norma wrote to *The Grain Growers' Guide* (1913: 10) and indicated that some men suggested that they could solve the suffragette problem in the same way that they had dealt with a rat infestation:

We put a puckle corn and a little water into a bait pot or boiler, held up the lid a bit with a stick, to which we tied a string, and when a lot of rats had entered the pot, attracted by the corn, we pulled the string. Then when they were safe inside the boiler, we lighted the fire, and like two young fiends, danced around the pot. Oh, man born of woman, think of that!

Regardless of the differing viewpoints, women did receive the vote before 1920, although other battles continued for many more years. For example, it took until 1928, and a court case that went all the way to the British Privy Council, for women to receive recognition as "persons" allowed to attain senatorial rank in Canada (Edwards v. Attorney-General for Canada, [1929] All E.R. Reports). In terms of divorce, women would not obtain equal rights as to the grounds for divorce until the Marriage and Divorce Act of 1925 and "no fault" divorce took forty-three more years to be made available in the Divorce Act, 1967-68. Legislation officially granting women equal pay for equal work in jobs subject to federal jurisdiction was not passed until 1956, and access to abortion and contraceptives finally became legally available in 1968 (Female Employees Equal Pay Act, 1956; Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1968-69). Even with

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10 In discussing the six-month prison sentence of a husband who beat his wife and children and caused the death of one child by putting the family out of the house while in a drunken rage, Beynon (1913) points out that if the husband had stolen a handful of jewellery he would have received at least a year in jail. As she states, "it is notoriously the case that in the laws of our land property is held as being more precious than human life or comfort."

all of this progress, women did not finally gain the right to equally share in matrimonial property and assets until 1979. Prior to the Saskatchewan government proclaiming the Matrimonial Property Act in 1979, equal entitlement was not an accepted legal principle. As recently as 1974, the Supreme Court of Canada had confirmed that a ranch wife, by performing all of the usual work and duties associated with life on a ranch including housekeeping, working in the fields, operating farm machinery, helping with construction of a house, performing the duties of hired help and also working to produce the grain and livestock that were sold to support the farm, was simply doing what was expected of any farm wife. This did not entitle her to any share of the land or farming assets, all of which were in the name of her husband (Murdoch v. Murdoch (1974), R.F.L., Volume 13, p. 185). It is likely that the highly publicized unfair result in this case prompted the passage of matrimonial property laws throughout Canada.

## Conclusion

The efforts of women were hidden within the farm family as a result of the patriarchal nature of society and the indirect influence of the commodity market, through the state, that maintained their subservient position in the *status quo*. As pointed out, particularly by Ursel, state involvement in the maintenance of patriarchy is endemic in capitalist societies. While relations between capital and labour control the production process and organize the distribution of wealth created by the labour of individuals, these relations have only limited direct impact on the reproductive process. Patriarchy, on the other hand, provides a direct, historically created means of controlling and organizing reproductive behaviour. The interaction of production and reproduction (referred to as the “dual systems” approach by Ursel (1992)) would ultimately determine the viability of a society as production and consumption must be balanced in some fashion. As both of these activities are fundamental, benefits and power may be obtained by the individual or group that is able to exercise control over the function; and in the historical Canadian situation, men were able to control reproduction by restricting the ability of women to support themselves and their families. Ursel suggests that this patriarchal system permeated all aspects of society as well as the structure of the state, and thus maintenance of male dominance was a natural function of government fulfilled through a legal system that restricted a woman’s ability to survive outside of the family unit. In terms of Saskatchewan and the women pioneers who helped settle the area, the legislation restraining women’s options and limiting the control of birth rates worked hand in hand with the need to establish a self-supporting and perpetuating labour force prepared to work the land and grow an export crop without reserving a large share of the production for consumption. Dependent women served this function well, allowing additional wealth to be accumulated on the farm and in turn advancing the prospects of the wheat economy.

## Note

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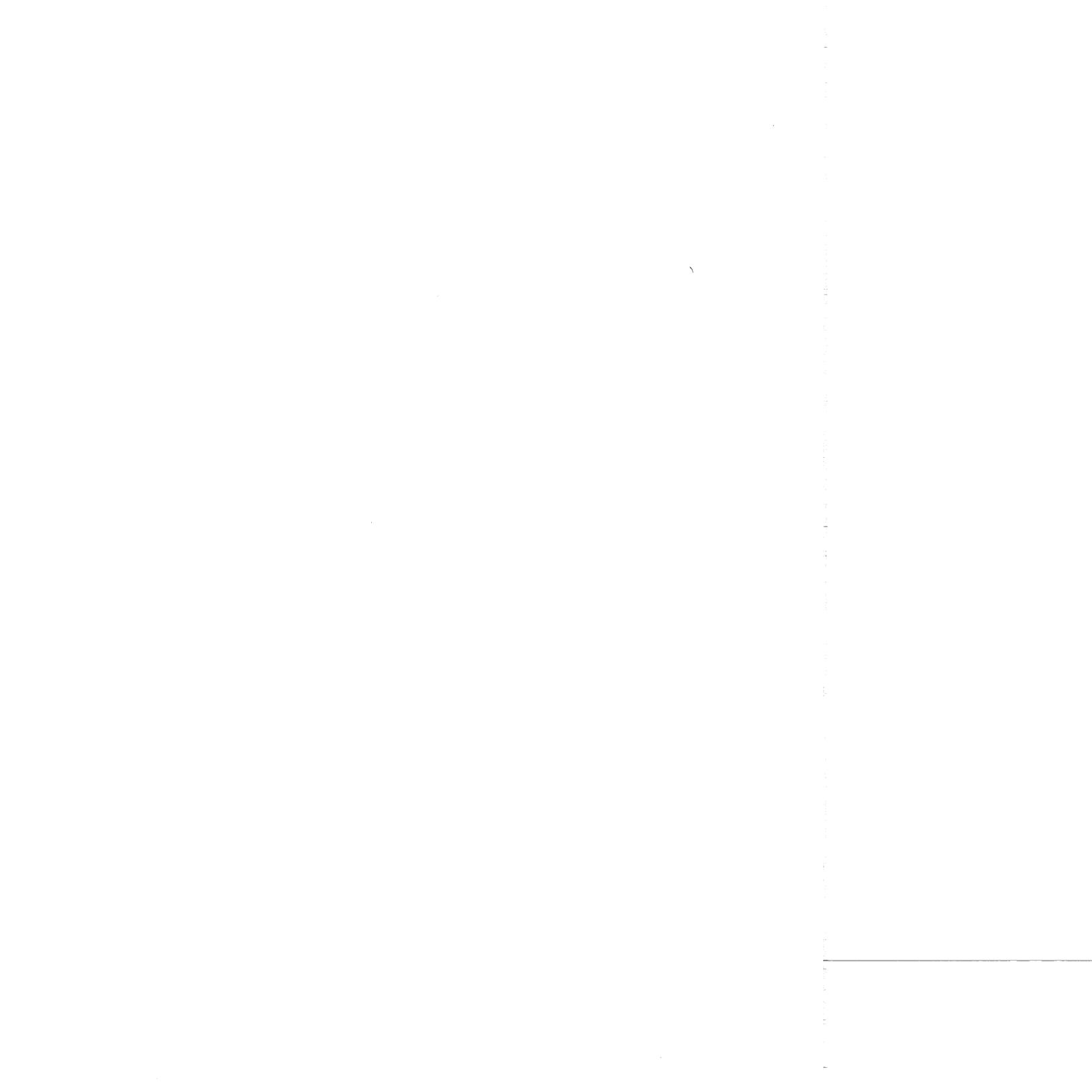
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# The Irish in Saskatchewan, 1850-1930: A Study of Intergenerational Ethnicity

*Michael Cottrell*

**ABSTRACT.** Approximately 10 percent of the population of Saskatchewan during the early settlement period were Irish born or of Irish origin. This article examines the social, economic, political, religious and ideological impact of the Irish diaspora on pioneer society and suggests that both individually and collectively, the Irish were a relatively privileged group. The most visible manifestations of intergenerational Irish ethnicity — the Roman Catholic Church and the Orange Order — served as vehicles for re-creating Irish culture on the Prairies and as forums for ethnic fusion, which integrated people of Irish origin with settlers of other nationalities. The Irish were thus a vital force for cohesion in an ethnically diverse frontier society, but also a source of major tension with elements which did not share their vision of how the province of Saskatchewan should evolve.

**SOMMAIRE.** Au début de la période d'implantation, environ dix pour cent de la population de la Saskatchewan était née en Irlande ou bien d'origine irlandaise. Cet article étudie l'impact social, économique, politique, religieux et idéologique de la diaspora irlandaise sur la société pionnière, et suggère que les Irlandais constituaient, individuellement et collectivement, un groupe relativement privilégié. Les signes les plus visibles d'ethnicité irlandaise intergénérationnelle - l'Église catholique et l'Ordre orangiste - servirent à recréer la culture irlandaise dans les prairies, ainsi qu'à opérer une fusion ethnique entre personnes d'origine irlandaise et colons d'autres nationalités. Les Irlandais représentaient donc une force de cohésion vitale dans une société de frontière aux ethnies diverses, mais aussi une importante source de tension avec les éléments qui ne partageaient pas leur vision de l'avenir de la Saskatchewan.

More than any other European nation, Ireland in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries was characterized by emigration. Between 1800 and 1920 over eight million people departed the country for a variety of destinations including Great Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.<sup>1</sup> This massive out-migration gave birth to a populous and far-flung diaspora which by 1900 numbered over 50 million and virtually circled the globe. The timing of this exodus was arguably as significant as its volume, for the fact that large-scale Irish emigration coincided with the opening up of many of these countries to European settlement ensured that the Irish had an enormous influence on their subsequent development. As virtual pioneers of the ethnic experience in many neo-European settler societies, it is therefore not surprising that the Irish have been a source of great fascination for ethnic historians.<sup>2</sup> To date, however, most studies of the Irish diaspora, including its Canadian dimension, have tended to dwell on its most visible elements. Generally this has resulted in a focus on first generation emigrants who arrived at their destination during periods of heavy Irish emigration and who settled in areas where Irish immigrants constituted a significant proportion of the population. Thus, much of what we know about the Irish experience in Canada refers to those who settled in the

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1 D. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration, 1801-1921* (Dundalk: Dundalgan Press, 1984), 1.

2 For a sampling of the vast historical literature on Irish immigrants see D.H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora: A Primer* (Toronto: P.D. Meaney, 1993).

eastern provinces roughly between 1815 and Confederation.<sup>3</sup> Regarding their children and grandchildren, or Irish emigrants who came later and who settled in other regions of the country, little is known.

The following study of the Irish in Saskatchewan between 1850 and 1930 seeks to expand the temporal and geographic focus of analysis of the Irish diaspora in Canada. Although no mass movement of emigrants from Ireland to the prairie provinces occurred, individual Irish people played key roles in the westward expansion of the Canadian frontier and the transformation of the West into a settled agricultural society in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, because many of the early settlers in Saskatchewan were Canadians of Irish origin, who continued the mixing of Irish traditions into the new prairie society, examining their migration westwards facilitates an analysis of Irish ethnicity in Canada as a dynamic, multigenerational phenomenon. In particular, by focussing on the development of the Orange Order and the Roman Catholic Church in Saskatchewan, two of the most important institutions transported by earlier Irish immigrants to British North America and subsequently brought West by their descendants, this study highlights the continuing influence of Irish immigrant culture on the development of Canadian society well into the twentieth century.

Unlike French Canadians and Scots, the Irish showed little interest in the fur trade which shaped the development of the West in the first two centuries after contact. However, in the momentous changes which occurred after 1850 a number of Irish played prominent roles. In 1857 Captain John Palliser, a member of a wealthy Anglo-Irish family from County Waterford, persuaded the Royal Geographic Society to sponsor a scientific expedition through Rupert's Land. Published in 1862, *Palliser's Report* confirmed the findings of contemporaries such as Henry Youle Hind that large parts of the Prairies, especially the Red and Saskatchewan River valleys, were suitable for agricultural settlement. These findings did much to change the prevailing image of the Prairies from that of a frozen wasteland to a potential agricultural Eden, and began a groundswell of enthusiasm for the annexation of the West by the British North American provinces. A vocal proponent of this western expansion was Millington Henry Syngé, cousin of the famous Irish playwright, who served as subaltern in the Royal Engineers stationed in Ottawa in the 1850s. Syngé was one of the first to propose railway construction as a vehicle for western development, as a mechanism for integrating the Prairies with the eastern provinces, and ultimately as a means of linking all of British North America from the Atlantic to the Pacific under the British flag.<sup>4</sup>

Palliser's and Syngé's vision of western colonization became a reality with the purchase of Rupert's Land by the Canadian government in 1869 and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885, a project in which Irish labourers played no small role. The resulting transformation of the northern Prairies into a commercial agricultural society opened up tremendous opportunities for settlers, but also caused enormous dislocation to the aboriginal peoples of the area. After signing treaties with

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3 C. Houston and W.J. Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement: Patterns, Links and Letters* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990); D. Wilson, *The Irish in Canada* (Toronto: Canadian Historical Society, 1989); R. O'Driscoll and Laura Reynolds (eds.), *The Untold Story: The Irish in Canada* (Toronto: Celtic Arts of Canada, 1988).

4 I. Spry, *The Palliser Expedition: The Dramatic Story of Western Canadian Exploration, 1857-1860* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1994); H.M. Syngé, *Great Britain: One Empire* (London: n.p., 1852); and R.D. Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 82ff.

the federal government in the 1870s, the Plains nations were confined to reserves and subjected to an aggressive *civilization* policy which sought to transform them from nomadic hunters to sedentary, Christian agriculturalists. In this process, too, the Irish were directly involved, and the work of Father Constantine Scollen was a significant case in point. Born in Ireland in 1841, Scollen joined the Oblate Order and came to Canada in 1862 to the mission at St. Albert. There he worked with Cree and Blackfoot people, learned the Cree language and assisted the famous missionary Father Lacombe in compiling a Cree grammar and dictionary. Present at the negotiations of Treaties Six and Seven, Scollen used what influence he possessed to persuade the chiefs to sign the treaties and continued to work among the Plains nations until 1885. The missionary priest had a great fascination with traditional cultural practices, and he worked tirelessly to protect Native people from unscrupulous traders and to ensure that the government fulfilled its treaty promises. Ultimately, however, he was committed to the destruction of the culture with which he sympathized, and he may be seen as an agent of the westward march of Euro-Canadian culture and in particular the global expansion of Roman Catholicism which was one of the main spiritual accomplishments of the Irish diaspora.<sup>5</sup>

No discussion of Irish involvement in the opening of the West would be complete without mention of Clifford Sifton. Born in Ontario to an Irish immigrant family from County Tipperary, Sifton moved to Winnipeg in the 1870s and became one of the leading spokesmen for western interests. As minister of the Interior in the Laurier government from 1896 to 1905, Sifton revitalized the somnambulant Immigration Department and launched a massive advertising campaign in Britain, the United States and Europe. Determined to attract settlers who were familiar with the climatic and agricultural conditions encountered on the Prairies, he showed particular interest in those he dubbed the *Sheepskin People* from Central and Eastern Europe. One of the most effective Interior ministers in the history of the department, Sifton deserves much of the credit for the great immigration boom which brought close to a million settlers to the Prairies in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>6</sup>

Before Sifton assumed control of the Immigration Department, a number of efforts to promote prairie settlement had been made by the federal government. Parcels of land and assisted passage were offered to preferred groups and resulted in bloc settlements of various nationalities. One such scheme envisaged the establishment of an Irish colony in the North-West under the close supervision of the Roman Catholic Church. Proposed by Prime Minister Macdonald as part of a Conservative campaign to win Irish votes in Ontario in the early 1880s, it was also endorsed by the Irish-born bishop of Toronto, John Joseph Lynch.<sup>7</sup> Despite their backing, however, the scheme never materialized, nor did a subsequent proposal by Canadian Pacific Railway president George Stephen to settle 10,000 Irish tenant

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5 Provincial Archives of Alberta, C. Scollen Papers; W. Hildebrandt, et al., *The True Spirit and Original Intent of Treaty Seven* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 58-59.

6 D.J. Hall, "Clifford Sifton: Immigration and Settlement Policy, 1896-1905," in H. Palmer (ed.), *The Settlement of the West* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1977), 60-85. Other notable Irish boosters of western settlement were John Macoun and N.F. Davin. See W.A. Waiser, "Macoun and the Great North-West" (Master's thesis, University of Saskatchewan, 1976).

7 G. Stortz, "Archbishop Lynch and New Ireland: An Unfulfilled Dream for Canada's Northwest," *Catholic Historical Review* 68, no. 4 (1982): 612-24; M. Cottrell, "Irish Catholic Political Leadership in Toronto, 1855-1882: A Study of Ethnic Politics" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Saskatchewan, 1988), 400-54.

**Table 1:  
Irish in Saskatchewan, 1901-1931**

Year	Total Population	Irish Origin	Irish % of Saskatchewan Population	Saskatchewan % of Canadian Irish
1901	91,279	10,644	11.7	1.1
1911	492,432	58,069	11.8	5.4
1921	757,510	84,786	11.2	7.7
1931	921,785	104,096	11.3	8.5

farmers along the newly constructed railway.<sup>8</sup> These early failures had significant long term consequences for the Irish diaspora. The large flow of emigrants from Ireland in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries continued primarily to the United States and Great Britain and only a very small percentage of the approximately 1.5 million people who left Ireland in this period settled in the Canadian West.<sup>9</sup> The arrival of these immigrants and the migration of Irish-born and Irish-origin settlers from eastern Canada to the Prairies was therefore a largely individualistic and unassisted enterprise, in contrast to the collective experience of groups such as the Ukrainians, Hutterites, French Canadians and Scottish crofters.<sup>10</sup> Few large Irish bloc settlements emerged on the Prairies and, at least demographically, the impact of the Irish was far less than it had been in the earlier settlement of eastern Canada.

Nevertheless, as the figures in Table 1 indicate, the Irish presence in what became Saskatchewan was both significant and visible. In 1881 people of Irish origin constituted close to half of the small non-Native population of the North-West Territories; and in 1891 there were almost 2,000 Irish-born settlers in the area. Ten years later the total Irish-origin population numbered over 10,500. In 1911, when Saskatchewan was included in the Canadian census as a province for the first time, the Irish were a significant element within the emerging provincial mosaic. Out of a total provincial population of 492,000, just over 58,000, or approximately 12 percent of the population, claimed Irish origin, and these constituted an extremely diverse cohort. About 10 percent were born in Ireland, the majority of whom were young single men, predominantly from the northeastern province of Ulster.<sup>11</sup> The bulk of the Irish-origin population, more than 70 percent, came from eastern Canada, with Ontario being the single greatest source, followed by the Maritimes. The remainder of the Irish-origin population came from the United States. In fact almost one-quarter of the Americans who moved north during the settlement of the Canadian Prairies were either Irish born or of Irish origin.<sup>12</sup>

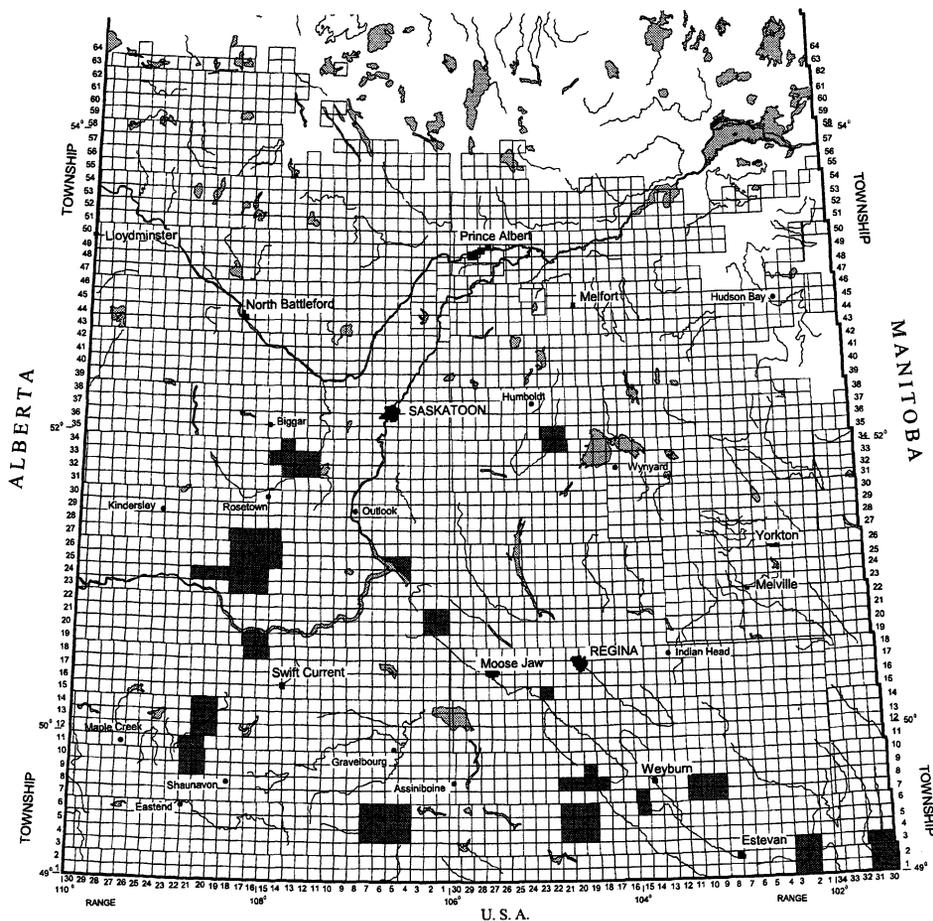
8 *Regina Leader*, 8 March, 26 April, 10 May 1883.

9 D. Fitzpatrick estimated that Irish emigration to Canada in this period comprised only 1/14th of the total outflow. D. Fitzpatrick, "Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century," *Irish Historical Studies* 22 (1980): 130-31.

10 For a study of the assisted and collective nature of Scottish crofter settlements see W. Norton, *Help Us to a Better Land: Crofter Colonies in the Prairie West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1994). On Ukrainians see J.C. Lehr, "The Government and the Immigrants: Perspectives on Ukrainian Bloc Settlement in the Canadian West," *Canadian Ethnic Studies* 11, no. 2 (1977): 42-52.

11 D. Fitzpatrick suggests that Irish emigrants to Canada in this period came in roughly equal numbers from the industrialized region around Belfast and the "more backward and agricultural counties" of Donegal, Mayo and Galway. They were more likely to be lower middle class or farmers than those who emigrated to the United States in this period, who typically were from the labouring and servant classes. Fitzpatrick, *Irish Emigration in the Later Nineteenth Century*, 130-31.

12 *Census of Canada*, 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911, 1921.



Map 1. Adapted from T.D. Regehr, *Remembering Saskatchewan: A History of Rural Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan Extension Division, 1979), with permission of the author. Concentrations of Irish settlement are shown in black.

Although Irish settlers were scattered throughout the population, a tendency toward geographic propinquity was apparent in the development of a number of predominantly Irish settlements (see Map 1). It is apparent from the map that by 1911 more than ten distinct Irish concentrations had emerged in different parts of the province; and as with all other nationalities, Irish nostalgia was reflected in their choice of place names. Communities such as Limerick, Roscommon, D'Arcy, McGee, Shamrock, Sinnett, Glasnevin, Kilronan, Mullingar, Clonfert, Lurgan and Erinferry were a testament to the early presence of the Irish in these areas and to their determination to stake their claim to the territory by establishing a continuity between the world that they left, however remotely, and their new homes.<sup>13</sup>

13 E.T. Russell (ed.), *What's in a Name?* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1973), 63, 77, 101, 126-27, 167, 185, 192, 204, 274, 292, 294.

The arrival of these people in Saskatchewan represented another, and in some cases final, stage in the great spread of the Irish diaspora westward across North America in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Typical of most early settlers, the Irish who came to Saskatchewan were motivated primarily by the desire to own land. In 1911 more than two-thirds of the Irish-origin population lived in rural Saskatchewan, and the vast majority of these were either homesteaders or were working as farm labourers to accumulate the resources necessary to begin homesteading. For those who came directly from Ireland the availability of 160 acres for \$10 under the Homestead Act offered the prospect of more land than could ever be realistically aspired to at home. It also provided an opportunity to escape the bitter sectarianism and oppressive landlord system in Ireland. As Andrew Lowry from County Donegal confided to a reporter from the *Regina Leader* upon his arrival in 1883:

Between taxes and rack rent there is no living for the farmers now in Ireland [while here] there is a hope and go and eagerness about the people ... no bowing and scraping, no "yer honour sir" ... no landlords to fight and every man stands on the same great platform of a broad equality.<sup>14</sup>

For the many more who came from eastern Canada or the United States, the opening of the Canadian Prairies came at an opportune time for it coincided with the closing of the agricultural frontier in Ontario, the Maritimes and the American Midwest. Typically undertaken as part of an extended family strategy, migration to Saskatchewan held out the prospect of commercial expansion while also maintaining the integrity of the family unit.

The experience of Irish settlers in Saskatchewan was therefore overwhelmingly a homesteading one, but there was nevertheless tremendous diversity within that experience. Some, like the Milligans, a multigenerational family which came from Ontario and homesteaded in Wadena, north of Qu'Appelle in 1881, enjoyed steady success on the original and adjoining homesteads. Because of the sheer size and early arrival of their family, the Milligans became the nucleus of the local community. The original homestead doubled as a trading post, post office, church, and briefly a North-West Mounted Police detachment. The Milligans helped establish the first school and Anglican church, operated a carting business and had the honour of having a local creek and bridge named after them.<sup>15</sup> Others were not so fortunate. Pioneer society was characterized by a high degree of mobility and uncertainty, where success and stability, if achieved at all, frequently came only after numerous attempts and repeated failures. More typical of this was the experience of the Barnes family, who emigrated from Belfast to Toronto in 1882 and homesteaded in the File Hills area in 1892. Their first effort was a complete failure and the family embarked on a mobile quest for paid employment over the next ten years which took them through Lebret, Indian Head and Regina. In 1907 they homesteaded again in the Rosetown area and this time, with the support of married children on adjoining quarter sections, their enterprise flourished. All three farms were broken and cultivated within five years and as the area filled up with settlers Tom and Agnes Barnes became pillars of their community.<sup>16</sup>

Few of the Irish who came to Saskatchewan were as fortunate as James Andrew

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14 *Regina Leader*, 3 May 1883.

15 Foam Lake Historical Society, *They Came From Many Lands: A History of Foam Lake and Area* (Foam Lake: Foam Lake Historical Society, 1985), 650ff.

16 Wilkie Historical Society, *Fifty Years of Progress: A History of Wilkie and District* (Wilkie: n.p., 1967), 218-19.

McBride, born in County Kerry in 1861. When he was a child his family moved to Iowa City and in the mid-1890s James and his brother-in-law joined the migration north to homestead near Weyburn. His ambitions extended far beyond the quarter section, however, and he shortly established the Weyburn Lumber and Elevator Company with his brother-in-law. McBride then built the Golden West Grain Company, eventually operating seventeen elevators in southern Saskatchewan. In 1917 he purchased a seat on the Winnipeg Grain Exchange. In the early 1920s he branched into the retail trade, building fourteen grocery stores and three bakeries in the Weyburn area. In the course of creating this empire, McBride became a major shareholder in the Weyburn Security Bank, president of the Weyburn Board of Trade, alderman on the Weyburn City Council, and founder of the Weyburn chapter of the Knights of Columbus.<sup>17</sup>

On the other end of the scale was Mike McGinley who came to Regina from Ireland in the early 1900s. A young, single man, he homesteaded in the Saltburn district about 1912 and like many settlers he worked at various labouring jobs to support his farm. The winter of 1920 saw him employed by the Prince Albert Lumber Company, cutting trees near The Pas. He was killed by a falling tree just after Christmas and was buried in an unmarked grave in the Manitoba bush.<sup>18</sup> Different again were the experiences of three young people from Northern Ireland who arrived together in Prince Albert on 27 June 1928. One of them, whose name is not remembered, worked on a farm near Shellbrook for three days and promptly returned to Ireland. The other two, Patrick Grimes and Elizabeth Vauls, one a Catholic and one a Protestant, arrived as sweethearts and married shortly after. A mechanic and avid soccer player, Patrick Grimes was never a day out of work in a succession of garages in Prince Albert. He and his wife lived to see four generations of Grimes, and the couple resided in the same house in Prince Albert until their deaths in the mid-1990s. At least some members of the Grimes family still embrace Ireland as part of their identity.<sup>19</sup>

The Irish who settled in Saskatchewan thus experienced a great variety of fortunes and were to be found in virtually every walk of life. Most were homesteaders, but people of Irish origin were also found in the labouring and servant classes; they were prominent in the hotel and saloon business; many joined the North West Mounted Police; they were conspicuous among the Christian clergy, the teaching and legal professions, real estate and insurance sales and, later, in the medical professions. Some were extraordinarily successful while others were complete failures. For the majority, great hardships had to be endured before even modest success was achieved.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, it is also clear that as a collectivity, people of Irish origin enjoyed a number of significant advantages which made their adjustment to the Prairies easier than for many other groups. Although there are references to the occasional speakers of Irish Gaelic, the vast majority who came from Ireland, and all who came from eastern Canada and the United States, spoke English as their first language. As part of the linguistic mainstream, no barriers thus existed to their immediate participation in the business, social or political spheres when they arrived

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17 *Columbianism in Saskatchewan, 1907-1982* (Saskatoon: Knights of Columbus State Council, 1982), 197.

18 Swarthmore Home and School Association, *Golden Threads: The History of Swarthmore, 1905-1980* (Swarthmore: n.p., 1984), 287.

19 Patrick Grimes, taped interview, 11 February 1994.

20 Fascinating insights into the difficulties faced by one Irish emigrant with the harsh climate and the often alien nature of the Saskatchewan landscape is provided by the correspondence of Ernest Cochrane. Public Records Office of Northern Ireland, E. Cochrane Papers, T3504/1/7-43.

on the Prairies. Indeed, Irish settlers in Saskatchewan, both Protestant and Catholic, became ardent champions of the primacy of the English language in the new province. Regardless of where they came from, the Irish were also familiar with the British political, legal and educational systems, and the bureaucratic ethos which governed them. When compared with the challenges faced by groups such as the Ukrainians, Russians or Hungarians, who had to learn a new language and familiarize themselves with a completely alien system, it must be said that the Irish experience was far less traumatic.<sup>21</sup> The timing of their arrival was also crucial, for in many areas of Saskatchewan the Irish were among the very first white settlers to establish themselves. These advantages serve to explain one of the striking features of the Irish experience, which was the pioneering role played by the men and women in community formation and the construction of public institutions in the province of Saskatchewan. Whether building schools or churches, organizing school boards or parish structures, or participating in rural and urban politics, the contributions of Irish settlers far exceeded their proportion of the provincial population.

Ireland's most prominent and indeed most controversial contribution to the early public life of Saskatchewan was undoubtedly Nicholas Flood Davin, founding editor of the *Regina Leader* and Conservative member of Parliament for Assiniboia West from 1887 to 1900. A passionate promoter of the interests of his adopted home, Davin frequently found himself at loggerheads with his own party's National Policy, which was unpopular in the West. He was also an advocate of minority education rights and women's suffrage. A respected journalist, writer and poet, he is credited with the first literary work to be written and published in the West. Blessed with eloquence and a quick wit, he was a popular public speaker — a perennial favourite at St. Patrick's Day events across the country — and his reputation as a *bon vivant* followed him from Toronto to Regina to Ottawa. However, his well-known fondness for alcohol and a long-term public affair with a Regina woman marked him as a man with deep character flaws. In 1900 Davin was defeated by Walter Scott, who would later become the first premier of Saskatchewan. With his political career apparently ended and his dreams of greatness unfulfilled, Davin fell into a severe depression and took his own life in a Winnipeg hotel room in October 1901.

Ironically, one of Davin's most enduring legacies in the West came from an obscure report on the education of aboriginals which he produced as part of a patronage appointment in 1879. Commissioned by the Department of the Interior to formulate policy in this area, the *Davin Report* recommended the establishment of residential and industrial schools which would not only impart academic and technical training but which would also facilitate the assimilation of aboriginal people into Euro-Canadian society by separating children from their parents' culture. This report became the blueprint for the residential school system which is now acknowledged to have inflicted tremendous damage on aboriginal people and their cultures. One wonders whether Davin, had he realized the long-term impact of his recommendations, would have been so cavalier in undertaking the project.

While Davin rose to become a member of the political elite, one who represented the interests of the West on the national stage, countless other Irish individuals made more modest but nevertheless vital contributions to the building of public institutions in the province. The O'Gorman family, who migrated from New Brunswick to the area around Macklin in 1905, were clearly blessed with great organizational and

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21 Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 39-40.

leadership skills. Attachment to the Roman Church was one of the major cultural values which the Catholic Irish brought West, and was obviously a priority for the O'Gormans. Their humble soddy was host to the first Catholic services in the area, usually provided once a month by itinerant priests, and in 1906 Thomas O'Gorman was the driving force behind the creation of St. Mary's parish. He organized the raising of funds, supervised the construction of the first Catholic church and secured a resident priest for the parish. His wife Mary was the founding president of St. Mary's Parish Catholic Benevolent Women's Association, a mutual assistance and charitable organization for Catholic families. The O'Gormans also took the lead in establishing the Bride School, and through their relatives in Ireland, secured the services of a young woman, Harriet Donnelly, as the first teacher in the school.<sup>22</sup>

The O'Gormans' concern with education was also typical of many Irish-origin settlers in Saskatchewan and was perhaps best exemplified by Edward Daniel Feehan. A third-generation Irish Catholic born in Prince Edward Island in 1891, Feehan came west to Regina in 1912 to assume the principalship of Souris High School. After various other administrative positions in Regina, he moved to Saskatoon in 1917 and served as supervising principal of the city's separate schools until 1945, and as superintendent of Catholic education in Saskatoon from 1945 to 1956. Feehan was active in the Knights of Columbus, served on the building committee of St. Mary's Church and hall, and was a founding member of the St. Mary's Credit Union. Among his many public accolades were the King George and Queen Elizabeth medals received in 1935 and 1957, and the naming of E.D. Feehan High School in his honour in 1967.<sup>23</sup>

That the Irish zeal for organizational activity was not monopolized by men is demonstrated by the record of Mrs. R.J. McAuslan. Originally from County Tyrone, the McAuslans came from Ontario in the early 1900s with a number of other Quakers from eastern Canada, Britain and Ireland to establish a Society of Friends colony in the Swarthmore district north of Unity. Mrs. McAuslan clearly had a powerful commitment to community service and the energy to match. Her numerous activities included membership in the Stoughton Church Committee, organist and Sunday School teacher, school trustee, president of the Women's Missionary Society, president of the Swarthmore and later the Saskatchewan Ladies Aid and Homemaker Society, and president of the Swarthmore Women Grain Growers' Association. For her outstanding service to her community which spanned more than fifty years, Mrs. McAuslan received many awards and commendations, including the King George V medal in 1937.<sup>24</sup>

Notable also among people of Irish origin in Saskatchewan was a strong commitment to the trade union movement. This tradition had deep roots in the agrarian secret societies formed to protect peasant rights in Ireland, and these combinations were then brought by Irish immigrants to many parts of the diaspora. An underdog mentality, an aversion to perceived exploitation and a determination to ensure that their rights were respected characterized many Irish emigrants and their descendants. This tradition was admirably upheld by Thomas Molloy, who came to Clark's Crossing with his Irish-born parents from Nova Scotia in the 1880s. Apprenticed to the printing trade in his teens, Molloy worked in the office of the *Regina Leader* and

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22 Macklin Home and School Association, *History of Macklin and Community* (Macklin: n.p., 1955), 6-24.

23 *Columbianism in Saskatchewan*, 234.

24 *Golden Threads: The History of Swarthmore*, 32ff.

served as western correspondent for the Montreal *Daily Star*. His involvement with the labour movement began as a shop steward at the *Leader* office, and he quickly rose through the ranks to become president of the Regina Typographical Union in 1905. From there he worked to create an umbrella organization for the different unions in the city, and in 1907 he became founding president of the Regina Trades and Labour Council. In 1927 he was appointed Deputy Minister of Labour, holding this position throughout the bleak Depression period. A tough negotiator, Molloy is remembered to have frequently used whiskey as a bargaining strategy. One of the leading figures in the growth of organized labour in Saskatchewan, he was also an active member of the cooperative movement, helping to draft the first provincial credit union legislation in 1936.<sup>25</sup>

Countless other individual stories could be told, but the general pattern is obvious: a great many of the Irish who came to Saskatchewan came early; they were part of the linguistic majority; they were familiar with how the system operated; and most possessed the resources which presaged economic success. Indeed, while individual Irish people distinguished themselves, their collective impact on early prairie society was perhaps even more significant. Like all migrants the Irish brought to the West certain traditions, institutions, social patterns, and ideological orientations which for many had been tempered by one or two generations in North America. Because of the timing of their arrival and relatively privileged position, the Irish were extraordinarily successful in transferring their traditions to the West and mixing them into the rich mosaic of the emerging Saskatchewan society. Striking examples of this process are provided by the fortunes of two peculiarly Irish institutions — the Orange Order and the English-speaking Roman Catholic Church. Both of these had evolved over centuries in Ireland as expressions of the cultures of Irish Protestantism and Irish Catholicism, and when they emigrated, the Irish transported their religious and cultural differences virtually intact. Throughout the diaspora, these institutions encapsulated major parts of the two Irish identities and became vehicles for the inter-generational transmission of these identities in different parts of the world, including Saskatchewan. Indeed, the prominence which these institutions achieved in the province is perhaps the best evidence of the collective impact of the Irish on the early social, religious, political, and ideological development of Saskatchewan.

The Orange Order was born in the charged sectarian climate of Ulster in the late eighteenth century to defend the interests of Protestant settlers against perceived Catholic aggression. Taking its name and inspiration from King William of Orange, whose victory at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690 secured Protestant ascendancy in England and Ireland, Orange principles involved an uncompromising defence of the British Crown and Protestant hegemony in Ireland, and its most visible manifestation was, and still is, the annual July 12th parades commemorating the Boyne.<sup>26</sup> When Protestants began to leave Ireland in large numbers after the Napoleonic Wars, Orangeism was part of the culture which they transported and re-created in their new homes. The British North American provinces proved to be extremely fertile ground for its expansion, in part because the institution was ideally suited to the conditions and values of that frontier society. Throughout Ontario and the Maritimes, the Orange Lodge became central to the social life of many settler communities, frequently serving as a school, church and town hall and offering one of the few

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25 Interview with Bob Lindsay, Saskatoon, August 1995.

26 H. Senior, *Orangeism in Ireland and Britain, 1775-1836* (London: Routledge and Keegan Paul, 1966).

opportunities for socializing. Membership also afforded practical benefits in the form of mutual aid from a network of like-minded individuals which was often vital for survival in a harsh environment. The Orange Order also flourished in Canada because of its religious and ideological compatibility with the Loyalist ethos of the existing English-speaking population. The Order's uncompromising anti-Catholicism struck a chord in a community which viewed the French Canadian population of Quebec with suspicion and hostility, and its hyperloyalism dovetailed with British settlers' attachment to the monarchy. Thus the Orange Order became a powerful political force, especially in Ontario, and could count numerous mayors, members of Parliament and even prime ministers as members. Over time, also, it transcended its early ethnic roots and came to include people of English, Scottish and mainland European origin as well as Irish immigrants and their descendants within its ranks. Between 1860 and 1910 it is estimated that one-third of all adult English-speaking Canadian males belonged to the organization at some point in their lives.<sup>27</sup>

At Confederation, therefore, the Orange Order retained its Irish roots, icons and lexicon, but it had also become an integral part of Canadian society; and from this influential position it sought to articulate a vision of the Canadian future. For Orangemen Canada was British and Protestant, and they rejoiced in the belief that these attributes represented the highest advance of human civilization. They insisted that the rest of Canada be incorporated into this British Protestant community and they offered themselves as unrelenting defenders of that polity against all potential threats, whether from French Canadians, Roman Catholics, immigrants, republicans or others. In a sense the Orange Order was the quintessential Canadian institution because it maintained the solidarity of British Protestant Canadians at the local level, and linked the local communities into a larger constituency which was national, imperial and Protestant.<sup>28</sup> And it is not surprising that as Canadians migrated westwards after Confederation, Orangemen, with their long tradition as *Queen's frontiersmen*, were in the vanguard of that process.

The first Orange Lodge west of Ontario was established in Red River in 1870, and as increasing numbers of settlers arrived the Order experienced rapid growth. Between 1892 and 1908 the Order grew from sixteen to forty-one lodges in the province with a total membership of 1,424. By the early 1930s, when the Order reached the peak of its popularity, membership had grown to 68,000, belonging to 274 lodges.<sup>29</sup> In its composition the Order appealed primarily to Canadians of Irish and British origin and to immigrants from these areas. Irish-born Orangemen, especially from Ulster, were prominent among the early membership. The first grand master of the Grand Orange Lodge of the North-West Territories in 1892 was A.G. Hamilton from Moosomin, with W.J. Kernaghan from Prince Albert as grand secretary. Born in Counties Tyrone and Londonderry respectively, both spent about ten years in Ontario before moving West. Kernaghan followed Hamilton as grand master in 1893 and served for two years in that capacity.<sup>30</sup> Lodge appeal was also strong

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27 C. Houston and W.J. Smyth, *The Sash Canada Wore: A Historical Geography of the Orange Order in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

28 Houston and Smyth, *Irish Emigration and Canadian Settlement*, 185.

29 Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Grand Orange Lodge of Saskatchewan. Annual reports 1908 and 1934 (hereafter GOLSK.AR).

30 SAB, Grand Orange Lodge of the Northwest Territories. Annual Reports (hereafter GOLNT.AR), 1892, 1893, 1894, 1895.

among Protestant immigrants from Scandinavia, Germany and Holland. Notably, Protestant immigrants from the United States remained largely aloof from the organization.<sup>31</sup>

As had happened originally in Ireland and then in eastern Canada, the Orange Order in Saskatchewan evolved into a multifaceted institution which offered a variety of services to its members and to the larger society. It was at one and the same time a social and recreational club, a mutual assistance network, an educational and moral improvement society, a social welfare organization, a vehicle for the expression of religious and cultural values, and an ideological and political lobby group. For those who subscribed to its values, membership in the organization made very good sense. New arrivals in the province, whether from eastern Canada, Ireland or elsewhere, were provided access to familiar rituals, human contact, easy entry to the local community, and a wealth of practical assistance which was often the difference between success and failure when attempting to build a new life in Saskatchewan. Orangemen were sworn to support other members and this mutual aid extended to help in securing accommodation and employment, advice on the location and availability of good land, assistance in house construction, loaning tools and equipment, extra hands at harvest time, ensuring that families were assisted in the event of sickness or death, and an extensive life insurance policy for all members. Before the advent of radio and television and the widespread availability of automobiles, the Orange Lodge was vital to the social and recreational life of many communities. Weekly meetings were occasions where members could socialize free from family constraints, and larger activities provided welcome breaks from the isolation and hard work which characterized pioneer society. The high point of the Orange calendar, the *Glorious Twelfth*, became large communal events which brought together members and non-members, young and old, for a public holiday and colourful spectacle which fell conveniently between planting and harvesting.<sup>32</sup>

As well as providing practical assistance and extensive social and recreational opportunities, the Orange Order was dedicated to the moral and intellectual improvement of its membership and, by extension, of the larger society. A "high standard of moral excellence" was one of the prerequisites for acceptance, and members were expected to adhere to an exacting code of behaviour. Specifically, they were required to be "men of humane disposition, kind behaviours and enemies of all unchristian [*sic*] conduct ... desirous of propagating charity and good will ... with a hatred of cursing and swearing and taking the name of God in vain ... men prudent, temperate, sober and honest."<sup>33</sup> Since the Order appealed to a broad spectrum of the population, obviously not all were of sterling character, but given the amount of time devoted to disciplinary matters in meetings it is clear that most lodges had high standards for admittance and maintained an ongoing monitor on members' behaviour. The Order thus played a vital role in a raw frontier society with a surplus of males. By tempering the excesses of anti-social behaviour, the Orange Order was a positive socializing force in that it promoted values which on many levels enhanced self-restraint, cooperation

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31 The Order's strong commitment to the monarchy was generally unpalatable to Americans. See C. Houston and W.J. Smyth, "Transferred Loyalties: The Orange Order in the United States and Ontario," *American Review of Canadian Studies* (1984).

32 For an excellent account of a typical 12 July celebration in the town of Young in 1924 see the *Saskatoon Phoenix*, 14 July 1924.

33 SAB, GOLNT.AR, 1896 and 1904.

and societal harmony.<sup>34</sup> One of the most enduring achievements of the Orange Order in Saskatchewan was the Orange Benevolent Home for orphans and young boys at Indian Head. Established in 1917, the orphanage provided refuge for countless thousands of young people in need of a home, and it is still in existence at this time.

In a similar vein, the Order sought to improve its membership through a variety of educational activities centred in the lodges. Religious instruction was obviously a priority, and the chaplain of each lodge was required to provide regular Bible readings and expositions to encourage the faith of members and to keep them abreast of various developments within the Protestant churches. Lodges were also required to maintain a library where books were circulated regularly and which also served as a reading room. In the days before public libraries, especially in rural areas, this was an extremely valuable service since it was often the only access that adults had to reading material. Lodges also attempted to keep members informed of current social developments by sponsoring public lectures on a broad variety of topics by visiting speakers, and the national Orange newspaper, the *Sentinel* provided an Orange perspective on regional, national and international affairs. It was not without some evidence therefore, that Orange leaders could boast that Saskatchewan lodges “produced some of the best informed minds to be found in the province, men in all ways prepared to play a leading role in whatever enterprise or pursuit they should settle on.”<sup>35</sup>

As was to be expected given that Ulster was its spiritual birthplace and that there was a large Irish presence in its membership, the Orange Order in Saskatchewan evinced continuing interest in Irish affairs. Speeches delivered by Grand Masters at the annual provincial meetings provided a running commentary on Irish developments and an opportunity to affirm Orange principles. Opposition to Irish Home Rule was an article of faith for Orangemen both in Ireland and throughout the diaspora, and Orangemen in Saskatchewan stood firmly with their brothers on this issue.<sup>36</sup> “Ulster Protestantism was placed in Ireland,” according to Grand Master Armstrong in 1916, “as the guardian of liberty and good government against the malignant encroachment of popery upon the lives, the faiths and the freedoms of British citizens,” and his predecessor pledged unwavering support for the embattled minority of Ulster:

Ulster’s friends will not desert her in her hour of trial. Loyal hearts in Canada beat in unison with those in the Emerald Isle. Many in Saskatchewan have pledged their assistance and I can assure [you] that the help from the west will be of no mean proportion.<sup>37</sup>

Resistance to Home Rule was a rearguard action however, and in 1921 all of Ireland, with the exception of six counties in Ulster, became independent of the United Kingdom. While Orangemen in Saskatchewan denounced the “handing over of [Ireland] to a papal Parliament,” they nevertheless rejoiced that Ulster at least had

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34 The Orange Order, for example, was a strong supporter of prohibition and for a period actually banned hotel keepers and other dealers in liquor from membership. SAB, GOLNT.AR, 1898 and 1899.

35 Ibid., 1900.

36 For a general outline of Irish history in this period see F.S.L. Lyons, *Ireland Since the Famine* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1978), esp. 141-471.

37 SAB, GOLSKAR., 1914-1916.

been saved for the Empire, and their brothers in the six counties were entreated to hold fast:

If [Ulster] Protestants put their trust in God and follow the battle cry of our leader of old "No Surrender," they will prevail. Right and justice have conquered disloyalty, sedition, treason, arson, theft, murder and Ireland will become a bright and shining jewel in the British diadem of nations.<sup>38</sup>

The situation in Ireland thus assumed a continuing significance for the Orange Order in Saskatchewan, but of much more immediate importance were local and national issues. As in Ireland and eastern Canada, the Orange Order in Saskatchewan was an exclusively Protestant organization devoted to the promotion of British and Protestant ideals, based on the conviction that these represented "liberty and freedom in the broadest sense."<sup>39</sup> Members were aware that their early arrival in the West and extensive organizational network gave them enormous influence in moulding the new society emerging on the Prairies, and like all charter groups, Orangemen sought to impose their own image on that society. The first Grand Master of the North-West Territories stressed the responsibilities and opportunities which faced the organization in the 1890s when he explained:

We are engaged in laying the foundation for future generations to build upon, may we make them truly Protestant ... our primary duty is to make loyal British subjects of those who are making their homes in our midst and to maintain Protestant ascendancy.<sup>40</sup>

Over the next half century the Order remained true to these principles and developed into a powerful political pressure group which served as one of the most passionate champions of a British, Protestant Saskatchewan. In espousing these values, Orangemen responded with a suspicion which occasionally verged on intolerance towards those they perceived as a threat. Not surprisingly, the most prominent challenge was believed to come from Roman Catholics, and Saskatchewan Orangemen were as suspicious of Catholicism as had been their Irish and eastern Canadian forebears. In particular, the Order saw the separate school system as part of a Catholic conspiracy to enhance its own special privileges and to undermine the public school system. Insisting that "one public school for all is sound doctrine on this continent because it inculcates a common morality and guarantees religious freedom," Orangemen were outraged when the Autonomy Bills that established the new province in 1905 contained provisions for publicly funded separate schools in Saskatchewan.<sup>41</sup> And this began a debate over education which developed into one of the most poisonous political issues in Saskatchewan over the next thirty years.<sup>42</sup>

The virulence of this debate stemmed in part from the fact that it had implications which went far beyond merely how children were educated. Since many of the Roman Catholics during the early settlement period were French Canadians, and separate schools allowed for French as a language of instruction, it was easy to view such schools as vehicles for the extension of French linguistic rights in the new province. In the eyes of one Orange spokesman, "Separate Schools were part of an attempt by our

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38 Ibid., 1923.

39 Ibid., 1911.

40 Ibid., 1903.

41 SAB, GOLNT.AR, 1892.

42 The best overview of this issue is K.A. Macleod, "Politics and the French Language," in N. Ward and D. Spafford (eds.), *Politics in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: Longmans, 1968), 124-60.

French fellow citizens to establish upon this continent a French and Roman Catholic nation.”<sup>43</sup> This was anathema to Orangemen and indeed to most contemporary English Canadians, because it directly challenged their own vision of the nation’s future. The majority of English-speaking Canadians, including, as will be seen later, those of Irish Catholic origin, espoused the view that English should be the sole language outside of Quebec. Further complicating the school question were its implications for the large number of European immigrants who came to Saskatchewan at the turn of the century. Many of these were also Roman Catholic, and the separate school system provided for instruction in languages other than French or English where student numbers warranted. In the opinion of many English-speaking Canadians, allowing instruction in a “foreign” language greatly hindered the acquisition of English by these immigrants and raised the unsettling prospect of the province becoming a second Tower of Babel, fragmented by a confusion of tongues, with no shared values.<sup>44</sup> Orangemen were quick to point out the consequences of this situation:

We have the danger of bilingualism or rather polylingualism in our own province — There are schools in this province today where English is treated as a foreign language — As Canadians we desire to see the children of our foreign population develop into good citizens of the Dominion. We cannot hope to make the foreign element absorb the British ideals until they first master the means of communication of those ideals, the English language. The preliminary teaching of which should be acquired in schools.<sup>45</sup>

Separate schools thus became a symbolic battleground for two competing visions of how the province of Saskatchewan, and by extension the country of Canada, should evolve: as a mosaic where many different nationalities, cultures and languages would have equal standing, similar to what we now call multiculturalism; or as an extension of the eastern provinces where all newcomers would be assimilated to English Canadian values and the English language.<sup>46</sup> This approach has come to be known as Anglo-conformity, and while the Orange Order in Saskatchewan was not alone in espousing such homogeneity, it was certainly among its strongest exponents. A particularly uncompromising statement of this philosophy was contained in a speech delivered by the Saskatchewan Grand Master in 1920:

There is no room for the hyphen in our citizenship ... it is a danger to the country and a hindrance to the building up of a united and homogeneous people. He that is not with us is against us. We have but room in this country for one flag, one language, one school, one throne, and one Empire. This country is British and we must insist on the residents of this country being British and the only way ... this can be accomplished is by educating the children in a non-sectarian national school where the language of use and instruction is English.<sup>47</sup>

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43 SAB, GOLSKAR, 1920.

44 M.J. Barker, “Canadianization Through the Schools of the Prairie Provinces Before World War I: The Attitudes and Aims of the English-Speaking Majority,” in M. Kovacs (ed.), *Ethnic Canadians: Culture and Education* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1978), 281-332. For a contemporary analysis see J.T.M. Anderson, *The Education of the New Canadian: A Treatise on Canada’s Greatest Educational Problem* (Toronto: J.C. Dent, 1918).

45 SAB, GOLSKAR, 1912.

46 H. Palmer, “Reluctant Hosts: Anglo-Canadian Views of Multiculturalism in the Twentieth Century,” in R.D. Francis and D.B. Smith (eds.), *Readings in Canadian History: Post-Confederation* (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1986), 185-201.

47 SAB, GOLSKAR, 1920.

In translating these ideals into political reality, however, the Order was frustrated by the Liberal Party's domination of provincial politics from 1905. Faced with this situation Orangemen generally leaned towards the provincial Conservative Party, an identification which became increasingly public in the 1920s. The best evidence of the growing alliance between the Orange Order and the Conservative Party was the meteoric rise within the party of Dr. J.T.M. Anderson, an Orangeman from Saskatoon. Born in Fairbanks, Ontario, to an Irish immigrant family from Ulster, Anderson came to Saskatoon in 1919 to assume the position of Director of Education for the province of Saskatchewan. In 1920 he joined the Orange Lodge in Saskatoon and became recording secretary in 1924. In the same year he was elected Conservative Member of the Legislative Assembly for Saskatoon, and his talents rapidly propelled him into the upper echelons of the party. He was chosen as leader of the party in late 1924, and although he stepped down from the position briefly in 1926 he continued as House Leader. In March of 1928 he resumed the leadership of the Saskatchewan Conservative Party.<sup>48</sup>

Anderson's entry into provincial politics coincided with the arrival in Saskatchewan of the notorious Ku Klux Klan and the beginning of one of the most turbulent periods in provincial politics. Most commentators agree that the extraordinary, albeit short-lived, popularity of the Klan in Saskatchewan stemmed from its ability to exploit the fears of a segment of the population concerning demographic and social changes occurring in their midst. Post-war immigration and differential birth rates were transforming the ethnic and religious composition of the population, with the result that Protestants of British origin were losing their majority status. The prospect of being swamped by those they termed "foreign born," many of whom were also Roman Catholic, was extremely alarming for the Anglo-Protestant population, posing as it did a very real threat that they would lose control of the province's institutions. As evidence of this they pointed to the education system, for not only was the separate school system thriving, but it also appeared that French and "foreign" Catholics were beginning to exert undue influence within the public schools in some areas. To make matters worse, the Liberal government appeared indifferent to these concerns, leading many to conclude that their own government had been captured by those same hostile elements.<sup>49</sup>

Such heightened passions afforded an ideal climate in which the Klan could thrive, since it successfully combined nativism, anti-Catholicism and Francophobia into one coherent message and provided an outlet for the growing sense of insecurity among segments of the English-speaking population. What is frequently overlooked in discussions of the Klan in Saskatchewan, however, is its connection to the Orange Order. Although Klan rhetoric was far more extreme and intolerant than most public pronouncements of Orange leaders, their positions on immigration, the French language and the influence of the Roman Catholic Church were almost identical. The Orange Order and the Klan also appealed to roughly the same segments of the population and there was considerable overlap in membership. Klan speakers were also frequently invited to address Order functions in the late 1920s, a great favourite being J.J. Maloney, a fiery renegade priest. The remarkable success of the Klan in

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48 M. Cottrell, "J.T.M. Anderson: Orange Premier of Saskatchewan" (paper presented to the British Association for Canadian Studies, History and Geography Conference, 1991).

49 P. Kyba, "Ballots and Burning Cross: The Election of 1929," in Ward and Spafford, *Politics in Saskatchewan*, 105-23.

Saskatchewan can therefore be attributed, at least in part, to the fact that the ground had been prepared in advance by the Orange Order. This was particularly true in the sense that Orange activities and rhetoric over the previous forty years had predisposed a considerable section of the population to become exercised over the issues of race, religion, language and education.

The Klan's popularity and the heightened interest which it focussed on these contentious issues were astutely exploited by the Conservative Party under Dr. Anderson, and culminated in the election of the first Conservative-led government in Saskatchewan in 1929. As premier of the province from 1929 until 1935, Anderson moved to address the issues which had for long been of concern to Orangemen and which more recently had formed the basis of the Klan's campaign. Acting as his own minister of Education, the premier introduced amendments to the School Act which prohibited the use of religious symbols and the wearing of religious garb in public schools. In the second session of the legislature, this was followed by changes which greatly reduced the use of French as a language of instruction in Saskatchewan schools.<sup>50</sup> In 1930 the Anderson government established a royal commission to study the issue of immigration to the province. One of the most detailed briefs was presented by the Orange Order, and not surprisingly it argued strongly in favour of imposing severe restrictions on non-British immigrants for the foreseeable future.<sup>51</sup> In power until 1935, the Anderson government found itself confronting the Great Depression, which brought unprecedented misery to the people of Saskatchewan. The collapse of the farm economy and massive urban unemployment soon distracted attention from the issues of language, race and education which had caused such bitterness in the late 1920s.

The election of the Anderson government in 1929 may be seen as the high point of Orange political influence in Saskatchewan, and it also coincided with the peak of the organization's popularity. Although the Orange Order continued to be a presence in rural Saskatchewan until the 1960s, the years after 1930 witnessed a steady decline in membership.<sup>52</sup> Rural depopulation and the advent of mass media drained its membership base, and as the pioneering generations disappeared the original need for the support which the Order provided ceased to exist. The values which the Order espoused also diminished in appeal after World War II, as notions of diversity and multiculturalism gained favour. Nevertheless, it is clear that the Orange Order had an enormous influence on the development of the province. It played a vital practical role in facilitating the social and cultural adjustment of early Protestant, English-speaking pioneers; and it also provided a medium for interlinking them with their co-religionists from Protestant, northern European countries. The Order also articulated a coherent vision for the future cultural development of the province, and although this vision fell into disfavour in the years after World War II, there is a sense in which the Order was undone by its own success. Though we pay lip-service today to the concepts of bilingualism and multiculturalism, the reality is that Saskatchewan is a predominantly English-speaking community with a relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity among its non-aboriginal population. This may be considered the enduring legacy of the Orange Order.

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50 McLeod, "Politics and the French Language," in Ward and Spafford, *Politics in Saskatchewan*, 147ff; R. Huel, "The Anderson Amendments and the Secularization of Saskatchewan Schools," *CCHA Study Sessions* 44 (1977): 61-76.

51 SAB, GOLS.KAR, 1921, pp. 14ff.

52 There are currently eight active lodges in Saskatchewan.

In Saskatchewan, as indeed in all of Canada, the Orange Order embodied a major part of the identity of Irish-origin Protestants. Although certainly not all belonged to or even supported it, the Order nevertheless enumerated a basic cultural identity common among Irish Protestant emigrants and their descendants, and it was a perspective which also resonated with other settlers, especially those from Protestant, northern European countries. In a similar way the Roman Catholic Church embraced a large part of the identity of the remainder of the Irish-origin population, the approximately 35 percent who were Catholic. Like their Protestant counterparts, the Catholic Irish in Saskatchewan consisted mainly of second- and third-generation descendants of earlier emigrants who came from eastern Canada and the United States, and of a small number who came directly from Ireland.<sup>53</sup> And like the Protestants, the Catholic Irish brought with them to the West a well-developed culture which had originally been forged in Ireland and then tempered by various North American environments.

Catholic culture in Ireland evolved after the seventeenth century, largely in response to British colonialism. Discriminated against on the basis of their nationality and religion, and excluded from property and power, Irish Catholic identity fused a deeply Anglophobic separatist nationalism and a powerful attachment to the Roman Catholic Church. Over time these two ingredients became virtually synonymous in the homeland, and they were further solidified while being dispersed to the four corners of the world by the massive nineteenth-century emigration. Catholics who emigrated from Ireland, especially during the Great Famine exodus of the 1840s, encountered a great deal more religious and racial prejudice than did their Protestant counterparts and, initially at least, had more difficulty in adjusting to their new environments. This early dislocation, combined with continued British control over the homeland, contributed to an abiding sense of historical grievance among many Irish Catholic emigrants and their descendants throughout the diaspora.<sup>54</sup> The intergenerational transmission of that identity from Ireland to Ontario and then to Saskatchewan was captured almost in caricature in the reminiscences of one unfortunate English settler:

I lived on a farm with a family ... Irish, west of [Regina]. A good sized farm. Irish. Not Ulster but southern Irish. God how they hated Englishmen... . They'd come to Ontario about 60 years ago. Their grandfather had. Both of these were actually born in the bush outside of Toronto but Irish as Paddy's pig. Talk about the Tories and the Corn Laws and the Famine and the English and you never heard such hatred. There I'd sit with them night after night and there was no use me defending the English because at school and prep and Oxford I hadn't ever heard of the Corn Laws. But by God I know what they are now. I think the Irish by their very nature bring a lot of these things down upon themselves. A treacherous lot.<sup>55</sup>

In Canada, also, the Irish invested enormous energy into the Roman Catholic Church; and throughout the Maritimes, Ontario and subsequently the West, they were largely responsible for creating the English-speaking dimension of this institution. In

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53 For a recent anecdotal study of one such group see J. Coughlin, *The Irish Colony of Saskatchewan* (Scarborough: Lochleven Publishers, 1995).

54 L.J. McCaffrey, "Irish Catholicism and Irish Nationalism: A Study in Cultural Identity," *Church History* 42 (1973): 524-34. See also various articles in M. McGowan and B. Clarke (eds.), *Catholics at the Gathering Place: Historical Essays on the Archdiocese of Toronto, 1841-1991* (Toronto: Canadian Catholic Historical Association, 1993).

55 B. Broadfoot, *The Pioneer Years, 1895-1914* (Toronto: Doubleday, 1976), 153.

the process they found spiritual sustenance, a relatively safe vehicle for expressing their community consciousness, and a powerful symbol of their ethno-religious identity.

As in other parts of the diaspora, Irish Catholic emigrants and their descendants in Canada developed a new identity over time which combined aspects of their Old World inheritances with their New World environment. In particular, this evolution was shaped by the ambiguous, double-minority status which they held within Canadian society.<sup>56</sup> Adherence to Catholicism and a lingering Anglophobia made them a religious and cultural minority within a predominantly Protestant, English-speaking community which exalted loyalty to the Crown as one of its chief public virtues. As a result, the Irish remained objects of suspicion and targets of sporadic *No Popery* campaigns, frequently led by their hereditary Orange enemies.<sup>57</sup> As English-speakers, moreover, the Irish were a linguistic and cultural minority within the Canadian Catholic Church which had previously been dominated by French Canadians from Quebec. In the late nineteenth century, therefore, they were increasingly at loggerheads with their French co-religionists both for control of the church and in formulating the relationship between Canadian Catholicism and the larger non-Catholic Canadian society.

Irish Catholic assimilation in Canada thus occurred in the context of the two solitudes, and the identity which they developed was essentially a compromise or middle ground between the two. Distance and time gradually diminished the bonds with the Old Country, and while many still proclaimed their Irish heritage and enthusiastically supported the Irish Home Rule movement, their Canadian residence and birth, their Catholic affiliation and English language increasingly became the foci of their identity.<sup>58</sup> English-speaking Canadian Catholics became their new term of self-identification, and historians refer to them as Anglo-Celtic Catholics because, although dominated by the Irish, they were also associated with English, Scottish, American and other Canadian Catholics whose first language was or became English. Loyalty to Canada as an independent, English-speaking religiously pluralistic nation within the context of a commonwealth of equal partners, became their ideal definition of Canadian society; and this provided common ground with the two dominant cultural traditions in Canada. With French Canadians they shared a strong commitment to Catholic rights, especially denominational education, and with British Protestants they shared a belief in the primacy of the English language and the duty of citizens to subscribe to Canadianism. One of the clearest articulations of this new Anglo-Celtic Catholic identity was provided in a speech by Charles Murphy, an Irish Catholic M.P. from Ontario, in 1904:

We must cultivate a Canadian national sentiment. Let us who are Irish Catholics identify ourselves with Canadianism in all our hearts. In the days when we were discriminated against in the fashion I have ... described, it was necessary that we should stand together as Irish Catholics for the better breaking down of the walls

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56 J.S. Moir, "The Problems of a Double-Minority: Some Reflections on the Development of the English-speaking Catholic Church in Canada in the Nineteenth Century," *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 41 (1971): 54-61.

57 J.R. Miller, "Bigotry in the North Atlantic Triangle: Irish, British and American Influences on Canadian Anti-Catholicism, 1850-1900," *Studies in Religion* 16, no. 3 (1987): 289-301.

58 For an excellent analysis of the assimilation of Irish Catholics in Toronto see M. McGowan, "We Are All Canadians: A Social, Religious and Cultural Portrait of Toronto's English-Speaking Roman Catholics, 1890-1920" (Ph.D dissertation, University of Toronto, 1988).

of brass. But now that we are on equal footing with the rest of the population it is in our interest and duty, while ever remembering Ireland and doing our best to assuage her griefs and promote her aspirations for Home Rule, to be loyal first, last and all the time to Canada, than which a fairer land and one with a greater or nobler future does not exist on earth.<sup>59</sup>

This, then, was part of the cultural baggage which Catholics of Irish origin brought to Saskatchewan and which shaped their responses to their new home. One of the most striking features of their behaviour in the West was that their first priority, after basic survival, was to practice their religion. In Regina, Saskatoon, Sturgis, Moose Jaw, Lanigan, Sinnett, Young, Prince Albert, Clark's Crossing and elsewhere, the Irish built a parish network from the ground up. Men and women with names like O'Brien, O'Grady, O'Mahoney, O'Leary, McCarthy, Gallagher, Grimes, Leddy, Ryan, Feehan, Quinn, Molloy and Mooney were the pioneers of the English-speaking Catholic Church in Saskatchewan.<sup>60</sup> They opened their homes for the first masses, originally provided infrequently by itinerant clergy. They formed parish committees, raised money, and built churches and parish halls. They staffed the numerous parochial organizations and, most importantly, they devoted their lives as priests and nuns to the far-flung pioneer congregation. Involvement in the church allowed Irish-origin settlers to establish a continuity with their past and to recreate their spiritual community, and the church also played a vital role in facilitating their social and material adjustment to the Prairies.

Like their Protestant counterparts, therefore, religion was the primary focus of individual and collective loyalty for the Catholic Irish in Saskatchewan, and their organizational constructs also emanated from the church. Although various nationalist and ethnic societies were established in Saskatchewan, the single most important public organization which people of Irish origin created was the Knights of Columbus. This organization was established in New Haven, Connecticut by an Irish priest in 1882 to foster fraternity among Catholic men and encourage the performance of *charitable, educational and patriotic works*. Introduced to Canada by Irish Canadians in Montreal in 1897, a western district was formed by Irish Canadians in Winnipeg in 1906, and the first Saskatchewan chapter was formed by Irish Canadians in Regina in 1907. In 1923 Saskatchewan Knights established their own state council, and by 1930 there were twenty-two chapters of the Knights of Columbus organized in the province with a total membership of 14,800.<sup>61</sup> Membership in the Knights offered Catholics many of the same practical benefits which the Orange Order provided its Protestant members. It served as a forum for socializing, a ready-made support network, and an outlet for the talents and ambitions of Catholic laymen.<sup>62</sup> Like the Orange Order it also encouraged service to the larger society, and in the process it accumulated an impressive list of philanthropic achievements. These included the construction of St.

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59 Ibid., 327.

60 M. Cottrell, "John Joseph Leddy and the Battle for the Soul of the Catholic Church in the West," *CCHA Historical Studies* 61 (1995): 41-51.

61 C. Kaufman, *Faith and Fraternalism: The History of the Knights of Columbus* (New York: Harper and Row, 1982). For an overview of the development of the Knights of Columbus in Saskatchewan see *Columbianism in Saskatchewan, 1907-1982*.

62 J.J. Leddy, from Saskatoon, for example, rose to become supreme director of the Knights of Columbus in North America, chair of the Knights of Columbus Army Hut Project, Trustee on the Saskatoon Separate School Board, and he served on the executive of the provincial Conservative Party. See Cottrell, "J.J. Leddy."

Patrick's Orphanage in Prince Albert, fund raising for St. Peter's College in Muenster, Campion College in Regina and St. Thomas More College in Saskatoon, the operation of the Catholic Immigration Welfare Society and the Knights of Columbus Army Huts project during both World Wars. Its female auxiliary, the Catholic Women's League, was also active; and among its most enduring legacies was Rosary Hall in Regina, which provided lodging and work for homeless women, care for troubled girls, assistance to female immigrants, a children's shelter, hospital visitation, and fund raising for various charitable endeavours.<sup>63</sup>

Although dominated initially by Catholics of Irish origin, the Knights of Columbus transcended ethnicity and appealed to Catholics of many different nationalities. English, Scottish, Welsh, Germans, Hungarians, Ukrainians, Poles and Americans all belonged to the organization, and it thus served as an effective forum for ethnic fusion. Membership in the Knights bound together Catholics of Irish and many other nationalities, forging the personal bonds vital to the creation of community cohesion in pioneer society. This was especially evident in marriage patterns, with high rates of intermarriage between the Irish and other Catholic groups represented by the Knights of Columbus. The one exception to this was the frequency with which Irish men married aboriginal women. Notable also was the fact that very few French Canadians belonged to the Knights of Columbus, in part because of the English language orientation of the organization. This was symptomatic of the wider differences between Irish and French Catholics in the West.

The Catholic Church and the Knights of Columbus thus served as vehicles for transmitting Irish Catholic culture to the Prairies and for integrating the Irish-origin Catholics with other settlers. What is clear also is that their early dominance of these institutions and proficiency in the English language allowed the Irish to become spokesmen for non-French Catholics in the province, and they proved themselves to be extremely assertive in protecting and promoting Catholic interests. One early resident of Saskatoon recalled "a small contingent of Irish ancestry ... only one of tranquil and mild opinion! They certainly added to the liveliness of frequent controversy and debate on local religious and political issues."<sup>64</sup> Like their Protestant counterparts, Catholics of Irish origin sought to impose their mould on Saskatchewan society, particularly in the area of education, and they did this in a manner consistent with the behaviour of their co-religionists in other parts of the Irish diaspora. It has been suggested that separate or denominational education systems were among the most important cultural legacies of Irish Catholic emigration. Wherever in the world they settled in numbers Irish Catholics pressed, often at great personal and collective sacrifice, for their own education system publicly funded, but controlled by the church.<sup>65</sup> This was certainly true of those who settled in Saskatchewan, as the single most important political issue they faced in the early years of the province was the controversy over separate schools. As previously mentioned, the Autonomy Bills of 1905 established a dual school system in Saskatchewan, but many non-Catholics resented this imposition. Catholics, including those of Irish origin, were therefore constantly on the defensive to protect their constitutional rights. Since the Orange Order tended to be the most vocal exponent of the extreme Protestant perspective (before the arrival of the Ku Klux Klan), Irish Catholics were faced with their old

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63 *Columbianism in Saskatchewan*, 74.

64 St. Thomas More College Archives, Saskatoon. J.F. Leddy Papers, "Growing Up in Saskatoon."

65 D.H. Akenson, *The Irish Diaspora*, 273.

enemy in a new environment, and the term “Orangeman” became their catchword for all enemies of Catholicism in Saskatchewan.<sup>66</sup>

But while Irish Protestants and Catholics and their descendants relived their ancient sectarian feud in Saskatchewan, the situation on the Prairies was complicated by the presence of new players. As in eastern Canada, the church in the West was originally dominated by French Canadians, and many of the Eastern European immigrants who arrived at the turn of the century were also Roman Catholics. Thus, as well as being confronted with their old Orange enemies, the Irish found themselves a minority within the Saskatchewan Catholic population and were forced to share the Church with others. This relationship, especially with the French, was often uneasy.

Tension between the Irish and the French in the West was an inevitable product of the desire of both groups to control an institution which each saw as peculiarly their own. Although a minority of the Canadian Catholic population, the Irish had already established substantial control of the church hierarchy in the East, and as they moved west they continued to demand the creation of English-speaking parishes and the appointment of English-speaking, preferably Irish-origin, clergy.<sup>67</sup> Language proved to be the most obvious source of contention between the Irish and the French, but this was more a reflection of a deeper conflict. Both groups had fundamentally incompatible visions of the future of the church in Saskatchewan; and these visions were microcosms of the contemporary polarization of views at the national level concerning the nature of the Canadian character and identity and the extent of cultural dualism in Canada. Concerned about the survival of their language and culture as well as their religion, French Canadians envisioned a significant degree of segregation, religious, cultural and linguistic, for Catholics in Saskatchewan. As well as insisting on the right to control their own education system, they were staunch defenders of French and other minority linguistic rights, and they fought hard to maintain their primacy within the church hierarchy in the West. Anglo-Celtic Catholics, on the other hand, led by the vocal and aggressive Irish, were convinced that English would become the dominant language in Canada and that Catholicism could only progress on the Prairies if its adherents adopted that language. Thus, while the Irish insisted on religious and educational segregation, they advocated considerable integration in linguistic, cultural and social areas. They argued that Catholics should assimilate to the Canadian mainstream through the adoption of the English language and Canadian norms, and as English-speakers familiar with British culture, they saw themselves as the ideal group to preside over this process.<sup>68</sup>

The conflict between the French and the Irish in Saskatchewan was therefore nothing less than a “struggle to ensure the domination of one cultural tradition as opposed to another.”<sup>69</sup> It juxtaposed two very different visions of the future of the church in the West, one assertive and integrationist, the other defensive and isolationist, and it understandably generated strong passions. From the Irish perspective, the

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66 For a humorous account of boyhood conflict between Catholics and Protestants in Saskatoon see J.F. Leddy Papers, “Growing Up in Saskatoon.”

67 R. Huel, “The Irish-French Conflict in Catholic Episcopal Nominations: The Western Sees and the Struggle for Domination Within the Church,” *CCHA Study Sessions* 42 (1975): 51-70.

68 R. Choquette, *Language and Religion: A History of English-French Conflict in Ontario* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1975); B. Rainey, “The Fransaskois and the Irish Catholics: An Uneasy Relationship,” pages 211-17 in this issue.

69 R. Huel, “Irish-French Conflict,” 53.

**Table 2:  
Religious Composition of Saskatchewan Population, 1901-1931**

Year	Total Population	Catholic	French Catholic	Other Catholic
1901	91,279	27,651	23,251	4,400
1911	492,432	90,092	42,152	47,940
1921	757,510	147,342	46,031	101,311
1931	921,785	233,979	50,700	183,279

identification of the French language and culture with Catholicism threatened the social acceptance and political rights of all Catholics and provided fodder for anti-Catholic bigotry. They accused the French of being aggressively racist, of “arrogating to themselves as rights those things which were merely privileges [and of] generating a deep resentment in the hearts of even the fair-minded Protestant people [towards Catholicism].”<sup>70</sup> Ironically, the views of Irish Catholics on cultural dualism and minority linguistic rights closely paralleled those of the Orange Order, and this was not lost on the French. *Les Orangistes* and *les Irlandais* were birds of a feather from the French perspective, both bent on assimilation and Anglicization, and both seen as bitter enemies of French culture. They were, in the words of one French commentator, “anational et contre nature.”<sup>71</sup>

The outcome of this struggle between Anglo-Celtic and French Catholics was determined in part by demographic changes within the Catholic population in the province. As Table 2 shows, between 1901 and 1931 the percentage of Catholics who were French declined from over 90 percent to less than one-third, and French influence waned in accordance. Virtually all episcopal appointments after 1911 went to English-speaking, frequently Irish origin, candidates, and the French were reduced to one bishop and a small core of parishes. Once in control of the church, the Irish also sought to implement their vision of Catholicism in the province; and they were successful in many crucial areas, including postsecondary education.<sup>72</sup> Thus, while French Canadians in Saskatchewan have succeeded in maintaining many aspects of their religion, language and culture, the Catholic Church in the province was destined to develop primarily along the English-speaking, integrationist lines envisaged by the Irish.

In conclusion it may be said that the story of the Irish in Saskatchewan is a varied, fascinating and important one, which weaves together two of the most significant developments in the evolution of this country: the creation of largely white, English-speaking, settler societies on the Prairies between 1850 and 1920, and the inter-generational spread of the Irish diaspora westwards across North America after 1815. The main contention of this study is that these two processes were linked, and that the Irish diaspora was a vital element in the establishment of the province of Saskatchewan. Although it may seem redundant to comment on the migratory proclivities of emigrant groups, the fact nevertheless requires emphasis because of its singular importance. People of Irish origin who settled in Saskatchewan came from a culture with a long tradition of migration in search of social and material advancement, and a tendency to define economic opportunity in terms of land ownership. Since the

70 National Archives of Canada, Charles Murphy Papers. J.J. Leddy to C. Murphy, 6 May 1931.

71 B. Rainey, pages 211-17 in this issue.

72 For an analysis of the struggle between the French and the Irish over post-secondary education in Saskatchewan see M. Cottrell, “J.J. Leddy and the Battle for the Soul of the Catholic Church.”

settlement of the West attracted those who were willing to migrate in order to own land, it is not surprising that the Irish constituted a significant proportion of the early pioneer population. Thus they were active agents in the great historical changes which occurred on the northern Plains at the turn of the century: in particular, the westward expansion of the Canadian political and settlement frontier; the transition from aboriginal to non-aboriginal control of resources; and the development of a commercial, agricultural economy.

Like all other settlers, the Irish who came West entered an unfamiliar environment and one of the most inhospitable climates in the world. Some of them were defeated by the challenge, but a great many possessed resources which privileged them in frontier society. Early arrival, white skin, Christian adherence, commercial acumen, proficiency in the English language, familiarity with the British Canadian political, legal and educational traditions, and considerable organizational ability ensured that the Irish adjustment, though often difficult, was not the traumatic and dislocating experience encountered by many other groups. This study has documented the involvement of Irish-origin settlers in the establishment of churches, schools, and hospitals; in building civic, municipal, provincial and federal political structures; and in creating fraternal organizations which were an essential cohesive force in pioneer society. In short, the Irish played an enormous role, especially given their relative numbers, in constructing the public institutions of the province of Saskatchewan.

More significant than the contributions of the many individuals documented here, however, was the collective impact of the Irish in shaping the early development of the province. Irish-origin settlers, both Protestant and Catholic, brought with them well-developed cultures which combined their Old World inheritances with the assimilation and accommodation to North American, primarily eastern Canadian norms, which had taken place over one or two generations of immigration. Revolving primarily around religious affiliation, the most visible institutional manifestations of intergenerational Irish ethnicity in Saskatchewan were the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches. These churches, and organizations such as the Orange Order and the Knights of Columbus which evolved out of them, served primarily as vehicles for transferring and re-creating Irish culture on the Prairies. In this they were typical of the behaviour of Irish immigrants and their descendants in virtually all other parts of the diaspora. In Saskatchewan, as in Ontario, Chicago, New South Wales, Auckland, Glasgow, and other places too numerous to mention, Irish emigrants adjusted to local circumstances, but sought to do so on their own terms. Like all charter groups they attempted to mould Saskatchewan society in their own image. In this process their institutions acted as forums for ethnic fusion which integrated Irish Protestants and Catholics with settlers of other nationalities, and provided a vital force for cohesion in an ethnically diverse pioneer society. However, Irish ethnicity also created great tension with other elements within the pioneer population which did not share their vision of how the province of Saskatchewan should evolve.

People of Irish origin were assertive proponents of Canadianism, and they offered two versions of that ideal which differed in some respects but which also shared several fundamental assumptions. Irish-origin Protestants who settled in Saskatchewan saw Canada as an English-speaking, majority Protestant country, an integral part of the British Empire, with a clear separation of church and state and a high degree of cultural homogeneity along Anglo-Canadian lines. As articulated by the Orange Order, this manifested itself in a powerful commitment to maintain the "imperial connection," the dominance of the English language and the primacy of the public school system as the vehicle for propagating those norms and for assimilating

weakening of ties with Britain, suspicious of the Roman Catholic separate school system, and overtly hostile to minority, especially French linguistic rights, or any concession to cultural diversity. The Anglo-Celtic vision of Canada developed by Catholics of Irish origin was less intolerant of heterogeneity, but it nevertheless had much in common with its Protestant counterpart. They too envisaged Canada as a predominantly English-speaking country, but as an autonomous nation within the British commonwealth. They insisted on religious pluralism and the right to denominational education, and the Roman Catholic Separate School system was one of their enduring creations. But Anglo-Celtic Catholics promoted no such separation in the areas of culture or language. Committed to the primacy of the English language and Anglo-Celtic Canadian cultural values, they were generally as intolerant as the Protestants of French and other minority groups' linguistic and cultural rights.

The vision of Canada and the province of Saskatchewan which people of Irish origin articulated was in some senses a narrow one, especially from today's more tolerant perspective. But it was a natural product of their historical experiences and cultural inheritances. Forged in Ireland and transported to Canada by earlier emigrants, these inheritances were modified by the Canadian environment and then brought west by their descendants. Therein lies perhaps the strongest evidence of their impact on the development of the province. For the primary vehicles for implementing their vision and assimilating others to it — the Protestant and Roman Catholic Churches and the organizational infrastructures which emanated from them — were in fact Irish institutions which had over time become integral parts of mainstream Canadian society. It is also a vision of the Prairies which has endured. Despite the waning attachment to the British monarchy and the adoption of bilingualism and multiculturalism as official policy, there is much about the province of Saskatchewan today that can be attributed, at least in part, to the Irish and Irish Canadians. Allegiance to the Canadian federation, the dominance of the English language, the numerical strength of organized Christianity, the Public and Roman Catholic school systems, organized labour, cooperatives and credit unions, the relatively high degree of cultural homogeneity among the non-aboriginal population — and green beer on St. Patrick's Day — these are among the enduring legacies of the Irish in Saskatchewan.



## The Fransaskois and the Irish Catholics: An Uneasy Relationship

*Brian E. Rainey*

**ABSTRACT.** This article aims at being a short general voyage of exploration in the area of relations between two ethnic groups in Saskatchewan rather than an attempt to put forth and prove any one particular thesis. It is not a voyage through entirely uncharted waters, for a number of scholars have plotted parts of the course I shall follow. It results from two converging interests: Irish immigration to Saskatchewan, and the situation of the French-language minority in the province, known since 1971 as *les Fransaskois*, a name which I shall use anachronistically in examining relations between the "Irish" and the Fransaskois, particularly in the first decades of this century. I shall refer particularly to one element of this relationship which has as yet been given little treatment, especially in English: the attitude to the Irish of the secret Ordre de Jacques Cartier during the 1930s.

**SOMMAIRE:** Cet article est un court voyage d'exploration dans le domaine des relations entre deux groupes ethniques de la Saskatchewan, plutôt que la présentation d'une thèse particulière. Il ne s'agit pas d'un voyage en terrain complètement inconnu, car un certain nombre de spécialistes ont déjà tracé une partie de mon parcours, qui résulte de deux intérêts convergents: l'immigration irlandaise en Saskatchewan, et la situation de la minorité linguistique française de la province. Cette dernière est connue sous le nom de Fransaskois depuis 1971; j'utiliserai ce terme de manière anachronique dans mon survol des relations entre les "Irlandais" et les Fransaskois, surtout en ce qui concerne les premières décennies du siècle. Je ferai plus particulièrement référence à un élément qui a été fort peu traité jusqu'à présent: l'attitude de l'Ordre de Jacques Cartier envers les Irlandais dans les années trente.

David Wilson, in his pamphlet entitled *The Irish In Canada*, published in 1989 under the aegis of the Canadian Historical Society, observed that "The Irish presence in western Canada has generally been ignored by historians" (Wilson 1989, 23), though he does mention some work done in Alberta and British Columbia. As far as I can determine, Wilson's statement still holds true for English-language historians as far as Saskatchewan is concerned, except for the continuing research of Michael Cottrell of the University of Saskatchewan, whose interest in the general history of the Irish in Saskatchewan has inspired his "John Joseph Leddy and the Battle for the Soul of the Catholic Church in the West" (Cottrell 1995).

A number of reasons may be adduced to account for the lack of studies of the Irish in Saskatchewan. In the first place, there is a difficulty of definition: what is Irish? Quite apart from the Protestant-Catholic divide, should a distinction be made between those of Irish ethnicity and those who were born in Ireland? Thus, in 1921, Saskatchewan had 84,786 residents of Irish extraction, of whom 6,897 had been born in Ireland, while ten years later the figures were, respectively, 104,096 and 8,159. The settlement of Sinnett, near Lanigan, provides an example of this mixture. Founded in 1905 by Father Sinnett, who had a vision of a settlement for Irish Catholics, and so known as the "Irish colony," its first inhabitants, like Father Sinnett, were of Irish extraction from Ontario and the Maritimes, as well as "a number of settlers who hailed from Ireland and all of them bachelors" (Sinnett 1955, 7). Also to be found among the early arrivals were names like Koberinski, Koski or Anstett. Thus despite its promising name, it was never a pure Irish community. The same would hold true for other Saskatchewan communities with Irish names, such as Limerick in the south. In fact the Irish, both Protestant and Catholic, but more especially the Protestants, tended to melt quickly into the general English-speaking population and were no

longer easily identifiable. It is true, however, as has been pointed out by Cottrell and others, that some of them continued to cling to long-held beliefs and prejudices.

Membership of the Orange Order, which might be seen as a possible means of identifying Protestants, is not reliable. As Houston and Smyth (1980) point out, by the second half of the nineteenth century the order had become progressively Canadian and removed from its Irish roots. Orangeism was capable of appealing to many Protestants other than Irish and probably came to Saskatchewan with the soldiers involved in quelling the Riel Rebellion in 1885, being formally instituted in 1892 by Major Stewart Mulgrew of Manitoba. However, that it had not lost its roots entirely is demonstrated by the fact that the addresses of the Grand Masters to the annual meetings of the Grand Lodge of Saskatchewan in the 1920s and 1930s generally contained a reference to the state of affairs in Ulster, and a visit from Sir James Craig, prime minister of Northern Ireland, was welcomed in September 1926.

Another impediment to the study of the Irish in Saskatchewan is a seeming lack of source material. Apart from extensive though incomplete Orange records — of limited value as we have seen — little enough other material seems to have come to light as yet in Saskatchewan. On the other side of the Atlantic, the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland has considerable Canadian holdings although few have Saskatchewan connections. The editor of *Northern Ireland and Canada, a Guide to Northern Ireland Sources for the Study of Canadian History* (Davison 1994, i) expresses surprise at the fact that Ulster does not have more substantial Canadian holdings, and hopes that further collections of correspondence will emerge.

Finally, there seems to have been a lack of impetus on the part of academics in the two Saskatchewan universities and, with the recent exception of the South Saskatchewan Irish Club, no Irish cultural organization has inspired study of the Irish in the province.

All this contrasts very strongly with the French Canadians in Saskatchewan. Although the Fransaskois were geographically scattered and many became assimilated into the English-speaking majority, they still constituted, because of their language and religion, a much more homogeneous group, a visible minority, whose struggles for survival and whose history have been well documented. Invaluable work has been done, particularly in the areas of religion, settlement, politics and the school question by Saskatchewan-based historians such as André Lalonde and Raymond Huel, as well as Robert Choquette and Robert Painchaud. La Société historique de la Saskatchewan commissioned a *History of the Francophones of Saskatchewan* and other historical works, while the involvement of Saskatchewan scholars in the Centre d'études franco-canadiennes de l'Ouest as well as of local historians of the Société historique have also contributed much to our knowledge of the history and culture of the Fransaskois.

No systematic study has then been undertaken of the provenance and makeup of the Irish in Saskatchewan. Generally speaking, they were a mixture of Protestant and Catholic and had come directly from Ireland or sometimes after several decades living in Ontario or elsewhere. They were a mixture of professionals, skilled tradesmen, farmers and labouring classes. A perception on the part of certain Roman Catholics that they suffered from a general lack of education and an inferior place in the Anglo-dominated society led them to pursue educational goals, bringing them into conflict with their French-language co-religionists.

There had been a French presence in the Prairies since the first Francophones had penetrated into the North-West in search of furs, a number of them remaining in the Prairies after the amalgamation of the North West Company with the Hudson's Bay

Company in 1821. They had been followed by missionaries who came to convert the Native peoples, to minister to the Metis and, later, to the Francophone settlers who came to the West at the end of the century. As early as 1899, however, the western archbishops were sending a desperate appeal to the hierarchy in Quebec: "Laisserons-nous ces étrangers s'emparer de tout le sol que le gouvernement du pays livre aux nouveaux colons? Plus tard serait trop tard. C'est le moment de faire un effort décisif [Shall we allow these foreigners to grab all the land which the government of the country is giving to the new settlers? Any later will be too late. It is time to make a decisive effort]" (Lalonde 1979, 177). Despite their efforts, when Saskatchewan became a province in 1905 French Canadians constituted barely 6 percent of the population, and the dream of a French-language *patrie* in the West was gone. The Fransaskois faced not only English-language Protestant immigrants but equally, if not more importantly, Roman Catholic immigrants of other language groups. The figures are eloquent: in 1901, 23,251 French Catholics and 4,400 other Roman Catholics. In 1911 the balance had changed, with 42,152 French to 47,940 others; in 1931, 50,700 to 183,279.

And the linguistic picture had changed too; the equal language rights provided for under the North-West Territories Act of 1875 had disappeared, so that when Monseigneur Mathieu was installed as first bishop of Regina in 1911, he found himself faced with the same battle which Ontario had known over schools and language rights. Externally, Catholics were confronted with the common enemy of the Anglo-Saxon majority, internally they were to be divided along French and "Irish" lines. The First World War was no help: nativists like the Reverend Murdoch MacKinnon thundered, "French must go, Quebec failed us during the war. Let all enlightened citizens speak, write and wire until French goes with German" (Huel 1979, 71). The scene was set for the anti-Catholic, anti-French campaign of the 1920s, which led in 1929 to the refusal to accept teaching certificates from Quebec and to the proscription of religious garb and the display of religious emblems in schools. In 1931, French was suppressed as a language of instruction. Over the question of religious dress, Robert Rumilly in the *Revue des deux mondes* informed the metropolitan French of the embattled position of the minority in Saskatchewan, and observed bitterly: "Dans les écoles publiques, on n'eût pas fait la moindre observation à une institutrice dont la jupe eût été ultra-courte, ou le corsage ultra-décolleté; mais on n'admet les religieuses que dépouillées du costume de leur ordre, en habits de veuves [In the public schools, not a single remark would have been directed at a teacher whose skirt was ultra-short or whose neckline was ultra-low, but nuns are only admitted when deprived of the dress of their order and wearing widow's weeds]" (Rumilly 1932, 429).

It must be added that all was not negative, for the Fransaskois had organized themselves, establishing their newspaper *Le Patriote de l'Ouest*, setting up the Association Catholique Franco-Canadienne de la Saskatchewan, and realizing the dream of Monseigneur Mathieu: "Si je pouvais sans bruit fonder un collège avant de mourir, je croirais avoir fait l'oeuvre de ma vie parce que j'aurais sauvé la langue française dans toute la province pour toujours"[If, before my death, I could without fuss found a college, I would think that I had accomplished my life's work because I would have saved the French language in the province for ever] (Lalonde 1977, 57). Mathieu's dream was realized and the college which bears his name still flourishes today, though it has known varying fortunes in the more than eighty years since the granting of its charter. Its history has been traced by Lise Lundlie in her comprehensive *Une pépinière de chefs: l'histoire du Collège Mathieu, 1918-1998*.

French Catholics were then opposed by their "Irish" counterparts and by the

moment both the Catholic and Orange groups, had moved West transporting with them attitudes already entrenched in Ontario, and were ready to fight old battles all over again. About the Orange side, there is little need to say much here, save that the familiar refrains were reiterated on immigration: “The Roman church has been especially active in promulgating and vigorously so, a system to fill this country with people of their own faith ... . We Protestants might well be inspired by their zeal” (Grand Orange Lodge 1929); and on separate schools and French: “The Government of Saskatchewan should be encouraged in removing from our schools everything of a racial, sectarian or bilingual nature and they should see to it that the English language shall be the medium of instruction in our primary schools” ( Grand Orange Lodge 1930).

There are always moments which make us pause and reflect with some amusement even in the midst of serious matters. Major W.A. Adams, in his annual report to the Grand Lodge in 1927, assured the assembled brethren that:

The principles and objects we profess are the same to-day as they were at the commencement of the Orange Order 238 years ago. At the masthead of the ship that had William Prince of Orange on board was the flag of England on which were inscribed the words, “The Protestant Religion and the liberties of England” and underneath was the further inscription, the motto of the house of Nassau, JE MAINTYENDRAI, and this is still our watchword.

One wonders whether, as ardent opponents of French, the brethren understood the motto, “I shall maintain,” and how their Grand Master pronounced it.

As far as relations between the Irish and French Catholics in the East are concerned, much has been written about the tenor of the discourse between the two groups both in New England and in Canada. Within the compass of this article, it is impossible to give a full treatment of the question in Saskatchewan, and so I have chosen to look at two leading representatives of each side — Monseigneur Mathieu for the French and, for the Irish, John Joseph Leddy (1879-1949), an Ontario-Irish businessman, a former Ontario schoolteacher and political activist who moved to Saskatoon in 1912. The chief areas of confrontation were the linked ideas of education and relations with the Anglo non-Catholic majority. As early as 1904, Monseigneur Langevin of St. Boniface was worried about the arrival of the Irish: “Je serais inconsolable si je voyais arriver un Irlandais qui arrêterait la colonisation française et qui sacrifierait les droits des catholiques dans la question des écoles [I would be inconsolable if I saw an Irishman arriving who would put a halt to French settlement and would sacrifice the rights of the Catholics in the school question]” (Choquette 1975a, 108). Leddy was exactly the type of *Irlandais* which Langevin had feared.

Both Leddy and Mathieu were determined to improve education but in very different ways. While Mathieu favoured a separatist approach which would keep young Fransaskois apart from their English-Protestant counterparts and thus save their language and their faith, Leddy saw that:

The future of the Catholic church in this province depends on the quality of its people and its relations with non-Catholics ... by associating with students of other religions, our youth will develop these acquaintances that are vital to their future success and through these contacts will also mitigate the hostility which exists among many Protestants towards our faith (Cottrell 1995, 45).

Leddy accused the French of being aggressive and racist, an attitude which, he claimed, had produced “a deep resentment in the hearts of even the fair-minded Protestant people” and led directly to the repressive Anderson amendments. He

French) had arrogated to themselves as rights those things which were merely privilege” (Cottrell 49). Mathieu was less than impressed by the efforts of the Irish:

C'est vrai, il y a beaucoup d'anglais protestants dans le diocèse. Mais qui ne sait pas que les anglais sont loin d'aimer nos chers frères les irlandais qu'ils considèrent comme leurs pires ennemis? Seraient-ils alors plus portés à les favoriser qu'à favoriser les canadiens-français? Les évêques irlandais ... ont-ils converti plus de protestants que les évêques français? [True enough, there are many English Protestants in the diocese. But who is unaware that the English are far from loving our dear brethren the Irish, whom they consider as their worst enemies? So would they be more likely to favour them than the French Canadians? Have the Irish bishops converted more Protestants than the French bishops?] (Choquette 1975a, 113)

And on the matter of good relations with the majority he was equally trenchant:

Il y a neuf ans qu'on m'a forcé à venir ici ... J'ai obtenu toutes sortes de faveurs de ce gouvernement qui ne sait quoi faire pour nous être agréable. Et cependant je ne suis pas irlandais. Il n'est pas nécessaire d'être irlandais pour attirer aux catholiques le respect des protestants [Nine years ago I was obliged to come here ... I have obtained all sorts of favours from the government, which has bent over backwards to help us. It is not necessary to be Irish to get the Protestants to respect the Catholics] (Choquette 1975a, 114).

Two attitudes, then, which it would be hard to reconcile. Appropriately enough, both men obtained the educational institutions which they sought: Collège Mathieu in Gravelbourg which, as has been noted, has just celebrated its eightieth anniversary, and St. Thomas More College, a federated college of the University of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.

In 1929, the Grand Master of the Grand Orange Lodge of Saskatchewan had warned his brethren: “The situation as it exists at Wakaw, Gouvernour, Ponteix and other points, points out to us as Protestants that the hidden hand is working very, very forcibly to destroy our public schools in the province” (Grand Orange Lodge 1929).

He might have been referring to the French Catholic secret society, set up in 1927 in Ontario by a group of disaffected Francophone civil servants, L'Ordre de Jacques Cartier, known as La Patente. In its forty or so years of existence, it had considerable influence, so much so that it has been claimed that it is impossible to understand what happened in Quebec during that period without taking it into account. It was the age of secret societies and the founders felt “Que nous devrions comme les autres peuples avoir une société secrète [That like other peoples we should have a secret society].” Strongly reminiscent of the Orange and Masonic Orders in its symbols, rites, secrecy and organization, it recognized its enemies very clearly: “Oui et nous avons toujours les mêmes adversaires, civils et religieux, les Orangistes et les coreligionnaires ... nos compatriotes ne peuvent obtenir de leurs curés irlandais ... du français à l'église [Yes, and we have still the same enemies, civil and religious, the Orangemen and our co-religionists ... our compatriots cannot obtain French in the church ... from their Irish priests]” (Laliberté 1983, 41).

The Ordre de Jacques Cartier arrived in Saskatchewan in 1930 when Monseigneur Prudhomme, the Bishop of Prince Albert, was invited — secretly of course — to be chaplain general of the first convention of the order in Ottawa. Not long after followed the establishment of the first Commanderie in Vonda, for, as the Chancellerie assured Monseigneur Prudhomme: “Soyez assuré, Excellence, ... que nous sommes toujours disposés à vous aider et à promouvoir nos intérêts catholiques et nationaux [Rest assured, Excellency, that we are always willing to help you and to promote our catholic and national interests]” (Wilhelm 1994: 4). The rhetoric is

distinctly bellicose — national interests must be looked after, it is a movement of “défense nationale,” their “adversaires” must be countered, so that they can “hâter la marche de notre race vers la supériorité, donneuse de liberté et de bonheur [speed up the movement of our race towards that superiority which will bring freedom and happiness].” To do this in Saskatchewan, it was necessary above all to “protéger de l’anglicisation et l’irlandisation ... afin de sauver nombre des nôtres d’une mort nationale, qui dans quelques années, voudra dire aussi mort religieuse [protect ourselves from anglicisation and ‘irelandisation’ ... in order to save many of our number from death as a nation which, in a few years, will also mean death of our religion]” (Wilhelm 1994, 5). They were surrounded by enemies — English, Freemasons, Orangemen, Communists — but none were, in their eyes, more insidious than the Irish. Thus the Franciscans were to be welcomed to the province, but only if they were Francophone, otherwise they might “couler nos petits enfants dans le moule irlandisateur, anational et contre nature [pour our children into the ‘irelandising’ mould, which runs counter to nature and our nation]” (Wilhelm 1994, 5).

The 1920s and 1930s in Saskatchewan were then a battleground between French Catholics, Irish Roman Catholics and the Orange Order in which, for the French, their language, culture and national vision were at stake. As is usual in any battle, some unfortunates were caught in the crossfire. One such group was the English-speaking Roman Catholic Sisters of Service.

The Orange *Sentinel*, ever alert to Roman Catholic subterfuge, issued a warning in 1920:

The Sisters of Service are trained to practice deception. They are under the same vows as nuns, but they are sent to foreign districts as teachers, nurses, etc. without any distinctive garb because it is realized that many of the New Canadians ... resent the regalia of the cloister and any kind of clerical interference. All Roman Catholic teachers, nurses and social service workers may be regarded with suspicion. Any Roman Catholic schoolteacher may be a Sister of Service — a nun in disguise — and any Roman Catholic nurse may be a disguised nun, interested more in the promotion of Romanism than in caring for her patients (Pennefather 1984, 125, 126).

A few years later, the Sisters of Service once more found themselves under attack, this time from a different quarter. The Ordre de Jacques Cartier enjoined Catholics to be on their guard against them, because well-intentioned but racist persons had attempted to “substituer à nos religieuses enseignant dans les écoles bilingues, celles dites Sisters of Service qui, elles, ne portent pas d’habits religieux et sont toutes de langue anglaise [substitute for our nuns teaching in bilingual schools those known as Sisters of Service, who do not wear religious habits and are all English-speaking]” (Wilhelm 1994, 6).

It is remarkable that the Sisters, attacked as they were by both extreme Protestants and extreme Francophone Roman Catholics, were able to survive at all.

This brief overview provides some insight into the frequently bitter relations which existed between the Irish and the French in Saskatchewan in the early decades of the twentieth century. That the Protestant Irish should have been at loggerheads with Roman Catholics is not surprising, while the tensions between Irish and French Roman Catholics demonstrate to what extent race and language held primacy over shared religious beliefs. Work remains to be done on the history of the Irish in Saskatchewan, and further examination of Roman Catholic sources will be necessary. This should bring even more clearly into focus relations between two of the important founding groups in the province.

## Note

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# Welsh Americans in Rural Alberta: Origin and Development of the Wood River Welsh Settlement Area

*Wayne K.D. Davies*

**ABSTRACT.** In 1900 a group of Welsh Americans began the process of agricultural settlement on the raw prairie in Wood River, near Ponoka, Alberta. A review of the origins of these people and their family linkages in the United States and Wales explains how an area of concentrated Welsh settlement was established, without formal government allocation. The numbers were relatively small, never more than about three hundred. The small size of the population, the aging of the original pioneers and the decline of the Welsh language as a medium for chapel services by the 1930s helped begin the process of acculturation. This was probably assisted by the split of the group into rival churches and the absence of significant new migration from Wales. Increasing farm sizes, school consolidation and greater contact with different ethnic groups in the surrounding areas, as well as with the surrounding larger rural service centres, helped accelerate the process.

**SOMMAIRE.** En 1900 un groupe de Gallois américains commença le processus d'implantation agricole dans la région de Wood River, près de Ponoka en Alberta. Un examen de leurs origines et de leurs liens familiaux aux États-Unis et au Pays de Galles explique l'apparition d'une concentration de colons gallois dépourvus d'affectation gouvernementale officielle. Il s'agissait d'un petit nombre: jamais plus de trois cents. Ce facteur, ainsi que le vieillissement des pionniers d'origine et le déclin du gallois comme langue des services religieux dans les années trente, contribua au processus d'acculturation. Ce dernier fut probablement renforcé par la scission du groupe en églises rivales, et par l'absence d'immigration importante depuis le Pays de Galles. L'agrandissement des fermes, la consolidation des écoles, ainsi que de plus grands contacts avec les groupes ethniques voisins et la présence de centres de services ruraux plus importants, achevèrent le processus.

## **Introduction**

The prairie provinces may seem an unlikely place to find the Welsh, a people used to intimate and varied landscapes of green hills, valleys and cloudy skies: a land markedly different from the Prairies — vast, flat or rolling grasslands, overpowered by the omnipresent blue sky and a long, numbing winter, bordered by the trackless lakes and forests of the Canadian Shield and the towering Rockies. Although there are only a few studies of the Welsh contribution to Canada (Bennett 1986; Davies 1986), it is known that people of Welsh origin were among the early European explorers and pioneers in the area that became the prairie provinces, from Button's discovery of the west coast of Hudson Bay in 1612-13, to the work of The Rev. David Thomas Jones, a missionary in the Red River Settlement of Manitoba (Davies 1991). However, the Welsh did not make a major contribution to the massive migration that peopled the area from the end of the nineteenth century. By 1921, when the peak of immigration had passed, only 0.70 percent of the Prairies' population was recorded as being of Welsh ethnic origin, compared with 28.48 percent of English origin, 15.63 percent Scottish and 11.47 percent Irish (DC 1921). This relative anonymity was intensified by the fact that most of the Welsh immigrants scattered throughout the countryside, or settled in the bigger towns. However, two Welsh rural concentrations can be recognized. One is the area around Bangor (Saskatchewan), settled in 1902 by migrants from the Welsh colony in Patagonia (Johnson 1962; Thomas 1971). The other significant rural settlement associated with people of Welsh origin — Welsh Americans rather than Patagonians — is in the Wood River region, near Ponoka (Alberta), which is the subject of this study.

## The Prairie Context

The massive boom in immigration to the Prairies began in 1896 with the election of a vigorous Liberal administration that saw the rapid settlement of the Prairies as part of a new national priority. It resulted in the rapid growth of the population of the prairie provinces: from 219,000 in 1891, to 414,000 in 1901, 1.33 million in 1911 and 1.96 million in 1921. In 1896, net migration to Canada had sunk to only 17,000 people, but after vigorous promotional campaigns, immigration peaked at 402,000 migrants in 1912-13, most of whom went to the western provinces. But during this peak year of immigration, only 2,019 people were recorded as coming from Wales, less than a fiftieth of the number of English migrants in 1912-13, a fifteenth of the Scottish and two-fifths of the Irish migrants (DI 1914) in the year. Since similar low values were found in other years, this trend means that the Welsh contribution to the prairie population was very small. By 1916 the prairie census recorded only 11,124 people of Welsh ethnic origin: 4,614 in Alberta (0.93 percent of the provincial total), 3,446 in Saskatchewan (0.53 percent) and 2,706 in Manitoba (0.48 percent). Superficially, this small contribution from Wales seems puzzling, given the historic attraction of Canada to the Scottish and Irish, the other Celtic peoples of the British Isles. Only a small part of the explanation can be attributed to the smaller population of Wales. In 1911 the Welsh population of almost 2.5 million was 42 percent and 45 percent of the Irish and Scottish populations respectively, and approximately half lived in and around the south Wales coalfield — at most 55 miles long by 25 miles wide — which, incidentally, contained almost as many people as the 1.3 million people spread across the 900-mile width of the three prairie provinces. Obviously the population discrepancies between the Celtic countries cannot explain the massive differences in the relative proportions of their migrants to Canada. Instead, the differences can be attributed to three factors. Many job prospects in Wales, in its early twentieth century booming industrial areas, were closer to home for the rural surplus, which could be absorbed within the country (Thomas 1972). In addition, the United States exerted a greater attraction than Canada because of its greater size, employment opportunities and milder climate. Moreover, the presence of many Welsh migrant areas in the United States also eased the newcomer's transition to a new land, whilst its republican government appealed to those who disliked English imperialism. Finally, migrants from Wales were almost certainly under-enumerated; immigration officials often recorded people from Wales as English in the records, especially if they left from the docks at Liverpool. This does not mean that we should question the fact that the numbers were low, relative to the other people from the British Isles, merely that the absolute size recorded in the census, and especially the immigration statistics, were underestimates of immigrants from Wales.

The small numbers of migrants from Wales were probably disappointing to immigration officials since the Canadian government had targeted Wales as a likely source for migrants (Davies 1999a). One major effort aimed at Wales was through the Crow's Nest Pass railway work scheme of 1897, although it has been shown the project was not successful and was steeped in controversy (Jenkins 1986; Davies 1999b). If the scheme had succeeded in its objective of bringing in a thousand Welsh labourers, a core area of Welsh settlement might have been established in the future province of Alberta, subsequently attracting many other migrants from Wales. However, the failure of the scheme may have had another consequence: the recognition that Wales and the rest of the British Isles would never produce enough people to settle the Prairies. This may well have helped convince immigration officials to allow the immigration of thousands of Eastern Europeans to the Prairies, forever changing the ethnic mix of the region (Lehr and Davies 1993). Indeed, by 1921 491 000 (21 56

percent) of the prairie population of 1.96 million were of Germanic and Slavic ethnic origin, although those with British and Irish origins still constituted the majority — 55.58 percent of the total. But the new Liberal immigration initiative did not only focus on Europe. Strenuous efforts were made to encourage emigration from the United States, leading to a massive influx of Americans in search of new lands and opportunities. There were less than 5,000 American-born settlers on the Prairies in 1891 according to Canadian census sources (DC 1891, 1921). By 1901 the figure had reached 40,000, then boomed to 217,000 by 1911, reaching 374,000 in 1921 — 19 percent of the prairie population — although many Americans were of British origin. Among the Americans who settled in the West were a small group of Welsh Americans.

### **The Entry of the Welsh Americans**

The northward migration of settlers from the United States was helped by the active promotion of opportunities in the Prairies and by the drought conditions in the American Midwest during the mid-1890s. Yet such “push” factors seem less important than the “pull” factors. In the first place the Canadian Prairies seemed to be a bargain to many in the United States. By selling their farm in the south they could obtain free, or certainly much cheaper, land in Canada. Secondly, the United States frontier was effectively closed by this date, so the problem of where a farmer could secure a future for his sons became a real one — especially for the bigger families. Third, the parkland environment north of Red Deer — a rolling, well-watered area with mixed trees and grass — was far more attractive to those of Western European origin than the arid short-grass prairies of the American Midwest or southern Alberta. The obvious difficulties caused by the shorter growing season in Canada had been reduced by the introduction of faster growing crops in the 1890s. The resultant northern flood of Americans gave a distinctive character to the settlement of the western prairie provinces, so that by 1916 there were 198,000 immigrants in the Prairies who had been born in the United States, compared to 282,000 born in the British Isles. Not all of these were Americans of long heritage. Many were European and Canadian immigrants to the United States, or first or second generation descendants. Among this often polyglot group were families of Welsh origin. Some had spent time in the United States after emigrating from Wales; others were first generation Americans of Welsh parents. A group of these settled in several townships east of Ponoka, in the Wood River area, twenty-five to thirty miles southwest of the provisional location planned by the Winnipeg Commissioner of Immigration for Welsh labourers associated with the 1897 Welsh Crow’s Nest Pass labourer scheme (Davies 1999b). This led to the creation of the distinctive Welsh settlement area at Wood River, although there was also a scatter of other Welsh settlers in and around Ponoka itself.

The Wood River settlement in Alberta is some six miles east of Ponoka and sixty miles southeast of Edmonton, mainly in the central part of Townships 42 and 43, Ranges 23 and 24, west of the 4th Meridian. Most Welsh settlers had fulfilled the three-year residency and land-breaking requirement of the Canadian homestead regulations to obtain title to a 160-acre allotment (Tyman 1972) or had purchased the standard CPR quarter section (160 acres) parcels in the first few years of the twentieth century — at \$3.00 an acre in this region.

Most of the area that became the Welsh rural settlement area consists of a rolling or undulating plain southeast of the Bobtail Indian Reserve, with the highest point at the small hill now known as Jenkins Hill (Section 32, Township 42 Range 23) — named after the pioneering Welsh family in the area. In the northeast of the zone that was occupied by the Welsh, the land is flatter, with a gentle slope to the flat valley floor occupied by the slow and meandering Battle River which empties into Battle Lake.

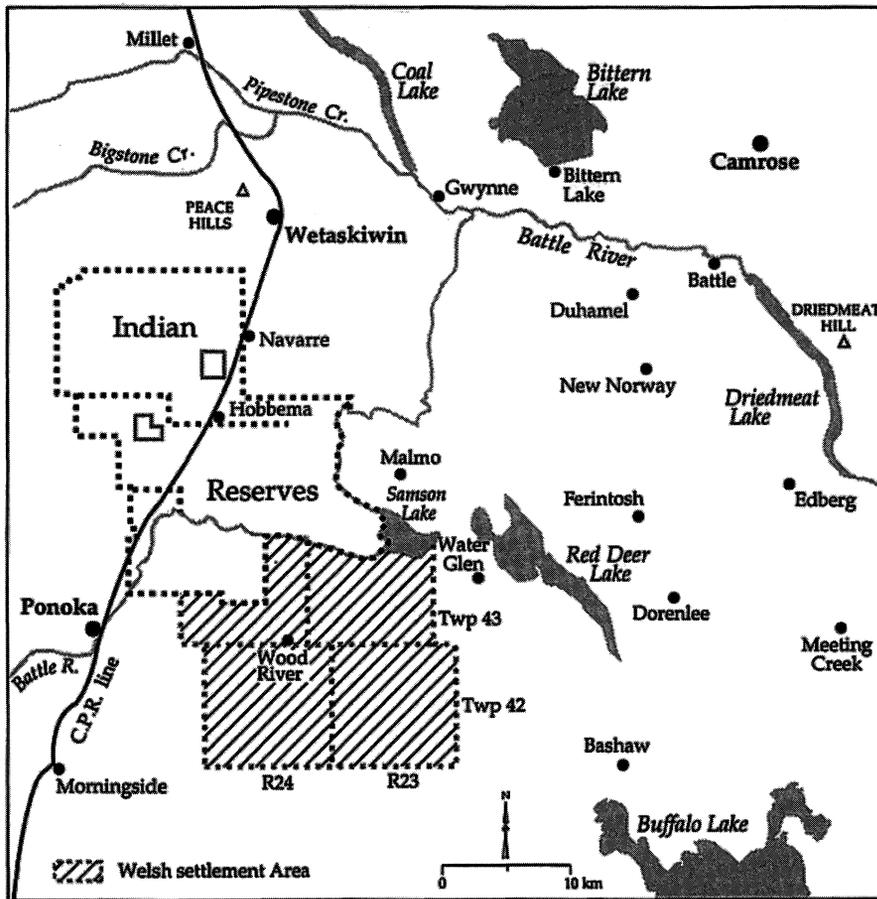


Figure 1. Location of the Welsh Settlement Area in Alberta.

The first detailed maps of the area, surveyed between 1873 and 1893 and published by the federal government in 1897, contain not only the topographic comments of the original surveyors but also the vegetation and soil characteristics. The land is composed of good to fair loamy soil over a subsoil of glacial sands and gravels. The topography is the typical product of glacial deposition. Scattered through the area are small hollows left by the retreating ice, occupied by marshes, sloughs or small lakes. Occasional deeper trenches are found, gouged out by the northwest to southeast trending spillways that had drained the glacial lakes to the west — lakes created by the retreat of the Continental and Rocky Mountain ice sheets. Two large marshes are found in the area: one lies to the north of the Battle River valley; the other, to the west of the Wood River settlement, occupies a half-mile-wide belt in the southern part of Township 43 Range 25. In the early days of settlement the latter marsh provided a barrier to easy communication with the nearest service centre, Ponoka, a town located on the Edmonton-Calgary railway line which was constructed in 1893. The original vegetation of the region was mixed grassland and woods, the latter mainly 20- to 30-foot high stands of poplar and willow, but with some patches of spruce and birch

many problems for the first settlers before mechanical devices were used. However, the presence of water and small trees — useful for fuel and occasionally for lumber — were major points of attraction to settlers from drier lands.

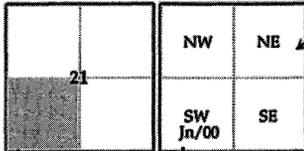
A small pioneering group of people of Welsh heritage established themselves in the Wood River region in the first five years of the twentieth century (MGM 1974; PP 1973; Hughes and Jones 1981). The vanguard of Welsh settlers arrived in the area in 1900 and 1901, mainly from Nebraska: Caradoc Morris (1900), Hugh H. Jones (1901), Edward James (1901), O.S. Williams (1901), Jesse Owen (1901), J.H. Jones (1901), and the first minister David L. Hughes (1901), although the latter two moved back to the United States by 1906. The names and locations of all the pioneering settlers who had arrived by 1902, compiled from homestead records and CPR land sales, are shown in Figure 2, with a detailed listing by year in Appendix A. Figure 2 shows that this first group of Welsh American pioneers was distributed over a loose cluster across four of the townships south of the Bobtail Indian Reserve.

The next four years saw the addition of a few more individuals of Welsh origin who had lived for some years in the United States and had bought land from the initial settlers: Owen G. Davies in 1905; Hugh F. Davies and Lamark G. Hughes and his parents, Mr. and Mrs. John J. Hughes, in 1906; whilst 1905 saw the arrival of Thomas Jeffreys from Pembrokeshire. He was not the first person in Wood River who came directly from Wales; Jeffreys had been preceded by Mrs. Levi Davies, who emigrated to marry her Cardiganshire-born husband in July 1904, which illustrates the way that Welsh Americans had kept their Welsh links. This area fulfilled the promise that the 1897 Crow's Nest scheme failed to achieve — a western Canadian farming area dominated by the Welsh. However, the area was very small in size: by 1906 there were only twenty-five family units of definite Welsh origin established on forty quarter-sections of land. This was rather more than a township of thirty-six units, but not as concentrated and certainly smaller than the three townships that McCreary, the Winnipeg Commissioner of Immigration, seems to have planned for the Welsh in 1897 as part of the Crow's Nest Pass work scheme (Davies 1999b).

Figure 2 shows that the area was not exclusively Welsh. Indeed, it was one of the earliest American settlers who gave the area a name, as part of the naming of rural areas associated with the development of postal services: Fred Bullock named it after his former residence, Wood River, west of Grande Island in the Platte River valley of Nebraska (Hughes and Jones 1980, 1). Some quarter sections passed through several hands before the land was officially registered as being occupied and subsequently owned by one person. So the names listed in Figure 2 are the individuals who were shown to be in possession for at least a year. Approximately 10 percent of the total number of quarter sections in the area subsequently linked to the Welsh were occupied by people who left after a few months; these quarter sections are identified by an asterisk.

Almost half of this group who had arrived by 1905 came from Nebraska, mainly from farms near the small towns of Carroll and Winside, with other family groups from Columbus, Sparks and Benkelman in the same state (Figure 3). The balance of the others came from South Dakota (Ipswich), Kansas (Arvonion), Minnesota (Lake Crystal), and Oklahoma. Many of the settlers had lived in several American communities, so a complex family migration history is present, although the majority seem to have owned land in their previous American location. The limited number of Welsh surnames and the inevitable duplication of names sometimes made identification difficult. For example, there were four people named Hugh Jones in the Wood River area just before World War I; in this case different individuals can be distinguished by

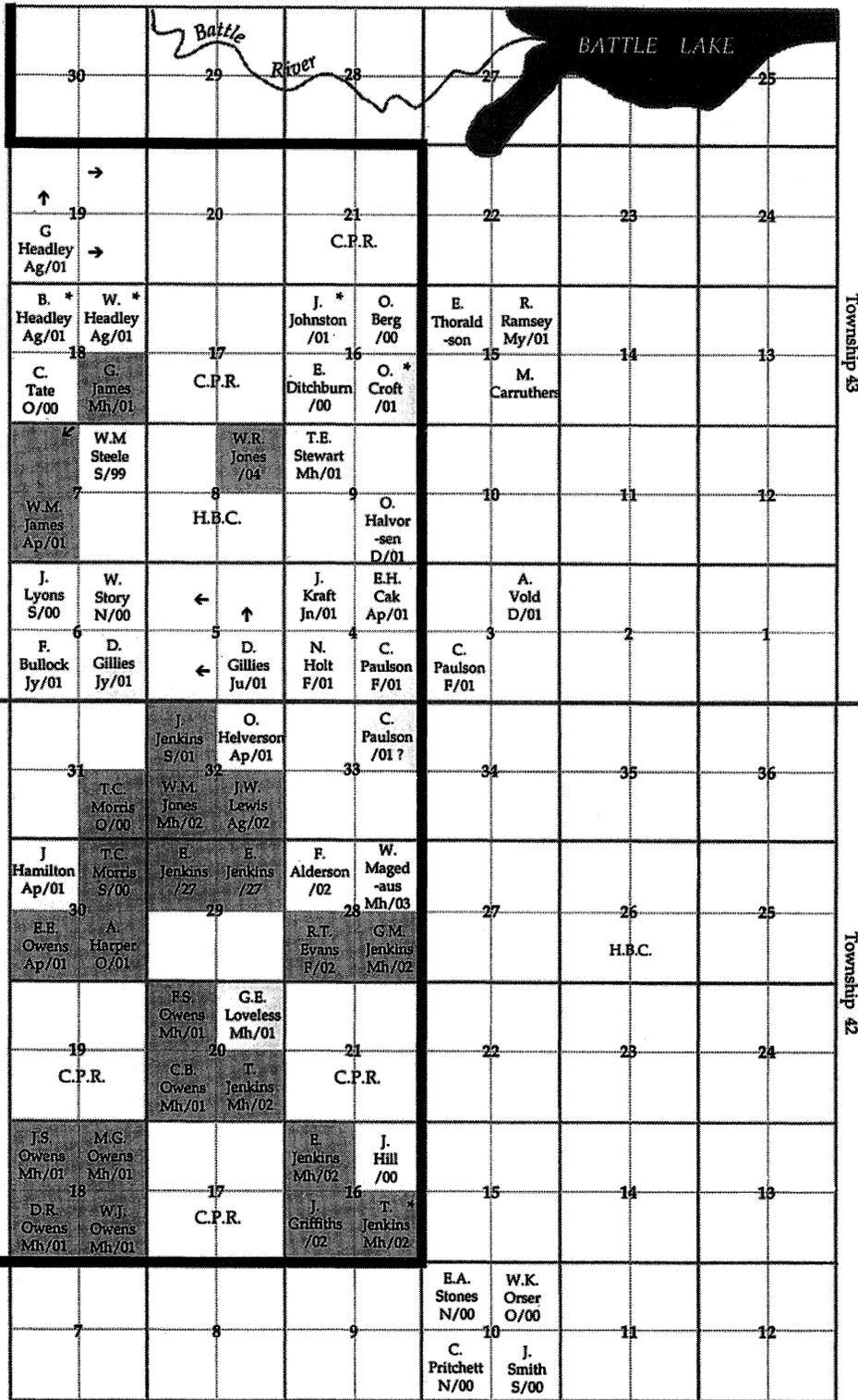
# EARLIEST LAND ASSIGNMENTS IN WOOD RIVER AREA



1st homesteader or (owner of C.P.R. lands on odd number section), who occupied area for more than a year. \* indicates that named occupier was preceded by an individual who left land in under a year.

Persons of Welsh origin  
1st occupied Jan/1900  
Boundary of Central area

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>↑</p> <p>H.B.C. M/86 →</p> <p>26</p> </div> <div style="width: 5%;"> <p>L. Stavely M/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>25</p> <p>L. Davies O/02</p> <p>E. Davies O/02</p> <p>T. Owens O/02</p> <p>L. Martin D/00</p> <p>C. Tate Ag/00</p> <p>24</p> <p>W. Martin D/00</p> <p>L. * Headley Ap/01</p> </div> </div>				Township 43			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 20%;"> <p>J.E. Rathburn Jy/00</p> <p>7</p> <p>W.M. James Ap/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>N.G. Newton Jy/01</p> <p>8</p> <p>A.J. Ferguson O/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>H.B.C.</p> <p>→</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. Going J/00</p> <p>10</p> <p>Ed. * James Au/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>D.L. Hughes M/01</p> <p>L.E. * Stacly D/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W.I. Jones M/01</p> <p>12</p> <p>O.S. Williams M/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>M. Martin M/01</p> <p>A. Legge S/00</p> </div> </div>				Township 42			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 15%;"> <p>H.W. Werington Mh/00</p> <p>6</p> <p>J. Pruis Mh/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>K.S. Dick /00</p> <p>5</p> <p>R. Dick Ju/99</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>H&amp;R Dick M/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Warnock Ju/00</p> <p>4</p> <p>R. Nochring Ag/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Dewhurst M/00</p> <p>3</p> <p>A. Dewhurst Ju/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. * Dalton Ju/01</p> <p>A. * Thomson My/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>T. Jones Ju/09</p> <p>2</p> <p>W.E. James M/01</p> <p>E. Peterson Ju/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>L.H. Nelson M/00</p> <p>LAKE</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J.H. Jones F/01</p> <p>H. Patterson M/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>←</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. Lyon Jy/01</p> <p>↓</p> </div> </div>							
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>R. K. Allen F/02</p> <p>31</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. * Bows My/02</p> <p>32</p> <p>J. F. Branner Ap/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. Davis N/00</p> <p>W.J. Sheirer Jy/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>H. Nelson Mh/03</p> <p>34</p> <p>S. Johnston Mh/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>R. Bunn F/01</p> <p>D. Parkins Ag/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>←</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.S. Bunn Jy/02</p> <p>↓</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>E. Bullock My/01</p> <p>G.P. Jones Jn/02</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. * Jones Ap/02</p> <p>T. Watts S/02</p> </div> </div>				Township 41			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. * Posey Mh/01</p> <p>30</p> <p>A. Vausi ? F/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. Eakin My/01</p> <p>←</p> <p>W. Le Frore N/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C. Dewhurst N/20</p> <p>29</p> <p>W.H. Dewhurst N/20</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C. Sheirer Jy/00</p> <p>28</p> <p>J. Sparks D/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Sheirer Jy/00</p> <p>L. McCaughey Jy/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>J. Mac-Dougall Ju/02</p> <p>H.B.C.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> </div>							
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Steele Ju/00</p> <p>19</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Wilson Ap/02</p> <p>20</p> <p>W. * Howard Ap/02</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>G. Laycock D/00</p> <p>H. Malvy ? Mh/02</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>E.H. * Hopper Jn/02</p> <p>22</p> <p>W.T. Tuell My/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>W. Balsac My/01</p> <p>W. Malchow Ju/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>←</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>G. * Biswan-ger? O/04</p> <p>J. Brown Ap/02</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>R. Wright Jy/01</p> <p>J. Owen Mr/01</p> </div> </div>				Township 40			
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C. Webb F/00</p> <p>18</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>A. Fraser Ju/00</p> <p>E. ? James N/00</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>G.L. McCaughey Ju/01</p> <p>S. McCaughey Ju/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>A. Wiencha Ap/01</p> <p>W. Parks Mh/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>E. Dodds Ju/01</p> <p>W. Parks Ju/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>←</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>A. Malchow Ju/01</p> <p>M. Malchow Ju/01</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>C.P.R.</p> </div> </div>							
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<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>7</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>8</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>9</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>10</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>11</p> </div> <div style="width: 10%;"> <p>12</p> </div> </div>							



Range 23

on their birthplace or the place where they had lived. It must be emphasized that the information shown in Figure 3 has been processed on the basis of male origins only. This has produced only a small gender bias because in practically all the cases the males were the landowners, although it must be acknowledged that far more information was available on male birthplaces and former residences. In general, therefore, the map of previous origins confirms that the migration that created the initial Welsh concentration was part of the movement of settlers into the Prairies from the United States — even though some of these were of Welsh origin, or were born in Wales and had spent many years south of the border.

Figure 3 shows that some settlers occupied more than a quarter section and that family networks were very important in the settlement process: father-son links dominate, but uncle-nephew and cousin linkages occur, with family members finding land in relatively close proximity. There were three large families with sons of eligible age to obtain their own land. Jesse Owen and his five sons in the south were probably from Benkleman in southwestern Nebraska and arrived in 1901. John J. James, the former county farm manager from Columbus (eastern Nebraska) had been born of Welsh parents in New York State in 1840. He came with four sons in 1903, although another son, Edward, had preceded the family move to the area in 1901. John Jenkins was born in Tredegar in 1853 and his parents had emigrated to the United States (Pennsylvania) in 1869. Subsequently he held land in a Welsh community in Kansas, and came to Wood River with his four adult sons in 1902. However, Figure 3 shows that the largest concentration of this initial group of settlers came from the Carroll-Winside area of Nebraska. So it is certain that these people knew one another and that their connections were reinforced by family linkages. For example, William T. Jones had two uncles, William M. and William E. James, although the two were only related by marriage. Four of the other settlers with known last residences were from the Carroll area: Andrew Harper, Caradoc Morris, T.C. Morris and J.H. Jones. The Levi Davies, Thomas Owen and Evan Davies group had all lived in Ipswich, South Dakota, and may have all been from Llandewi Brefi, near Tregaron, in Cardiganshire. The John J. Hughes and Hugh F. Davies families had all lived in Altimira, Washington, as had Owen G. Davies, whilst the two Davies were from Cemmaes Road and nearby Machynlleth (Merionethshire) respectively. So the Nebraska, South Dakota and Washington source areas provided at least three major social network associations based on previous location; these must be added to the family linkage explanation which produced this loose clustering of individuals of Welsh origin. This means that the process of government-inspired assignment of land in adjacent lots — the pattern found in the Welsh settlement of the London township of Ontario in the 1820s (Rosser 1954) and in the case of the Patagonian Welsh in 1902 at Bangor, Saskatchewan (Thomas 1971) — was not followed here.

The actual pattern of land settlement also provides supporting evidence for the conclusion that the area was settled by an informal process among relatives and people known to one another. Once the core was established other migrants of Welsh origin filled up the area, purchasing land from people who had left, thereby reinforcing the concentration of the Welsh. Figure 3 shows that practically all the Welsh in the central area of this zone were from the Carroll or Winside region of Nebraska, with the Welsh from other parts of the United States displaying a peripheral distribution around them. This suggests that the initial Welsh settlers came to the region within a few weeks of one another, enabling them to register for land within close proximity. Yet Figure 2 shows that within this area there were many individuals who were not of Welsh origin — settlers who were simply attracted to the area and filed their claims at the same time as the advance guard of the Welsh. Hence the Wood

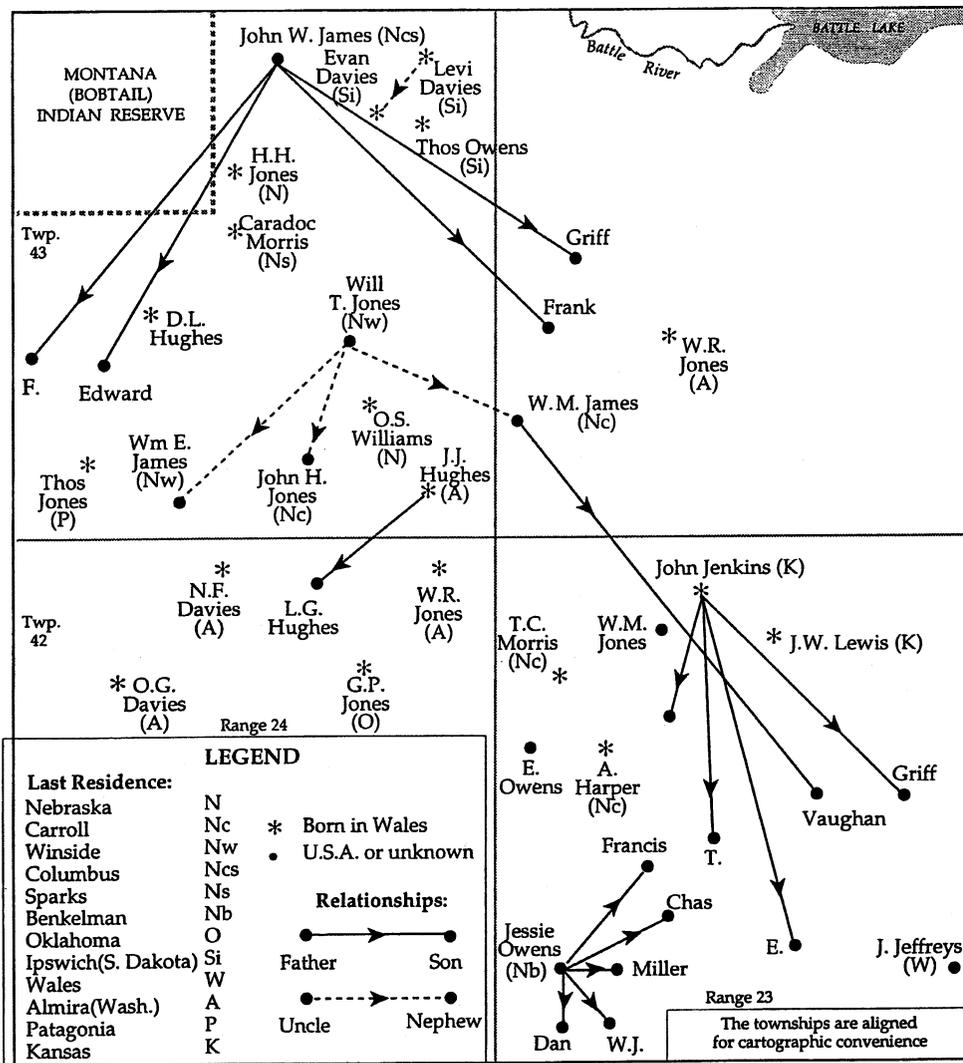


Figure 3: Linkages Between Wood River Pioneers by 1906.

River region was far from being a completely concentrated zone of Welsh settlement. Members of other nationalities can be found between and around the Welsh settlers, with a large group of Norwegians to the east, around the settlement of New Norway. In addition, it is worth noting that some other small areas of Welsh settlers were found immediately south and to the southeast of the town of Ponoka, although these minor concentrations did not last for more than a few decades; most of the other Welsh who migrated to rural Alberta scattered throughout the region.

Table 1 shows the family and age characteristics of the settlers in the Wood River area. It is clear that the majority of the first phase of pioneers were married, with an average of over three children, but in the second phase there was an approximate balance in the proportions of married and single people. However, the age structure was much younger since many immigrated from Wales without spending time in the United States and several found partners amongst the daughters of the original migrants. The known total of 178 residents in Table 1 needs to be adjusted to take into

**Table 1**  
**Characteristics of the Welsh Settlers in Wood River, Alberta**

a) Family Characteristics						
Dates	Married	Single	Unknown	Children	Adult Children	Total Population*
1900-06	14	8	(3)	32	14	85
1907-18	15	16	(10)	31	6	93
b) Ages of the Heads of Families						
Dates	Under 29 Years	30-39	40-49	50-59	Over 60 Years	Unknown
1900-06	4	7	7	0	2	(5)
1907-18	13	16	4	0	0	(10)

\*Assuming the unknowns were single.  
Source: Calculated from family records. Ages of adult females were rarely available.

areas — as well as the birth of additional children and the presence of farm labourers who are not recorded because they were often temporary visitors and did not own land. In total, therefore, the Welsh population was only around two hundred by the end of World War I.

It is difficult to be precise about extent of “Welshness” about the Wood River settlers because the family histories are not all available. However, homestead records and family biographies found in local histories make it possible to build up a general picture of the origins of the settlers. Table 2 identifies the last residence of the settlers who came to the Wood River area.

Table 2 identifies the last permanent residence of the settlers, which confirms the dominance of family units coming from the United States. Only those who had spent

**Table 2**  
**Places of Last Residence of Wood River Families: Percentage Distribution**

Area of Last Residence	1900-06	1907-18
Wales	4	30
United States	89	50
Patagonia	—	2.5
Canada	4	18
Totals (Actuals Numbers)	100% (25)	100% (40)

at least a year in the United States are placed in this category. In the second phase of migration the same pattern is found; but almost a third of the family units had come directly from Wales and over a sixth had spent time in other parts of Canada — mainly Alberta — typically in drier areas where the family had not been successful in their pioneering. The distribution of birthplaces is shown in Table 3. Although birthplaces are not known for a third of the initial pioneering family units, it is probable that many were born in Wales, for the phrase “Welsh nationality” keeps occurring in the homestead records, and their obvious attachment to the Welsh way of life is clear from comments in the family histories (MGM 1974; Hughes and Jones 1981). Of the known birthplaces the majority are in the Welsh-speaking heartland of north and west Wales, running from Anglesey, Caernarvonshire and Merionethshire to North Cardigan-shire. This pattern of Welsh origins is in great contrast to the Welsh labourer scheme of the Crow’s Nest Pass railway, which attracted people mainly from industrial south Wales — despite its goal of attracting farm labourers. Indeed, only one person among the earliest Wood River pioneers, William Rees Jones, seems to have worked on the

**Table 3**  
**Birthplaces of the Wood River Migrants: Percentage Distribution**

Source Areas	1900-06 (%)	1907-18 (%)
<b>1. Wales</b>		
Anglesey	8	17
Caernarvonshire	8	31
Denbighshire	4	11
Merionethshire	16	8
Montgomeryshire	4	11
Pembrokeshire	4	8
Cardiganshire	16	3
Monmouthshire	4	—
Other Wales	—	8
<b>2. Unknown</b>	32	—
<b>3. United States</b>	4	3
<b>Totals (Actual)</b>	100 (25)	100 (40)

Source: Calculated from family records.

shire, an area near Machynlleth, that was the original home of several of the other Wood River settlers, such as Hugh F. Davies and Owen G. Davies. After his railway work Jones went to Altamira (Washington), where he met his future wife, and then migrated to Wood River in 1904.

The early Welsh settlers did not have an easy time during their first few years on their quarter sections. The land was still either raw prairie grassland with deep roots, or occupied by small woods and brush. Riven with sloughs and small lakes whose muddy edges added to the difficulty of farming they were the source from which clouds of biting mosquitoes arose to challenge attempts to conquer the land during the summer months. There were no roads: only paths through a wilderness that stubbornly resisted attempts to convert the land into productive farms. Table 4 shows the painful progress of some of the earliest homesteaders in breaking the land. Most were fortunate to clear and crop five to eight acres a year.

In this arduous conquest of a virgin land the value of teenage or young adult children was obvious. These advantages explain the attraction of this new land to the three large families mentioned above — Jesse Owen, John Jenkins and John W. James — all of whom had several adult sons. Progress in breaking the tough, deep sod of the grassland and clearing the land of the 20- to 30-foot high trees, brush and old stumps, was often slow as Table 4 shows. Before mechanization only horses were available to assist the settlers in breaking the land. One of the striking features of the age distribution of the settlers was that many of the settlers were middle-aged or even older — Jesse Owen was aged 67 — at first sight a major handicap since the brute strength of the young was often needed to clear the land. But in retrospect it seems clear that the middle-aged possessed many advantages over young adults. First, they were likely to have more capital — from the sale of their farms and stock in the United States — to invest in stock, equipment, seed and, perhaps, to buy extra land from the CPR land allocation, the odd-numbered sections throughout the townships that were given to the company to help them construct the transcontinental railway. Second, the older settlers often had adult children. Not only could they claim land for themselves, as did the Owen family (Figure 3), but they also provided an unpaid workforce in the difficult early days of land clearance. In addition, many of the sons found work on other farms, or on the railway and mines in the winter — all of which

**Table 4**  
**Progress in Land Breaking: Selected Examples**

Location	Names (Age) Family	Dates	Land				
			Broken	In Crop	Cattle	Horses	Hogs
T43R24/16NW	Hugh H. Jones (46) + wife & children	1902	4.0	2.0	—	2	—
		1903	6.0	3.0	2	2	—
		1904	9.0	10.0	3	3	—
T43R24/10NE	David L. Hughes (?) + wife & children	1901	10.0	5.0	—	—	—
		1902	11.0	20.0	—	—	—
		1903	16.0	37.0	—	—	—
T42R23/10SW	R.C. Jones (46) Single	1903	—	—	14	4	—
		1904	—	—	14	4	—
		1905	6.5	6.5	12	6	—
		1906	10.0	16.5	15	6	—
		1907	8.0	16.5	22	6	—
		1908	9.5	24.0	22	6	—
T43R24/12SW	Owen Williams (47) Single	1901	3.0	3.0	36	2	—
		1902	4.0	7.0	45	2	—
		1903	1.0	8.0	54	2	2
T42R23/18NW	Jesse Owen (67) + wife & daughter at home Sons (Dan, W.J. and Miller)	1901	25.0	5.0	2	3	4
		1902	10.0	25.0	3	4	4
		1903	—	35.0	5	2	12
T42R23/18SW	Dan R. Owen (30) Single	1901	5.0	3.0	—	3	—
		1902	10.0	5.0	—	3	—
		1903	—	—	—	3	—
T42R23/18SE	W.J. Owen (40) Single	1901	10.0	—	—	3	—
		1902	25.0	10.0	—	3	—
		1903	—	35.0	—	—	—
T42R23/18NE	Miller J. Owen (21) Single	1901	13.0	—	?	?	?
		1902	2.0	12.0	?	?	?
		1903	7.0	13.0	?	?	?
T42R23/20SW	Charles B. Owen (20) Single	1901	9.5	—	—	1	2
		1902	8.0	9.0	—	1	3
T42R24/24NW	Joseph Owen (30) Single	1901	5.5	—	—	3	1
		1902	10.0	15.5	—	2	1
		1903	—	15.5	—	2	1

Source: Calculated from homestead records.

tional monies during the slack winter months in particular was often a crucial factor in the survival of many farm families in these pioneering days. Yet progress was universally slow. Table 4 also shows that after two years on the land it was typical to find that only between five and twenty-five acres out of the 160-acre quarter section that was homesteaded were cropped. The number of farm animals was also low. Most of the farms had only two or three horses, essential for transportation and for help in clearing and ploughing the land. Table 4 also shows that only R.C. Jones and Owen Williams had anything resembling herds of cattle, with fifty-four and twenty-two respectively by the time they received title to the land in 1903 and 1908. The Owen family were the only immigrants to keep a large number of pigs; their acculturation to America is shown by their use of the term "hogs" on the homestead forms.

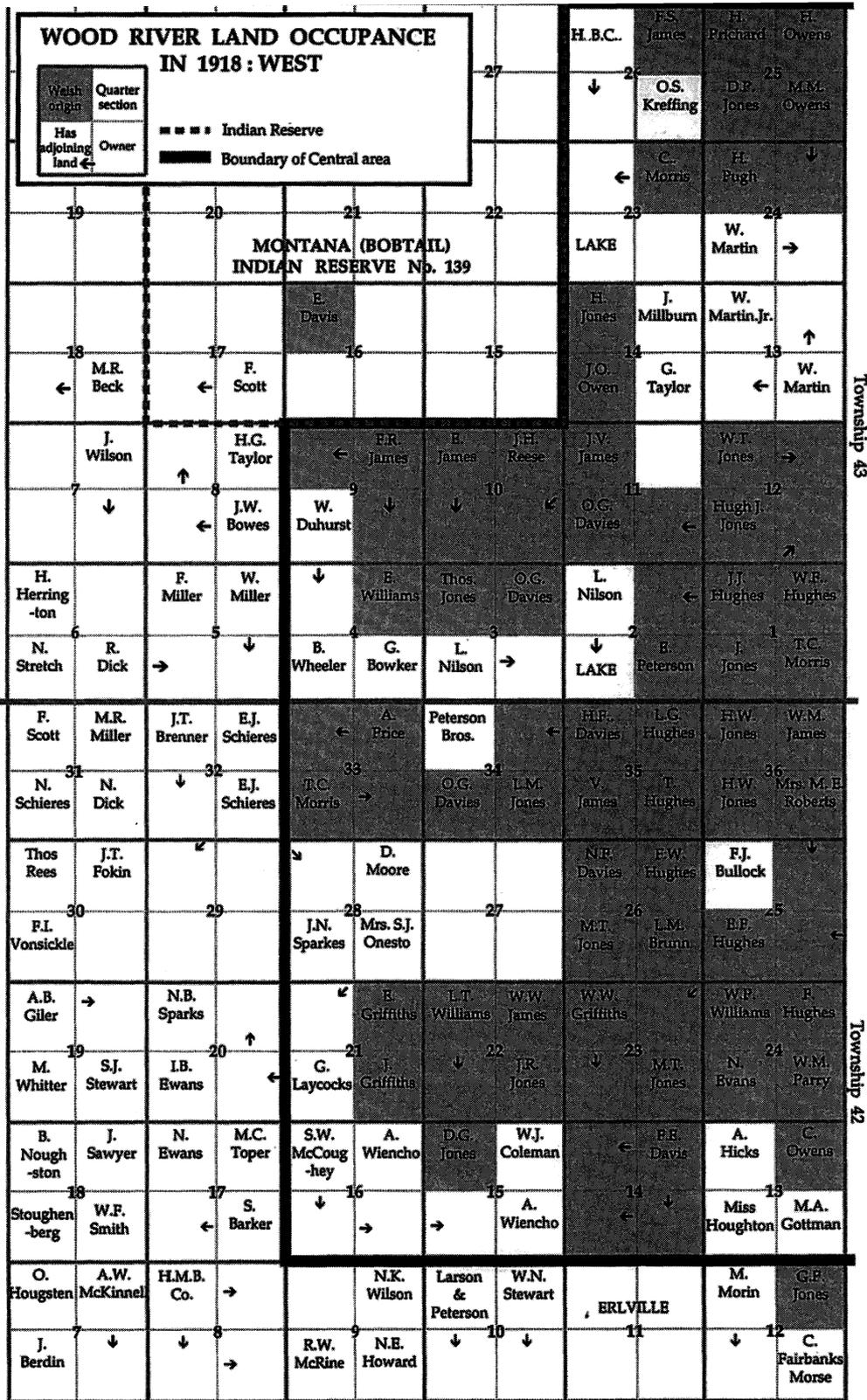
The unresolved question about the Wood River settlement is why this particular area became the focus of a Welsh concentration. In the absence of clear evidence from the family records of the founding members of the groups, one can only speculate on the precise sequence of events. The most important fact was that this general area was one of the regions being promoted by government agents at the turn of the century, since the lands along the Calgary-Edmonton line had been settled some years earlier. Along this general route, it is likely that the area north of Red Deer would seem to be more attractive to settlers from the Midwest, since the parkland vegetation and abundance of game birds and animals had been established there.

specific location was identified by the comments of the influential Winnipeg Commissioner of Immigration, who had suggested the area east of Wetaskiwin as the place in which to encourage Welsh settlement (Davies 1999b). This probably remained in the minds of local agents and advance delegates from the United States, whilst the publicity of the Crow's Nest Pass work and settlement scheme meant the same general area would have been known to the Welsh in the American Midwest, through their continued contacts with Wales and the news provided in the Welsh monthly newspaper for Americans, *Yr Drych*. Yet all these points are hypothetical and only suggest how the general location was chosen. The choice of the specific area was a result of the small number of individuals of Welsh origin who arrived at a similar time and who established their specific land claims in close proximity. It was the linkages between these Welsh Americans who had made the decision to move to Canada during the few years in which land in this area was available that provide the most important reason for the initial focus of settlement. Most migrations of a group of people involve some respected leader, the person who had the initial idea to move, or who possessed the persuasive power to encourage people to move to a particular place. The individual may not necessarily be a formal leader of an organized colonization but may simply be a person that others would follow, or look up to. It is probable that the man who ministered to the Welsh in the Carroll area of Nebraska occupied such a role, namely Rev. D.L. Hughes. He was one of the first to establish his own farm in Wood River, although he did not stay long, leaving in 1906. John W. Lewis — previously of Kansas but born in Wales at Deiniolen, Caernarvonshire — was another who fulfilled such a role. He was a part-time land agent and a contributor to *Yr Drych*. In both of these functions he may have helped profile the area as a zone of Welsh settlement, in Wales and among Welsh emigrants to the United States. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that the process that led to the formation of a small core of Welsh settlers in Wood River was not a carefully organized formal colonization; rather, it was the result of a number of individuals of Welsh origin making their own decisions, influenced by their friends and neighbours, and guided by the local land agents and the availability of land.

### **Subsequent Development of the Wood River Settlement**

Figure 4 shows the names of the occupiers of land in the area in 1918, when a detailed land occupancy map of Alberta was compiled by the Cummins Map Company. It is clear that the total land area that is occupied by the Welsh has expanded and forms a much more concentrated zone. Detailed comparison of the names on the individual quarter sections shown in Figures 2 and 4 reveals that there was a great change in the locations of the land occupied by individual families. The details of the land occupancy shown in Figure 4 can be summarized in part by Table 5, which shows the shifts in the land occupation in the area between 1905 and 1918, dates when the location of the occupiers of land are known from the homestead and CPR sales records and the Cummins land occupancy map.

It is often forgotten that in the early days of land settlement there was a great deal of instability in the land occupancy. Figure 4 has already shown that 10 percent of the initial settlers on a quarter section never completed the requirements so the land reverted back to the government and was reassigned to others. Others left after a few years. In addition, the amount of movement to other pieces of land in the vicinity by earliest settlers is often underestimated. Indeed Table 5 shows that only 34 percent of the first occupiers of the land in the 1900-1902 period were still on the same piece of land by 1918. Obviously this means that two-thirds of the first occupiers had moved in the intervening sixteen years. This change shows the degree of instability in the initial



Range 24

Figure 4a. Wood River Land Occupance in 1918 — West

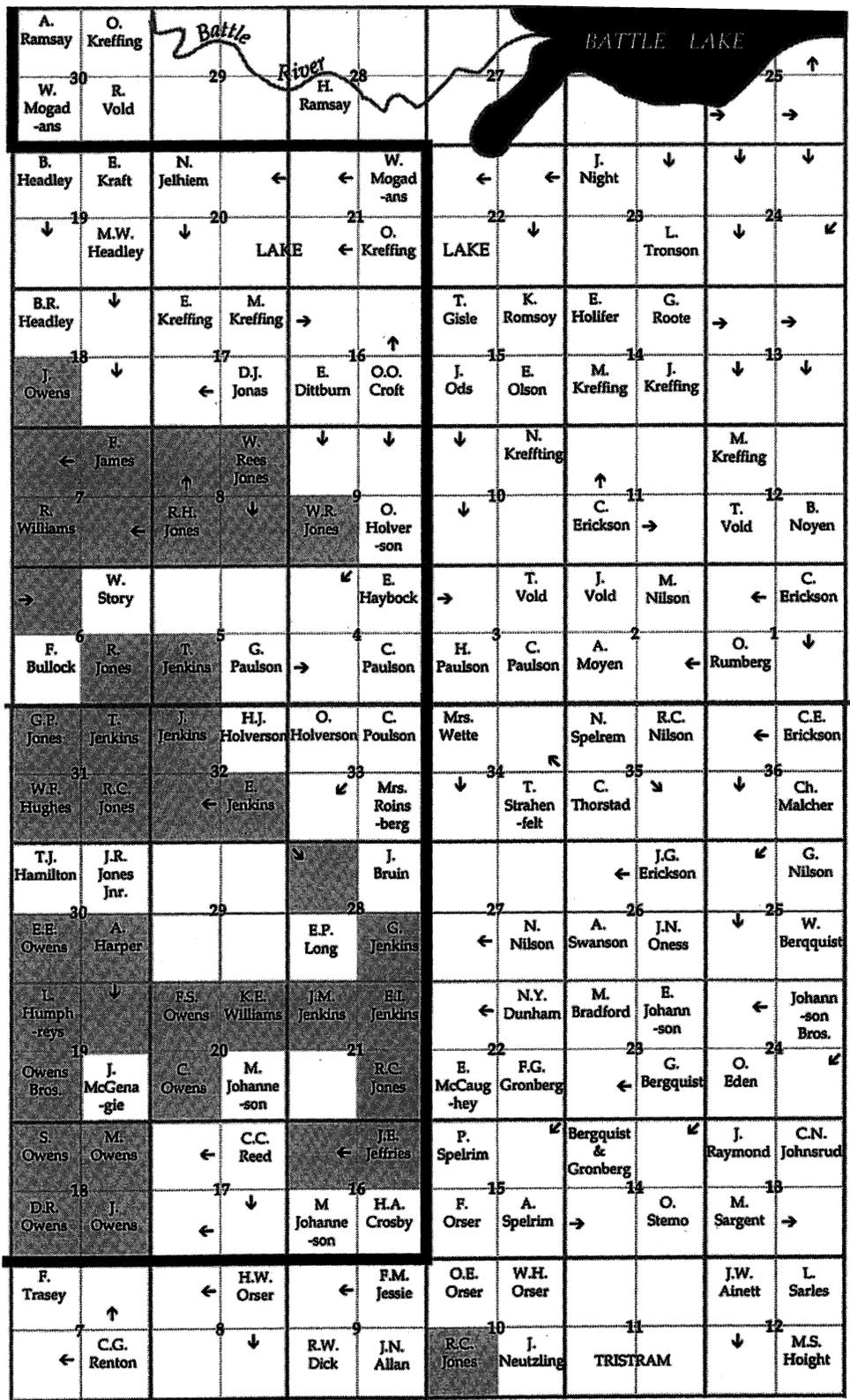


Figure 4b. Wood River Land Occurance in 1918 — East.

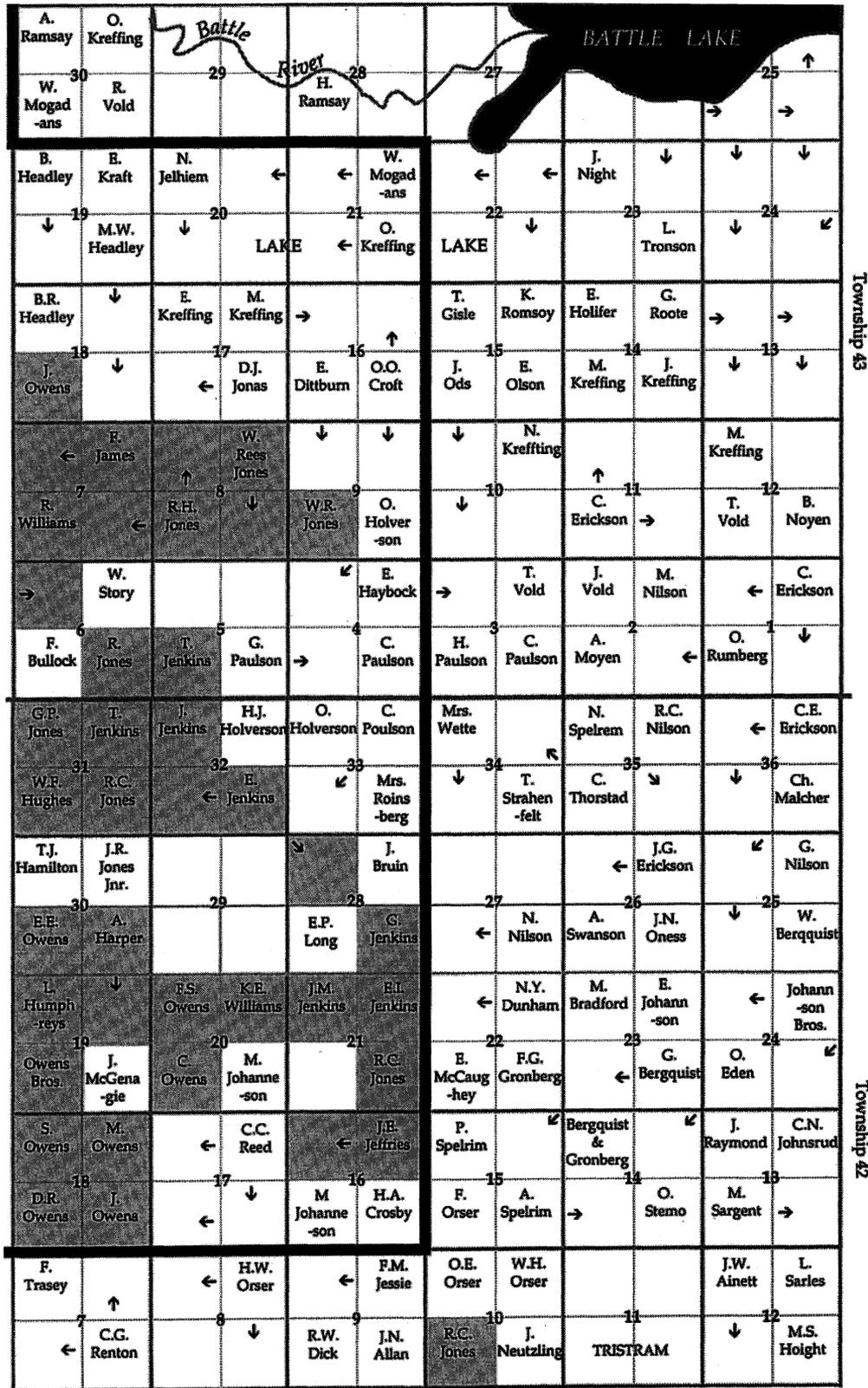


Figure 4b. Wood River Land Occupance in 1918 — East.

**Table 5**  
**Shifts in the Occupation of Land in Wood River, 1905-1918**

Quarter Sections With:	1905 to 1918 (% of Unknown)	Composition by 1918		
		Welsh	Others	Unknown
Same Occupiers in 1905 as 1918	45 (34.1%)	16	29	—
Changed	87 (65.9%)	54	24	9
Unknown*	74	34	32	8
Totals (% of Known)	206**	104 (55.0%)	85 (45.0%)	17
1902 Composition: (% of Known)		36 (28.1%)	92 (71.9%)	78 —

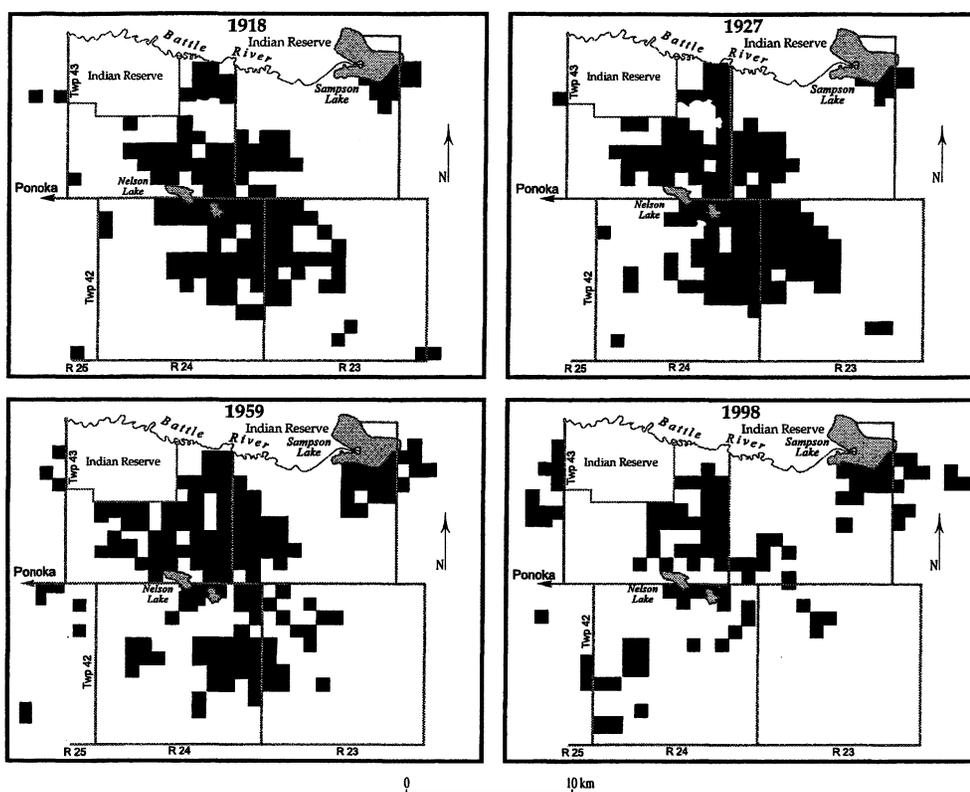
\*Mainly CPR (odd-numbered) sections where land sales could not be traced  
\*\*The 206 quarter sections in the central area of Townships 42 and 43, Ranges 23 and 24

Source: Calculated by author from Homestead Records, 1918 Cummins Rural Directory Map, and from CPR Sales Records.

sections in the survey area of the four townships that are known from homestead and CPR sales records. Most of the missing cases were originally CPR lands for which the individual sales records could not be located in the archival sources.

Table 5 also enables another generalization to be made about the way in which the area became a concentration of Welsh settlement. In the area for which the first occupier is known only 28 percent of the original quarter sections were settled by people of definite Welsh origin. By 1918 the figure had risen to 55 percent — this is rather an underestimate of the extent of concentration by that date since Figure 2 shows that most of the northeastern area was occupied by people of other ethnic origins. What is also apparent is that the largest number of changes in the survey area between 1902 and 1918 involve the Welsh. This means that the creation of such a concentration of settlers of Welsh origin does not come simply from the occupation of the land in the first or earliest phase of occupation: it is a function of a secondary phase in which those of Welsh origin bought land that was initially occupied by others. The result of this process was to expand the core area of the Welsh and increase its concentration, as shown in Figure 4, where those areas occupied by farmers of Welsh origin are highlighted.

Another characteristic of the development of the Wood River area is the changing pattern of origins of the migrants in the phase of development from 1906 to 1918. Table 4 has shown that the proportion of migrants whose previous residence was in the United States among the migrants who came between 1907 and 1918 had dropped to a half. Almost a third of the second-phase migrants came directly from Wales, with another sixth who were born in Wales but who had spent a few years in Canada — many in farms in the drier areas of southern Alberta. The early emphasis upon the Anglesey-Caernarvon area as a major source area of migrants is much clearer, for these historic counties account for almost half of the total. So there seems little doubt that many of the people in Wood River traced their origins back to a limited number of settlements in these parts of Wales, in addition to the linkages forged in their phase of American residence. Hence the typical chain migration from some original source areas in the homeland, one so frequently found in studies of migration, seems to be present here. However it is complicated by the fact that many of the migrants spent time in several parts of the United States — frequently in areas that had concentrations of Welsh — forging additional linkages of friendship and



■ 1/4 section occupied by people of Welsh origin (some areas are irregular due to lakes, marshy areas)

(Revised from Davies 1986. These maps show the actual, offset alignment of the townships due to the decreasing width of each successive northerly lines of latitude on which the layout is based. The maps have been adjusted in the other figures for cartographic convenience)

Figure 5. Changes in Patterns: 1918-1984.

family. This was followed by a re-migration, usually with children, to the final destination in Wood River. Figure 6 shows the process in diagrammatic form, illustrating the way that several areas in the United States represent secondary source areas for the Wood River migrants. Places of historic Welsh concentration, such as Granville (New York) or Lake Crystal (Minnesota), play a part in the secondary flow, suggesting that it took some time for the Wood River Welsh area to be known. This may also explain why almost a third of the 1907-1918 migration stream came directly from Wales, many from areas with family linkages to the original pioneers. By the middle of the first decade of the twentieth century the “Welshness” of the Wood River area was known in Wales, which attracted new migrants, adding to the incipient cultural distinction of the area that was being reinforced through the development of schools and churches.

Figure 5 shows that by 1927 the Welsh area of Wood River, as measured by the land units occupied by those of Welsh family origin, remained in approximately the same pattern, with some increase in the degree of concentration. Since the land was all occupied and relatively few new settlers came to the region after World War I the change cannot be due to major new migration streams; rather it is a function of the fact that an increasing number of the Welsh farmers had increased the size of their holdings, buying up other quarter sections as they became available. Table 6 shows

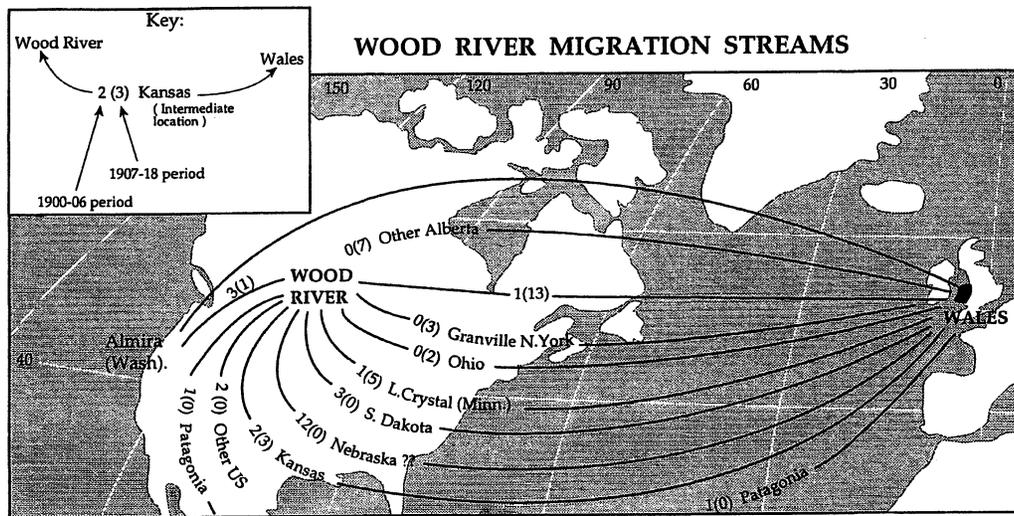


Figure 6. The Wood River Migration Streams (Source: Compiled from family history records).

that by 1918 over a third of the farms were larger than a quarter section, compared to only 6.7 percent in 1906.

From the peak in 1918 there has been a steady decline in the numbers of farm units occupied by those of Welsh origin. Some migration from Wales certainly continued up to the 1930s, but with members of the original families leaving the area and moving to towns the overall population did not grow. With the deaths of the original pioneers, retirement and sale of land, intermarriage of the children and land consolidation in the period, it is not surprising to find the area occupied by those descended from the Welsh to have shrunk to fifty farm units from almost double that number in 1906. In the first phase of land occupation practically all the farmers occupied a single quarter section. By 1927 only 59 percent were at this size, whilst by 1959 over half their holdings were larger than a quarter section, a proportion that has remained constant to 1998. However, many of the holdings are now held by one or more family members, producing a complicated pattern of ownership. Many of these land units may be held by parents who have retired, shared among family members or with siblings who have other jobs, but in practice are often farmed as a unit. This means that the size of the effective farm units is certainly understated in Table 6. In practice the area has experienced the prairie trend of increased size of farm units and mechanization of farming, by which farmers often need at least a section of land to be economically viable. The increasing size of farms meant that 1959 was the peak of areal coverage as measured by the number of quarter sections still held by people of Welsh origin, because the decreasing number of units was counteracted by their increasing size.

In spatial terms Figure 5 shows that the growth of the Welsh population from the original pioneers had produced a reasonably solid core area in the middle of the four townships of the Wood River area (Twp 42 and 43, Range 23 and 24), one that had expanded marginally and had become even more consolidated by 1918. But by 1959 there was a decrease in the Welsh heritage occupation of the two southern townships (Twp 42, Range 23 and 24) with the sale of land to people with different ethnic origins. By 1998 Figure 5 shows that the old Welsh core area had been reduced in size and was far more diffuse, although the east and southeast part of Township 43, Range 24 and of Twp 43, Range 24 was still dominated by descendants of various Pugh,

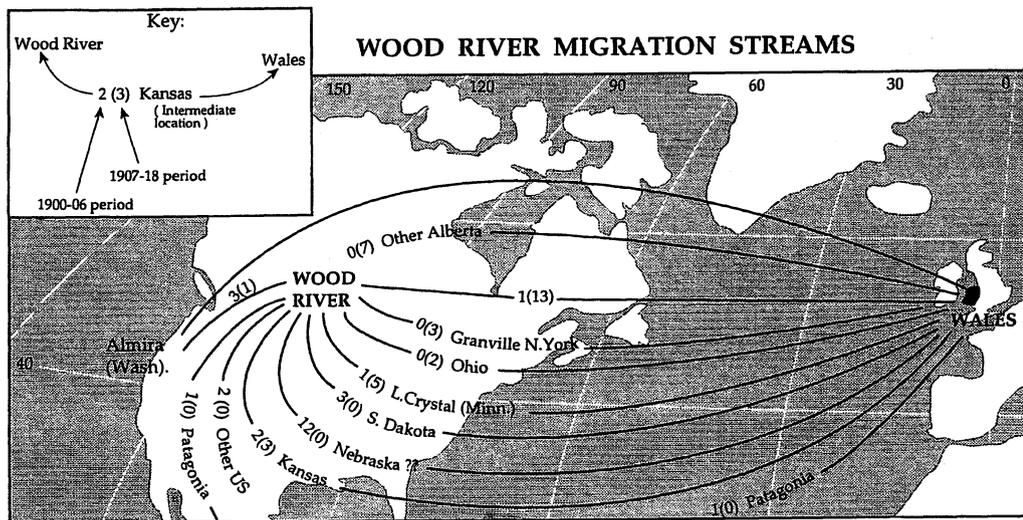


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**Table 6**  
**Changing Sizes of Farms: The Welsh Land Holdings in Wood River**

Dates	Percentage of Farm Ownership Units with Farmers of Welsh Heritage							Total Units of Ownership
	Quarter Section Size Categories*							
	Total	¼	½	¾	1	1¼	>1½	
1906	43	92.5	6.7	—	—	—	—	40
1918	135	66.7	25.8	3.2	4.3	—	—	93
1927	102	59.4	29.7	6.3	3.1	—	1.6	64
1959	146	48.0	26.7	14.7	8.0	1.3	1.3	75
1998	102	48.0	22.0	14.0	12.0	2.0	2.0	50

\*Note that by 1998 many holdings were jointly owned by one or more family members in various combinations, or by companies, so the size of the effective or functioning farm unit is underestimated.

Source: Calculated by author.

bear the names Jones Road and Owens Road in testimony to the Welsh heritage. Elsewhere, an outlier of the Welsh area has spread around Sampson Lake, mainly due to the expansion of the Pritchard family. This originated with Hugh Pritchard's purchase of part of the Phillips ranch in 1931; Hugh, a brother-in-law of one of the early pioneers, R.H. Jones, only arrived in Canada from north Wales in 1914, married Annie Evans, Humphrey Evans's sister, and raised seven children. Elsewhere, there are still small concentrations of other Welsh descendants, such as the Jenkins family in the northwest corner of Twp 42, Range 23, and members of the Griffiths and Owen families in particular scattered in the southwest corner of Twp 24, Range 24. Nevertheless, these scattered outliers only reinforce the general conclusion of the breakdown of the once-dominant Welsh core, producing a much smaller and more diffuse settlement area associated with those of Welsh heritage in the Wood River area.

### **Cultural Distinctiveness and Decline**

The migration of a people with a similar cultural background, together with their settlement in close proximity, is usually enough to create the first stage of a distinctive cultural region. Its consolidation and enlargement require recognition of the region among compatriots and their desire and ability to migrate to this area. But its perpetuation through time as a distinctive culture region requires the maintenance and reinforcement of its cultural characteristics, through the development of separate organizations — schools, churches and community facilities — by which the people maintain their distinctiveness. There is always a built-in momentum for cultural continuity in ethnic settlement areas for a generation or two. But as the original pioneers die, and their children or grandchildren succumb to the acculturating pressures of the host society, the degree of cultural separation is likely to be drastically reduced. Exceptions occur in those cases where there are new migration streams, or the group has strong cultural and religious ties and keeps itself separate, or where there is involuntary segregation due to economic and ethnic prejudice.

In the case of the Welsh in the Wood River area, there have been few factors that have kept them apart from the host society for very long. Economically they have been part of the mainstream of settlers, seeking prosperity on their farms or in local businesses. So the perpetuation of their distinctiveness for more than a few generations was always unlikely — especially in the face of the emerging Canadian identity and new communication devices that increased the degree of contact to places

the process of acculturation increased from the late 1920s and can be related to five major sets of factors — size and migration, changes in Wales, schooling, churches, and organizations — all of which led to a decrease in the use of Welsh and other distinctive cultural practices. This assimilation parallels the case of many Welsh communities in other lands (Ellis 1972; Jones 1957; Jones 1986).

The small size of the Welsh enclave in the sea of new migrants to rural Alberta must be considered a key factor among the reasons why they have not been able to maintain their cultural distinctiveness through time. The number of families of Welsh origin was so small that their survival as a distinctive group was always problematical. Once the land was settled there were few opportunities for new migration streams from Wales to enlarge the size of the Welsh core population and to reinvigorate its cultural heritage. Moreover the process of land consolidation and the problems caused by the economic depression of the 1930s further reduced opportunities in the area. In the context of commercial activity the rural nature of the region can be seen by the fact that the Wood River area had only one small post office and store, initially on the Bullock property in 1903. For over thirty years this was run by the Thomas Hughes family after their arrival from Glan Conway in North Wales in 1907. Thomas Hughes and his wife died in 1940 and 1942 respectively. The store closed soon after, the victim of the same pressures that were present throughout the Prairies — decreasing rural population and easier access to larger stores in nearby towns. Although the post office remained in the home of John R. Jones for a few years it also succumbed to the centralization processes based on the larger towns. The problem was intensified by the development of all-weather roads, especially Highway 53 between Ponoka and Bashaw in the early 1950s. This meant that the trip to Ponoka took fifteen minutes, instead of the best part of a day at the turn of the century, when the path was only a trail and muskeg or fallen trees were ever-present hazards. In any case the locational scatter of the Welsh community meant that the Wood River store was not necessarily the most central location for all, one that would help reinforce neighbourly contacts — a situation that also applied to the churches. It was often easier to obtain needed goods or mail from some other service centre. The local town of Ponoka did act as the main supply centre for the Welsh settlement area. Several Welsh immigrants established businesses there, and many of the Wood River farmers retired to the town. However, Ponoka performed the same function for many other nationalities; so it was never dominated by those of Welsh extraction, unlike some other towns in Alberta with high ethnic concentrations. If anything, the cultural mixture in Ponoka helped increase the degree of cultural integration of the Welsh. Moreover, it is important to emphasize its relatively small size. Ponoka contained only 712 people in 1921 and 2,574 in 1951, although like most district centres in Alberta it has grown in the post-war period and reached 5,861 in 1991. So the opportunities even in this centre were quite limited and could not support new migration waves from Wales.

Even if there had been the opportunity for greater emigration from Wales it is dubious whether any mid- or late-twentieth-century migration stream would have re-invigorated the Welsh community as it has done with many other ethnic groups in Canada. The increasing modernization and anglicanization of Wales during this century has meant that the turn-of-the-century distinctiveness of the Welsh migrants has been largely lost. The collapse in chapel membership and the continued decline in the use of Welsh as an everyday language has ensured that most people in Wales have been acculturated to English culture, or rather to an international culture based on this language. Certainly there has been a stabilization in the decline of the Welsh language in the last two decades, even an increase in some areas, as well as a revival of interest in Welsh traditions (Price 1986); but most recent migrants from Wales have

few cultural symbols or practices to ensure their distinctiveness beyond a generation. Moreover, it is dubious whether many of those whose first language and culture are Welsh would migrate to a rural area of western Canada. They would lose the ability to operate in their culture, and relatively few would find new economic opportunities by way of compensation. Certainly the major advantage of the past — the attraction of free land — is not present now; most opportunities lie in the cities.

The third major force that has aided cultural assimilation in the area has been the school system. At first the establishment of local schools provided a means whereby families of similar background reinforced their identity. However, the use of English as a means of instruction and the presence of non-Welsh families in some of the sections in the “Welsh area” meant that schools were also the medium of acculturation — unless, as with the Hutterites, special permission was sought to use another language for at least part of the day. The opportunity for integration among the Welsh community was also reduced by the fact that they were scattered among several school districts, a product of the difficulty of daily travel and the numbers of children. This meant that there was often more than one single-roomed school in each of the four townships that were settled by the Welsh. In Township 43, Range 24, on the border of sections 2 and 3, the Magic School District was organized in 1902, with Eastside developing to the west. In Township 42, Range 24 the Concord District was also created in 1902, with the school in Section 10. The Climax and Asker School Districts were founded in Township 43, Range 23, in 1902 and 1896 respectively, with schools in Sections 19 and 14, although it must be emphasized that the latter area was one in which many Norwegians settled. Finally, the Eureka and Calumet districts were created in Township 42, Range 23, in Sections 30 and 25 respectively, during 1902 and 1905, with Ellice in the southeast corner in 1907. The creation of so many districts meant that the developing Welsh community did not form a cohesive whole, for there were children of many other nationalities in the various schools. As the Welsh area consolidated, the Magic, Climax and Eureka districts did have a high percentage of their students from parents of Welsh extraction. But Welsh was never a formal part of the curriculum; the children never had the chance to hone any skills they may have learned at home. The result was that English was rapidly confirmed as the predominant language. Thirty years after the first migrants had entered the area Welsh was only spoken occasionally. The consolidation of most of the small, single-roomed schools into large age-segregated buildings after World War II hastened the process of assimilation. In 1949 the Mecca Glen school was built to the east of the Wood River area along the new Highway 53. This building replaced most of the schools named previously, but also included the schools of Water Glen (formerly Fair) District—in the middle of a belt of Swedish settlers—as well as the Schultz District. Although a great deal of interaction between various ethnic groups had already taken place in the area, there seems little doubt that the consolidation of these small school districts substantially increased the mixing of the population. These changes took place against the background of land holdings consolidation and the rapid decline of the birth rate in recent years, both of which have reduced the size of the overall population of Welsh background in the region.

It is generally accepted that the survival of the Welsh language was a product of the Protestant revolution, the translation of the Bible into Welsh and its use among the people (Pryce 1986; Davies 1993). The people of Wales took to religion with alacrity from the eighteenth century onwards, but the fragmentation of the Protestants into a number of separate denominations meant that chapels of many different persuasions vied with one another and doctrinal disputes and personal antagonisms frequently led to a great deal of inter-community bitterness. Many Welsh migrants to other lands kept

their faith and church organizations, including Sunday Schools, and these were vital in maintaining language and community for many years in North America. The first twenty years of the Wood River region was no exception. Two churches catering to Welsh families were established and provided a focus for community life.

In 1902 the small group of pioneering Welsh families began the process of organizing their religious beliefs by holding their first religious service in the barn of William James. This was followed by church services in the home of Fred Bullock — although these were probably in English — and then in the Magic school, where Welsh was often the medium in the afternoons, and English in the evenings. By July 1905 some of the pioneers had registered their own chapel, The Welsh Calvinistic Methodist Church of Magic — the last word a rather incongruous and contradictory title until one remembers that it was the name of the local school district! By 1916 the congregation had built a new and substantial church with wooden spire, a building that still stands, although a substantial renovation took place in 1967, one that included a full basement and additional space (Jones 1976). Many of the early pioneers of the district are buried in the adjoining churchyard, which was given a new gate in 1970. The new church was renamed in 1916, taking the more traditional title of Zion (Seion in Welsh), a name derived from biblical sources — and one that was given to many chapels in Wales, as well as used extensively by the Mormons in Salt Lake City. However, in architectural style the church has no resonance with Welsh traditions. It looks more like the Lutheran churches scattered over the Prairies and probably reflects the fact that the builders adopted much of the style of their Norwegian neighbours.

Although the first church members chose to become Welsh Calvinistic Methodist — a very popular denomination among Welsh-speaking congregations in Wales — Zion later joined the Welsh Presbyterian Church of the United States, although its subsequent connections with the Blue Earth Presbytery Church of the United States were severed in the 1930s (Hughes and Jones 1981). In 1939 the members voted to join the United Church of Canada, itself an amalgam of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregational churches. At first there was a considerable Welsh language presence in its activities, although it is clear that the English language services attracted people of other backgrounds. But by 1930 the church had become virtually English only, as many of the early pioneers had died and knowledge of Welsh among the new generation had declined — an evolution paralleled elsewhere (Ellis 1972; Jones 1986). The community was fortunate to have Thomas E. Jeffreys among its members. Arrived from Wales in 1905, Jeffreys seems to have had some biblical training in Wales; he soon answered the call of his God and went to the Welsh Bible College in Lake Crystal, Minnesota, returning as a minister to Wood River in 1909. Apart from the years 1921-1924, when Jeffreys went to the Welsh church in Calgary, he ministered to the Zion church until 1936, despite the handicap of being virtually deaf.

A second church, the Wood River Welsh Church, located east of Zion Church, on the other side of the township line that became Highway 53, was built in 1914 on land donated by John J. Hughes. A local history observed that it attracted a large number of Welsh pioneers from many denominational backgrounds, whether Methodists, Baptists, Anglican and Congregational, and that they “blended well together” (Hughes and Jones 1981, 68). This church soon established an association with the Presbyterian Church of Canada. Like Zion it seems to have had regular Welsh services up to 1929. Its first regular minister was J.J. Samuels, who had graduated from Presbyterian College in Carmarthen, although he commuted to Ponoka where he was also the resident minister at the Presbyterian church. After the end of World War I

Davies of Chicago and then J.M. Hughes of Seattle, who first occupied the house built for the minister and his family in 1921. The Rev. O.J. Davies held office from 1923 to 1927. He was followed by P.O. Pierce from the Bangor, Saskatchewan Welsh settlement. But by 1930 the services were being conducted by ministers from the Ponoka United Church, initially T.R. Davies and then George Young from 1936-40. From 1946 a new arrangement was formalized, that of sharing a minister with the Baptist Church in nearby Concord (Jones 1976). Since Zion Church had joined the United Church, the attempt at separation implies that some of the existing Wood River Church congregation still had some continued doctrinal disputes with members of Zion Church. Neither the arrangement nor the church lasted for long. Unlike the postwar revival of Zion Church, the Wood River congregation became too small to function in the late 1940s, and in 1953 the building was dismantled and sold to a Bashaw group. Although Zion was left as the only local church, few of the former Wood River members joined it, preferring to worship in one of the Ponoka churches.

Initially, both churches had large congregations and were focal points for the Welsh families, each with their choirs, ladies aid societies and cultural activities. There is little doubt that the churches maintained a Welsh cultural presence and were the main reason why the distinctiveness of the Welsh community was perpetuated for so many years. Although both churches seem to have given up regular Welsh services by the late 1920s, occasional Welsh services continued into the 1930s. Cultural events such as an annual *eisteddfod* appealed to both congregations. For example, in the spring of 1933 the Zion minister wrote to a friend in Wales describing the preparations for another *eisteddfod*, observing that he needed to produce fifty typed programs, perhaps a sign of the number of families who were likely to participate (Jeffreys, May 1933). However the decline in the use of Welsh can be seen in the comment: "I only speak Welsh on Sundays as my closest neighbours are English" (Jeffreys, March 1932). He also claimed that he had never heard his young nephew, Iolo, speak Welsh — although he had lived with him since the death of his brother John. During the next year Jeffreys admitted his sermon in Welsh was the first he had given in six months, further evidence of the decline in the use of Welsh in the area (Jeffreys, October 1933).

Unfortunately, there is little documentary information available to provide definitive evidence on the social and religious divisions that led to the development of two different Welsh churches in such a small area. One source (Hughes and Jones 1980) described the separation in the following innocuous way:

as the district increased in population a need was felt for larger facilities, so that in 1914 the Wood River Welsh Church was built and affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in Canada (67).

There seems little doubt that the increase in the Welsh population in its early days did create a need for more church space. But any review of the development of two churches in such proximity provides another example of the presence of a fatal flaw that existed within many Welsh communities: doctrinal differences that encouraged individuals of a similar cultural background to worship in separate groups. In the early days the services were probably broad enough to appeal to all the small band of early pioneers, but the creation of the first church at Magic as Welsh Calvinistic Methodist created dissension among people of other denominations. For example, Andrew Harper, one of the early pioneers, was a member of the Ponoka Baptists but soon played a prominent role in the creation of the Wood River Welsh Church in 1914. This congregation joined the Canadian assembly of Presbyterians — in contrast to the Magic, later Zion, church which joined the Welsh Presbyterian organization in the United States.

pioneers established two separate churches. Unlike more hierarchical religions such as Catholicism, the leaders of the local congregations played a vital part in accounting for the decisions to have separate churches. The division between the two groups was not simply a matter of individual religious beliefs. It may have been linked in part to the dominance of one form of worship over another in the communities from which the pioneers came — although the link cannot be established with precision. The Wood River members seem to have had more varied backgrounds, both from their origins in Wales and residence in the United States; but at least one of the source areas, Almira in Washington, had been the residence of prominent members of both churches. There is also a suspicion that one of the historic divisions in Wales was also partially responsible for the difference in the church membership, for more of the Wood River Church leaders pioneers seem to have been from south Wales and mid-Wales. Again the division is far from absolute, for families with origins in the Dovey Valley in Wales were in both of the Wood River churches.

These differences may have explained the initial separation in two churches, but it is difficult to understand the continued separation through time. There is little doubt that there was a core in both churches that remained opposed to one another. The geographical location of the farms of the leading members of both churches also provides a partial clue to the differences. Most of the leading members of Zion Church were residents of the Magic district in the southeast of Township 43 and Range 24, overlapping into Eastside and to the northern fringe of Township 42, Range 24. In contrast the Wood River Church seemed to have a wider spread into the Climax and Eureka districts. However, this locational difference was never complete for the Zion minister, Jeffreys, lived in the southeast of Eureka. Nevertheless, it hints at the influence of many of the Carroll group of pioneers and their preference for an American organization, perhaps a product of their familiarity with the organization during their years in the United States. Again the relationship is only partial, because the Harper family had been in Carroll prior to migrating to Wood River. Personal antipathy between individuals was often another reason for the splits in chapels, for there was no outside authority to resolve the differences. But another reason may be involved. It is clear that the presence of two churches provided some social advantages for many in the region. After all, there were more roles to share out — especially in the leadership of choirs — always a prize for those who wished to exercise a major role in the cultural life of the area.

This division within the Welsh community must not be exaggerated: both congregations took part in the local *eisteddfodau* and *cymanfoedd*, so the separation was never complete. However, it does seem significant that many of the original pioneers were also separated at death. Most of the Wood River Church pioneers were buried in the Forest Home cemetery in Ponoka, not in the local Zion churchyard, although the fact that many members of both churches retired to Ponoka, attended churches there and are buried in the local cemetery must be taken into account. In addition, it seems clear that by 1921 the two churches were showing signs of cooperation, or at least running in parallel, because they often shared ministers. Important clues to the relationships between the churches are provided in a set of letters that the Rev. Jeffreys of Zion wrote to an old friend in Wales, The Rev. Bodfan Anwyl, a distinguished man of letters who had taken over the editorship of Spurrell's well-known *Dictionary of Welsh* and who was subsequently employed in the National Library of Wales from 1919 to 1935.

Jeffreys seemed to have been prominent in negotiating some alliance between the two churches when he left the area in 1921, although it did not last. In one of his very

When I left this place after spending 18 years here I succeeded in persuading my old church to unite with another here under the same ministry. The experiment is not a very great success and this spring they dissolved the partnership... (Jeffreys, August 1926)

Jeffreys had returned to Wood River in 1924, in large part because he claimed that he was tired of the constant arguments and disputes among his Calgary congregation which made his work difficult. Again it is difficult to know how much of this was due to religious differences. It seems clear that Jeffreys had little time for splitting the doctrinal hairs:

I do not care what anybody thinks of my sermons, if I am to teach the young folks that to be good men and women is a thing worth striving for. I was never much of a theologian. I am less so now... (Jeffreys, March 1927)

Later on in the same letter he praised the merits of being a Presbyterian, implying the chapel had a greater flexibility in approach. Without an analysis of the local church records or informative local diaries it is difficult to be sure of the reasons why the two churches drifted apart again in the mid-1920s. It cannot be only due to rivalry between the ministers at the time, for Jeffreys's letters suggest he was very friendly with the other minister present in 1926, namely The Rev. O.J. Davies, who conducted services in the area from 1923 to the spring 1927. In 1926 Jeffreys refers to his enjoyment in "sitting under" the ministry of O.J. Davies, noting his dignified approach. Later he is more specific:

he is as fine a man as ever I have met. We co-operate like two brothers and have a great time together. He is an able fellow too but deficient in cheek so will never get very far. (Jeffreys, November 1926)

This cooperation between the two Welsh ministers is in contrast to a predecessor "who resented the friendly relations between his church and mine" (Jeffreys Nov. 1926). Later he complained about a Wood River Welsh Church minister — not named, but probably Rev. Samuel:

He thought it was in the nature of things that there ought to be antagonism between me and the members of his church and when he found out that his people spoke in most friendly fashion of me he wasn't satisfied and was called to task by one of them. He even refused to co-operate with me in trying to level the differences between the two churches. I lost my enthusiasm for him. (Jeffreys, January 1927)

Although the new separation of the two churches in 1926 was important in pointing to some continuing intracommunity differences, it is difficult to determine a deep-seated religious schism based on religion alone. The Rev. O.J. Davies moved to South Dakota in 1927, which distressed Jeffreys, who complained that "he will be left without another Welsh minister within a radius of several hundred miles" (Jeffreys, March 1927). There are no informative comments in his letters on the subsequent two-year ministry of P.O. Pierce at the Wood River Welsh Church between 1928-30. Afterwards the Wood River Church was again served by ministers from Ponoka, but this time belonging to the United Church, since the Presbyterians had been absorbed within this new grouping. After his retirement in 1936 Jeffreys continued to work on his farm. He sold it in 1940 and lived in Ponoka for five years, finally moving to Victoria, dying at the age of 89 in 1967; but was re-buried in Zion churchyard after his wife died. This was a fitting gesture for a man who had devoted his life to a community that seems to have held him in the highest esteem, despite his severe handicap, for Jeffreys admits in his letters he could hardly hear anything — perhaps a useful handicap if there were argumentative factions within the Welsh community! Yet Zion did not lose

Church in 1936 who preached at Zion on alternate Sundays, foreshadowing the Zion congregation's formal decision to join that assembly in 1939. There was a real revival in interest in Zion Church in 1945 when it became the Zion Mission Field, served by student ministers. Under Doug Lapp, a thriving Sunday school seems to have been re-established, one that was still attracting large numbers into the early 1960s as the photographic history of the church indicates (Jones 1976). These developments led to a substantial upgrading and renovation of the church in 1967. The Wood River church seemed unable to match this postwar revival and closed within a decade of the war. Yet even in the case of Zion the last few decades have proved difficult. The financial difficulties of operating a single church, decreasing interest in religion in a declining rural population, fewer Welsh associations as the generations changed and other people moved into the area, led to changes in organizational structure. Zion entered into a more formal linkage with other churches in 1965 when it became part of a rural circuit of two other rural churches. In 1977 came a formal association with the Ponoka United Church, with services conducted by the Ponoka incumbent. Attendance at Zion Church has shrunk to a handful of the older people, a reflection of the decreasing role that religion plays in modern life, as well as the effect of smaller families and rural depopulation.

The two churches were essential organizations in the perpetuation of the Welsh heritage in the area, for the two congregations came together in the various cultural festivals, even though the language was rarely used after 1930. However, there does seem to have been some antipathy between some members of the rival organizations. Such schisms among the Protestants were not the prerogative of the Welsh. By World War I there many other denominations within a township of Wood River, each with churches that usually catered to the particular ethnic group that had settled the area: a Norwegian Lutheran congregation at Asker, Svea Swedish Lutheran north of Battle Lake, a Swedish Baptist at Fair (renamed Water Glen), St Peter's Evangelical Lutheran, Kreuz (Cross) Evangelical Lutheran and St Michael's Catholic Mission near Schultz, as well as a Primitive Methodist congregation at Ellice. Nevertheless, the split of the Welsh church community in such a small population did hinder the development of a common sense of identity, although individuals such as Jeffreys worked to keep the channels of communication open between the various groups.

Community interaction among the Welsh pioneers and their neighbours was also found in a number of other local organizations. Singing was never far from a Welsh community's soul and the choirs — both male and female — from this region were famous for miles around, making a substantial contribution to the cultural life of this part of the province. Choirs based at Zion Church were directed for decades by an early pioneer, Owen G. Davies (1875-1958), winning ladies choirs' awards in the Wood River Festival in the 1930s (Hughes and Jones 1981). They were still thriving under Goronwy Davies — a son of Hugh F. Davies — and his wife Elinor, into the 1960s. This couple took an active role in the music festivals in the new Mecca Glen facility during the postwar period. Sports organizations were also popular amongst the young, and soccer teams were founded in the Magic, Eureka, Eastside and Water Glen districts at the end of the first decade of the century, although the Magic and Eureka teams amalgamated in 1923. Rugby, the game which has captured the hearts of so many Welsh, was a relative latecomer in Wales, especially in the rural areas from which many of the original pioneers came; so it is not surprising that there are no real signs of interest in rugby in this area. The local interest in soccer led to the merger of some of the smaller teams into a Wood River team, providing another example of how the Wood River community was emerging out of the smaller school districts into which the area, and the Welsh settlers, had been split. In 1922, the 1922

depression, followed by a war which took so many of the young off to fight and by a decrease in the number of children per family, seems to have assisted in the decrease of interest in the game. By 1950 organized soccer seems to have died out in the area, perhaps a function of the growth in the popularity of the Canadian variation of American football promoted in the high schools.

Another source of cultural cohesion among the settlers in the area was provided by the building of Wood River Community Hall in 1919, mainly with volunteer labour, on land donated by Lamark Hughes. This provided the focal point for many lectures, community events and dances when larger facilities than the schools or churches were needed — such as the local *eisteddfod*, a traditional Welsh concert that involves competition between participating choirs, soloists and poets. In 1949 the Wood River Hall had to be moved to make way for the construction of Highway 53 along the boundary of Townships 42 and 43. The date of its construction as an all-weather road shows that the creation of good communications in the area was late. In its new location near Nelson Lake it enjoyed several renovations, but with the creation of better facilities in the new school at Mecca Glen the old hall could no longer compete. It saw the last community festival in 1957. However, the Wood River name still survives in an annual competition for local choirs in the Mecca Glen Hall, although the wider area served by the school ensures that the original “Welshness” of the festival has long been limited. In another context there are few signs of the Welsh presence in the naming of landscape features, apart from Jenkins Hill, the small Davies Lake and the very minor Jones road, all named after local farmers.

Yet one Welsh tradition still survives in the region, although not in Wood River itself. Each August since 1943 a *Cymanfa Ganu* is held in Ponoka; this is a singing festival based mainly on hymns. Although such festivals were a frequent event in the early days in Wood River, the Ponoka organization was the initiative of some Welsh airmen posted to the Penhold air force base in World War II. They seem to have been mainly responsible for reviving the old Wood River musical tradition and, together with local Welsh church members, helped to relocate it in the local service centre where it is still an annual event. Together with the annual banquet on St. David’s Day hosted by the Ponoka Welsh Society, it has kept some Welsh traditions in this part of Alberta alive. It is a pity that its existence is not well known in Wales, and that it cannot be reinforced by formal contact with Welsh cultural organizations, leading to visits of mutual benefit to both areas.

## Conclusions

The failure and controversy surrounding the ambitious Crow’s Nest Pass railway work and settlement scheme of 1897, designed to bring 1,000 Welsh labourers to the Prairies, may have discouraged potential Welsh immigrants (Davies 1999a). However, the dream of some people to establish a Welsh settlement area in the region did not die; it was fulfilled by a group who had spent many years in the United States. This group, drawn from several origins, but principally from northwest and central Wales, created the only major concentration of Welsh in rural Alberta. Their settlement added to the range of cultural differentiation in the province, even though their impact in numerical terms was much smaller than that of many other groups (Palmer and Palmer 1985). The creation of the distinctive Welsh settlement area in Wood River was a complex process. It was created by a several groups of people of Welsh origin who knew one another because of family and neighbourly ties forged in the American Midwest and who registered land claims almost simultaneously on quarter sections in close proximity. The initial core was never exclusively Welsh, but as people

moved between sections in the early days of farming and new Welsh migrants were attracted to the area, the area's cultural distinctiveness was increased.

The cultural perpetuation of the community was handicapped by several factors. Essentially the Welsh area of Wood River was too small, too rural and was founded too late to survive for more than a few generations as a distinctive cultural entity — especially given the blows of the Depression and World War II. Depopulation and the increasing dominance of towns, as well as the accelerating secularization of life, meant that even the chapels — for so long the cultural lifeline of the Welsh, declined. Obviously, the compulsory use of English in the schools also hastened the decay of the language. There was no economic basis in such a rural area to attract any new and large-scale emigration from Wales — a migration that may have reinvigorated the Welsh heritage of the area. Even if there had been, the anglicization of life in Wales for most of this century has meant that few of the cultural differences of the Welsh that were found at the turn of the century would have been brought along. After all, much of the distinctiveness of the Welsh at that time, apart from language, was based on a chapel culture that was itself in decay in Wales by the 1950s. Nevertheless, the Welsh heritage is still a factor in the Ponoka area. Many have pride in such a background and still maintain personal links with families in Wales. Unfortunately, there are no real monuments or markers, except on Jenkins Hill, to remind the people of Alberta or Wales of this Welsh contribution to the settlement of the Prairies.

#### **Note**

Many people have helped in the completion of this study. Goronwy and Iorweth Davies — part of the first generation of Welsh in Wood River — and their wives Elinor and Laura — described their own recollections of early life in the area and left no doubt in my mind that “warm welcomes” are not found only in the “Welsh valleys.” The availability of the local family records in the various centennial publications of small towns and country areas in the Prairies provided an invaluable source material. Special thanks must go to the late Mrs. L. Harries of Cilgerran for assistance in translations and to Eleanor Aubrey of Porth (Rhondda) who translated the letters of The Rev. Jeffreys held in the National Library of Wales. Alberta Historical Resources Foundation assisted with a grant to defray some travel and accommodation costs associated with this research. The University of Calgary, especially the Humanities Institute and the Geography Department, also provided me with needed facilities. Marta Styk did her usual splendid cartographic work just before her well-earned retirement. To all I give my thanks.

**Appendix A**  
**Pioneering Welsh Families in Wood River: By Year of Migration to Area, 1900-1918**

Date	Head (Wife) and adult sons	Birthplace (Old Counties)	Last Residence
1900	Caradoc Morris (Emma)	N.K.	Sparks, NE
1901	John H. Jones	N.K.	Carroll, NE
1901	Hugh H. Jones (Flora 1903)	Anglesey	NE
1901	D.L. Hughes (nk)	Wales?	NE?
1901	Owen Williams	Anglesey	NE
1901	William T. Jones (nk)	Wales?	Winside, NE
1901	William E. James	Wales?	Carroll, NE
1901	William M. James (Lydia)	N.K.	Carroll, NE
1901	Thomas C. Morris (Ann)	Aber, Caern.	Carroll, NE
1901	Andrew Harper (Anne)	Cardigan	Carroll, NE
1901	John W. Lewis (nk)	Deiniolen, Caern.	Arvonias, KS
1901	John Jenkins (Mary) & 4 sons	Tredeggar, Mon.	KS
1902	Griffith P. Jones (m Carrie 1902)	Pennal, Merion.	Iowa/OK
1902	Jessie Owens (nk) & 5 sons	N.K.	Benkelman, NE
1902	Levi Davies (nk. m 1904)	Llandewi Brefi, Card.	Ipswich, SD
1902	Evan Davies (Elizabeth)	Llandewi Brefi, Card.	Ipswich, SD
1902	Thomas Owens (Mary)	Wales (as above?)	Ipswich, SD
1903	John W. James (Margaret) & 5 sons	New York State	Columbus, NE
1904	William R. Jones (Jane Ellen)	Pennal, Merion.	Almira, WA
1904	Richard C. Jones	Carno, Mont.	L. Crystal, MN
1905	T.E. Jeffreys (Mary, 1933)	Pembroke, Pembs.	Wales
1906	Owen G. Davies (Mary, 1913)	Machynlleth, Mont.	USA
1906	Hugh F. Davies (Anne, 1907)	Cemmaes Road, Mont.	Almira, WA
1906	Lamark G. Hughes	N.K.	Almira, WA
1906	John J. Hughes (Jane)	Wales?	Almira, WA
1907	Thomas Hughes	Glan Conway, Denb.	Wales
1907	Robert Williams (Mary)	Lanfairfechan, Caern.	Wales
1908	Jack Lewis (Florence, 1921)	Deiniolen, Caern.	Wales
1908	Hugh T. Jones	Chwilog, Caern.	Granville, NY
1908	Thomas Jones	Eglwys Fach, Denb.	Patagonia
1909	Hugh D. Jones	Trevor, Caern.	Wales
1909	Will Parry (see Parry below)	Bryngwran, Angl.	L. Crystal, MN
1909	William F. Hughes (Margaret)	Llangefni, Angl.	L. Crystal, MN
1909	John Williams (Jane)	Wales	Wisconsin, AB
1909	John O. Jones (nk)	Merion.	Granville, NY
1910	(Mary Parry & 2 sons: Dick, Harry)	Bryngwran, Angl.	Wales
1910	John R. Jones	Glyn Ceriog, Denb.	BC
1910	William W. Griffiths	Harlech, Merion.	USA
1910	John O. Owen	Bontddu, Merion.	Iowa, CA
1910	Owen Humphreys	Bryngwyn, Angl.	Wales
1910	Hugh W. Jones	Festiniog, Merion.	Granville, NY
1910	John Griffiths	Wales	KS
1910	Sam R. Davies (Mary)	Cardigan	S. AB
1910	Emrys Williams	Carno, Mont.	Wales
1911	William R. Roberts (Mary)	Racine, Wiscon. USA.	Magrath, S. AB
1911	William Thos. Edwards	Wales	Iowa
1912	Hugh M. Pugh (Stella 1915)	Pennal, Merion.	ND & SK
1912	Richard L. Reese (Anne)	Llanbrynmair, Mont.	Ohio & Edmonton
1912	William George	Cilgerran, Pembs	Wales
1912	William Williams (Hawen)	Llanbrynmair, Mont.	Wales
1912	William M. Williams	Chwilog, Caern.	Wales

1912	Robert H. Jones (Laura 1910)	Clynnog, Caern.	Vermont & Idaho
1913	Humphrey Evans (Alice 1921)	Caern.?	Wales
1913	Evan Lloyd	Newtown, Mont.	Wales
1913	Henry Whitticase	Newtown, Mont.	Wales
1913	Bill Harper (Mabel 1929)	Cardigan, Cards.	Wales
1913	David S. Jones	Pembs.	Wales
1913	Hugh Evans (Jenny 1920)	Denbigh.	Lake Crystal & Idaho
1914	John Jones	Arthog, Merion.	Wales
1914	William Williams (Susan)	Dolgellau, Merion.	Edmonton
1914	Hugh Pritchard	Caern.?	Wales
1914	Ira Edwards	N.K.	Kansas & Edmonton
1915	William J. Evans (Doris 1915)	Denbigh	Idaho
1917	Owen T. Jones (nk)	Capel Coch, Angl.	L. Crystal, MN
1918	Lewis Humphreys (Catherine)	Llanbrynmair, Mont.	Edmonton
1918	Wm. Robert Jones (nk)	Llanddeiniolen, Caern.	Almira, WA
1918	Hugh Roberts	Pentrefelin, Angl.	Emporia, KS

(Compiled from: Homestead records; Hughes & Jones, 1981; P.P.1973; M.M. 1974)

Notes. The pioneers are listed by family head, but the wife's name is listed in brackets if known, otherwise it is shown by the following symbol — nk. The date of marriage is only listed if it took place after arrival in Wood River.

N.K.: information on origin is not known. Question marks are also used if there is some doubt about the reliability of information, such as birthplace.

Some of these pioneers returned to the United States or Wales after a few years, or upon retirement, so the names do not necessarily appear on the maps of land occupation. Adult sons who accompanied parents and held land in their own right are not listed separately.

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CPR. Canadian Pacific Railway: Land Sales Records. M.S. in Glenbow Institute, Calgary.

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Jeffreys. The original letters of The Rev. Thomas Jeffreys to the Rev. Bodfan Anwyl are found in the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. Copies of the letters in Welsh were translated by Eleanor Aubrey (Ynyshir, Rhondda) and have been deposited at the Alberta Provincial Museum, Edmonton.

RG. Archival Material in National Library, Ottawa. Information on The Welsh can be found in the Ethnic files in which the RG (Record Group) is followed by Subsection Numbers e.g. RG25 A1-Vol. 11. Microfilm versions of this some of this material are identified by microfilm numbers after the RG number e.g. C-10425, Vol. 490, 756658, in which the last number identifies the specific document.

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# Saskatchewan's Community Health Service Associations: An Historical Perspective

*Gordon S. Lawson and Luc Thériault*

**ABSTRACT.** Saskatchewan's five Community Health Services Associations (CHSAs) are the descendants of the province's early medical service cooperatives. The CHSAs provide medical care and an array of health and social services to their members and patients at cooperative health centres that they own and operate in the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Lloydminster, and in the town of Wynyard. While the CHSAs are often cited in the literature on community health centres in Canada and are viewed by progressive health policy analysts as a model for the restructuring of the Canadian health care system, a comprehensive history of the CHSAs has yet to be written. This article is an historical account of the CHSAs from their origins in Saskatchewan's nascent health care system in the early 1900s until the present. It is based in part on minutes, annual reports, briefs, and policy papers generously provided by the CHSAs in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

**SOMMAIRE.** Les cinq associations de centres de soins communautaires de la Saskatchewan sont les descendantes des anciennes coopératives médicales de la province. Ces associations fournissent à leurs membres et patients des soins médicaux, ainsi qu'une gamme de services sociaux et de santé, au sein des centres coopératifs qu'elles possèdent et opèrent dans les cités de Régina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert et Lloydminster, ainsi que dans la ville de Wynyard. Bien que ces associations soient souvent citées dans la littérature concernant les centres de soins communautaires au Canada et soient prises par les analystes progressistes des politiques de santé comme modèles pour la réorganisation du système médical canadien, leur histoire détaillée n'a pas encore été écrite. Cet article est un rapport historique sur ces associations, depuis leurs origines, au sein des services médicaux de la Saskatchewan du début des années 1900, jusqu'à nos jours; il se base en partie sur les minutes, rapports annuels, directives et exposés de principe généreusement fournis par les associations de centres de soins communautaires de Régina, Saskatoon et Prince Albert.

## **Introduction**

The province of Saskatchewan is recognized for its social security initiatives in the health services field. Saskatchewan was the first jurisdiction in North America to introduce free diagnosis and treatment for tuberculosis (1929), universal hospital insurance (1946), universal medical insurance (1962), and universal prescription drug insurance (1974-1982). Although these programs were initiatives of the provincial state, the third sector<sup>1</sup> was also instrumental in their establishment and continues to play an active and important role in the Saskatchewan health care system.

The first advance in the development of a universal health care system in Saskatchewan was in the field of tuberculosis treatment. In 1911 the Saskatchewan Anti-Tuberculosis League was founded in order to fight the "white plague." Beginning in 1917, this grassroots agency provided treatment and care for tuberculosis at sanatoriums it constructed and operated with provincial and federal grants and donations.

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<sup>1</sup> Many organizations in society are neither private-sector businesses run for a profit nor government-owned state corporations or agencies. They are rather independent organizations created to provide a service either to the public or to a defined membership. We follow here the Canadian tradition in referring to such organizations as belonging to the "third sector" of the economy. In the United Kingdom the term "voluntary sector" tends to be used for these organizations, while in France and in Québec the term *économie sociale* ("social economy") is more common.

With the exception of the indigent and war veterans, all patients initially paid at least a part of the costs for their treatment; the provincial government paid a modest per-diem sum of 50¢ per patient. The cost of treatment bankrupted some patients and deterred many from seeking entry to the sanatoriums. In this context, the League mobilized popular support for free treatment. Subsequently, the Liberal government of James G. Gardiner passed legislation, effective 1 January 1929, for the provision of free diagnosis and treatment for tuberculosis, with the full costs met by a grant from the provincial government and assessments on all the province's urban and rural municipalities.<sup>2</sup>

The League's education campaigns and treatment programs, coupled with improved treatments, substantially reduced the province's tuberculosis rates. In 1981, in recognition of the diminishing demand for tuberculosis treatment, the League became the Saskatchewan Lung Association. In 1987 the Saskatchewan Department of Health assumed the Association's responsibility for tuberculosis treatment. The Association continues to fund research and offers an array of educational programs concerning the treatment and prevention of lung diseases.<sup>3</sup>

Third-sector involvement in the provision of general medical services began in 1939 with the establishment of the first of several lay-controlled medical care co-operatives in Saskatchewan. These consumer organizations provided coverage for services obtained from local doctors on a fee-for-service basis.

Saskatchewan's five Community Health Services Associations (CHSAs) are the descendants of the province's early medical service cooperatives. The CHSAs provide medical care and an array of health and social services to their members and patients at cooperative health centres that they own and operate in the cities of Regina, Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Lloydminster, and in the town of Wynyard.

While the CHSAs are often cited in the literature on community health centres in Canada and are viewed by progressive health policy analysts as a model for the restructuring of the Canadian health care system, a comprehensive history of the CHSAs has yet to be written. Dennis Gruending and R.S. Reid have written commissioned histories of the Saskatoon (1973) and Regina (1988) clinics. The narrative of Stan Rands' *Privilege and Policy: A History of Community Clinics in Saskatchewan* ends in 1964 with the defeat of the New Democratic Party.

This article is an historical account of the CHSAs from their origins in Saskatchewan's nascent health care system in the early 1900s until the present. It is based on the aforementioned texts, as well as minutes, annual reports, briefs, and policy papers generously provided by the CHSAs in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert.

## Overview

The CHSAs are non-profit organizations incorporated under the province's Co-operatives Act or the Municipal Medical and Hospital Benefit Associations Act.<sup>4</sup>

The five cooperative health centres, or community clinics as they are referred to in Saskatchewan, are governed by elected boards of directors drawn exclusively from

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2 C. Stuart Houston, *R.G. Ferguson: Crusader Against Tuberculosis* (Toronto and Oxford: Hannah Institute & Dundurn Press, 1991), 72, 81-82.

3 *Ibid.*, 185.

4 Community Health Co-operative Federation Limited, Proposal for the Involvement of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Community in the Development of Co-operative Health Centres in Saskatchewan, 20 October 1997, p. 3.

their membership of 50,000 families and individuals.<sup>5</sup> Membership is open to all persons over the age of 18 with the payment of a lifetime fee of \$5 (\$10 for families).<sup>6</sup>

The clinics collectively serve 75,000 patients of Saskatchewan's approximate population of 1,000,000. Once the domain of predominantly middle-class Caucasians, the clinics now also provide services to a large number of unemployed and low-income people, minorities and aboriginal peoples. These latter groups make up the vast majority of the Lloydminster clinic's patients.<sup>7</sup>

The Lloydminster and Wynyard health centres provide basic primary care consisting of physician, nursing and diagnostic services. The three larger clinics in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina offer a much broader range of services. In addition to the traditional paramedical services of occupational and physical therapy, pharmacy, dentistry, optometry and occupational and physical therapy, they offer nutritional information, as well as family and individual counselling. They also provide mental health services. These services are delivered through an interdisciplinary team approach to care that emphasizes prevention and health promotion. The three urban clinics also engage in a great deal of community outreach and development.<sup>8</sup>

The Wynyard community clinic has been active in dealing with problems and issues affecting health services in rural areas.<sup>9</sup>

With the exception of the Lloydminster clinic,<sup>10</sup> clinic physicians work on a straight salary in a group practice setting that emphasizes prevention and monitoring. This form of medical practice and remuneration contrasts sharply with the majority of the province's practicing physicians who are paid on a fee-for-service basis for medical care rendered under the Saskatchewan Medical Insurance Plan.

The CHSAs reject the biomedical model of health and illness and view social, economic, and environmental well-being as determinants of health. The Saskatoon CHSA, for example, opposed the construction of a uranium refinery at Warman, Saskatchewan (approximately 18 kilometers north of Saskatoon). More recently, the Saskatoon clinic was involved in the grass-roots campaign to defeat the Multilateral Agreement on International Investment.

In 1995 the CHSAs' combined budgets totalled \$13.5 million. The majority of this funding comes from the Saskatchewan Department of Health (hereafter Saskatchewan Health). With the exception of the Lloydminster clinic, these provincial monies

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5 Ibid.

6 The Lloydminster clinic is currently exploring the possibility of granting membership to anyone who uses the clinic's services. Telephone interview with Dal Windram, administrator of the Lloydminster CHSA.

7 Ibid.

8 Community Health Co-operative Federation Limited, Proposal for the Involvement of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Community in the Development of Co-operative Health Centres in Saskatchewan, 20 October 1997, p. 3.

9 The Community Health Co-operative Federation of Saskatchewan, Brief to the Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care, March 1989, p. 57.

10 The physicians providing medical care at the Lloydminster clinic bill the Saskatchewan and Alberta governments for services rendered on a fee-for-service basis. The current administrator of the Lloydminster community clinic is optimistic that several physicians who rent office space from CHSA will accept a salary arrangement. The city of Lloydminster straddles the Alberta and Saskatchewan provincial borders. The Lloydminster clinic provides services to patients and members in both jurisdictions.

are provided directly to the clinics in the form of global budgets. This payment method allows the flexibility to tailor health programs to meet the needs of the CHSAs' diverse and targeted clients, such as seniors, aboriginal peoples and those with multiple disabilities. Additional funding is provided through grants from their communities, the federal government, fees for services they render, and donations.<sup>11</sup>

The CHSAs are active members and contributors to the province's vibrant social economy. For instance, credit unions provide CHSAs with banking and payroll services, Co-operators Insurance provides general insurance as well as employee disability and life insurance programs, CHSAs are enrolled in the Co-operative Superannuation Plan, and retail cooperatives supply CHSAs with materials for the maintenance and operation of their facilities.<sup>12</sup>

The Community Health Co-operative Federation (CHCF) is the umbrella organization of the CHSAs in Saskatchewan. It is the forum through which the individual associations maintain contact and discuss mutual problems and interests. On behalf of the individual associations, the federation lobbies and negotiates with the provincial government with respect to financing, legislation and health policy; acts as a liaison body with the provincial government and other organizations (e.g. the Canadian Co-operative Association); and promotes the community clinic model on a provincial and international basis. The federation and the three urban CHSAs also provide technical and financial assistance to a women's health centre in Nicaragua.

### **Origins and Birth**

The development of the CHSAs was the direct result of the bitter struggle to introduce a provincial medical insurance plan in Saskatchewan in 1962. Despite the opposition of organized medicine and the majority of the province's private practitioners, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation government of T.C. Douglas and Woodrow Lloyd proceeded with its plans to implement a provincial medical insurance program. Physicians would be remunerated on a fee-for-service basis by the state for the provision of medical care to the citizens of Saskatchewan. Maintaining that such a scheme would result in political interference in the delivery of medical care and the eventual transformation of the medical profession into salaried civil servants, the leaders of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of Saskatchewan (SCPS) declared that they would not cooperate with the government plan. Furthermore, SCPS officials stated they could not guarantee the delivery of medical services after the plan's implementation date of 1 July 1962.

In this context, small groups of lay persons and several progressive physicians in Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina began organizing not only to provide facilities for physicians willing to provide medical services under the provincial plan, but also to develop an alternative to private fee-for-service medical practice.<sup>13</sup> In particular, the

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11 Denise Albrecht and Patrick Lapointe, "Community Health Centres in Canada: In a Land of Opportunities and Threats," presented to International Conference on Community Health Centres, 3-6 December 1995.

12 Community Health Co-operative Federation Limited, Proposal for the Involvement of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Community in the Development of Co-operative Health Centres in Saskatchewan, 20 October 1997, p. 3.

13 Dennis Gruending, *The First 10 Years* (Saskatoon: Community Health Services Association, 1973), 7; Prince Albert Community Clinic (hereafter PACC), Minutes, 26 May 1962; Margaret Hughes, *A Biography: The Community Health Center Regina* (Regina: Community Health Services Association (Regina) Ltd., 1977), 4.

founders of what would become the first CHSAs wished to develop group medical practice clinics staffed by salaried doctors and other health care personnel that would strive to maintain health in addition to curing illness. The proposed clinics would be owned and administered by their lay members in cooperation with their resident physicians.

These ideas and proposals were neither new nor without precedent in Saskatchewan: they were the continuation and legacy of lay-controlled medical care programs and popular health care activism in Saskatchewan dating back to the establishment of the first municipal doctor plan in 1915. In that year, a country doctor who in the past had been unable to collect a sufficient income from his patients due to crop failures, agreed to provide medical services to the residents of the rural municipality of Sarnia for an annual salary of \$2000. Through the promotional efforts of the organized farming movement, this indigenous form of lay-controlled medical care spread throughout rural Saskatchewan. By the time the CCF came to power in Saskatchewan in 1944, the residents of 101 of the province's 303 rural municipalities, sixty villages and eleven towns with a combined population of 200,000 were receiving medical services from salaried municipal doctors.<sup>14</sup>

In response to demands for a similar service in the cities, the provincial government enacted the Municipal Medical and Hospital Association Act in 1938. This legislation permitted any ten or more persons to incorporate a health insurance program for its members. The first group of citizens to organize a medical service under the act, the Regina Mutual Medical Benefit Association headed by H.L. Fowler (manager of Consumers' Co-operative Refineries Limited), obtained applications from eight doctors to work in a cooperative clinic that was to be staffed by salaried physicians. Foreshadowing the SCPS' reaction to those doctors who were willing to work for the CHSAs in the 1960s, the Regina District Medical Society successfully pressured all eight applicants to withdraw from the project. The cooperative organized a simple indemnity plan that provided coverage for their members' medical fees. Similar fee-for-service plans were organized in Saskatoon, Prince Albert and Melfort.<sup>15</sup>

Despite SCPS opposition to salary remuneration, the province's Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Associations, along with the Saskatchewan State Hospital and Medical League<sup>16</sup> and a large number of trade unions and agriculture organizations, recommended (in their briefs to the 1944 Sigerist Commission) that doctors be paid on a salary basis.<sup>17</sup> This was also the position of the Saskatchewan Federation of Agriculture, "representing the organized Producers and Consumers' Co-operatives."<sup>18</sup>

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14 Seymour Martin Lipsett, *Agrarian Socialism: The Co-operative Commonwealth in Saskatchewan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1950), 228.

15 Stan Rands, *Privilege and Policy: A History of Community Clinics in Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: Community Health Co-operative Federation, 1994), 25; Robin F. Badgley and Samuel Wolfe, *Doctors' Strike: Medical Care and Conflict in Saskatchewan* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1967), 16-17.

16 The SHML was a confederation of voluntary and governmental organizations including homemakers clubs, fraternal societies, church and farm organizations, the Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, cooperative groups, 120 rural municipalities, six cities, twenty-four towns and fifty-six villages. Established in the city of Prince Albert in 1936, the League lobbied the provincial government to establish a comprehensive medical hospital services plan. It was a staunch opponent of fee-for-service remuneration.

17 Gordon Stewart Lawson, "The Co-operative Commonwealth Federation, Health Care Reform and Physician Remuneration in the Province of Saskatchewan, 1915-1949" (Master's thesis, University of Regina, 1998), 58-61.

18 *Ibid.*, 59.

But under intense pressure from the SCPS, in 1945 the new CCF government of T.C. Douglas rejected a medical services plan devised by its health planners that envisaged the expansion and development of the province's municipal doctor system into a state-salaried medical service stationed in group practice clinics with some measures for lay control.<sup>19</sup> The popular demand for salaried group practice clinics continued, however.

In 1946 the Saskatoon Mutual Medical and Hospital Benefit Association, with 16,000 members, announced a million-dollar plan to establish a group practice clinic staffed by salaried doctors in Saskatoon with satellite operations in neighbouring rural centres. In due course the Saskatoon District Medical Society established Medical Services Incorporated (MSI), a doctor-sponsored fee-for-service medical care plan, in order to compete with the cooperative and pre-empt its ambitious plans, which a 1951 SCPS report maintained, "threatened to completely jeopardise the future of prepaid medical care in the province and the welfare of the profession in general."<sup>20</sup>

By the time T.C. Douglas announced his government's plans in 1959 to establish a provincial medical services plan, MSI had experienced substantial growth and successfully deterred the expansion of both the lay medical cooperatives and the municipal doctor system. In that year, MSI had contracts with sixty rural municipalities and had a combined enrollment of 211,514 persons; and its sister organization, Regina-based Group Medical Services, had an enrolment of 69,305. In contrast, the number of municipal doctor plans had fallen from 179 contracts in 1943 to 126 in 1959. And the once thriving medical cooperatives were in decline.<sup>21</sup>

The growth of the doctor-sponsored plans, coupled with the decline of the municipal doctor system and medical cooperatives, emboldened the medical profession to withdraw its support for a state-financed medical care plan in 1950 and, in turn, attempt to defeat the CCF provincial medical care plan in 1962 by withholding its services. However, the Municipal Medical and Hospital Association Act was still in effect. It provided the legislative authority for groups in Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and, following their example, an additional thirty-five communities in Saskatchewan to set up (or begin to organize) with loans from the province's credit unions, community clinics which would secure medical services during the twenty-three-day doctor strike.

Former salaried municipal doctors, in addition to recently recruited British doctors, provided medical leadership to the clinics. Dr. Samuel Wolf, medical consultant to the provincial association of CHSAs and the first medical director of the Saskatoon CHSA, stated in a 1982 interview, "I found as a municipal doctor I could make a living on a salary instead of being paid by piecework."<sup>22</sup> Many of the clinic organizers maintain that it was the threat to fee-for-service medicine posed by physicians willing to work as salaried employees of community clinic boards that caused the SCPS to seek a compromise with the government and bring to an end the strike with the

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19 Ibid, 102-11.

20 C.D. Naylor, *Private Practice, Public Payment: Canadian Medicine and the Politics of Health Insurance, 1911-1966* (Kingston and Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 149; Malcolm G. Taylor, *Health Insurance and Canadian Public Policy: The Seven Decisions that Created the Canadian Health Insurance System* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978), 260.

21 Taylor, *Health Insurance and Canadian Public Policy*, 260.

22 "Saskatoon Doctor Recalls Early Days of Medicare," *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 7 June 1982.

signing of the Saskatoon Agreement.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, in an address to the annual meeting of the Regina CHSA in 1987, Allan Blakeney, who had been Minister of Health during the 1962 doctors' strike, stated: "Community Clinics were in the very front line in the medicare battle of 1962. They made medicare possible."<sup>24</sup>

### **The Early Years: 1962-1964**

With the end of the strike and the resumption of medical services under the government's Medical Care Insurance Act, the *raison d'être* for many of the CHSAs disappeared; accordingly, many quickly disbanded. Among others, the ideals and objectives of consumer control, group practice, preventative medicine and salaried remuneration of health care providers persisted, particularly in the larger urban centres of Regina, Prince Albert and Saskatoon. However, these groups soon discovered that the provisions of the Saskatoon Agreement did not facilitate their aspirations for an alternative to curative fee-for-service medicine; and neither would the provincial government or the Saskatchewan Medical Care Insurance Commission (SMIC), which was charged with administering the program.

First, after the CHSA doctors' unsuccessful attempts to obtain satisfactory salaries from the SMIC, in early 1963 the Commission ruled that payments to community clinic physicians had to be on a fee-for-service basis.<sup>25</sup>

Second, with the absence of financial aid from the provincial government, the fledgling CHSAs' main revenue source was their doctors' earnings from the Medical Care Insurance Commission. At considerable personal financial sacrifice, clinic doctors gave all of their fee-for-service income to their clinic boards in return for a salary, or used part of their earnings to help establish and administer the clinics. These arrangements and financial circumstances hindered the objective of consumer participation and control.

As the CHSAs' medical personnel were providing most of the monies for the operation and expansion of the clinics, they had an equal or greater influence in their administration. In Saskatoon, this medical dominance was re-enforced by the terms of the Saskatoon Agreement which stated that "the role of the citizen group [CHSA] in the provision of insured services is to be limited to that of landlord." In this context, according to Dennis Gruending, "it was difficult for the board to accept that it had a real important role to play." The Regina CHSA's insistence on assuming administrative control led to intense and protracted disagreements and tension between the clinic's lay board and physicians. In 1967, in order to ease a debilitating debt and to eliminate its operating deficits, the Regina CHSA reluctantly handed over administrative control of its clinic to its medical staff in return for an annual rent payment and for assuming liability for accumulated back rent and loans.<sup>26</sup>

In addition, neither the SMIC nor the provincial government assisted the community clinics in obtaining doctors to staff their clinics.<sup>27</sup> In several communities well-equipped facilities stood idle for want of physicians.

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23 Benjamin G. Smillie, "Foreword" to Rands, *Privilege and Policy*, 10-14.

24 Reid, *More than Medicare* (Regina: Community Health Services Association (Regina) Ltd., 1988), 44.

25 Rands, *Privilege and Policy*, 75.

26 Prince Albert Community Clinic (hereafter PACC), O.K. Hjertaas, Medical Director's Report, 24 April 1972, p. 9; Gruending, *The First 10 Years*, 21; Reid, *More than Medicare*, 18-21, 31-32; Hughes, *The Community Health Center Regina*, 20.

The impediments to the establishment of consumer-controlled medical cooperatives posed by the Saskatoon Agreement and the provincial government's apparent unwillingness to aid the CHSAs led some of the clinic organizers to conclude that in obtaining an end to the strike and the doctors' compliance with the Medical Care Insurance Act, the government promised that it would not support the community clinic movement.

A further obstruction to the development of community clinics was the antipathy of organized medicine in Saskatchewan. Through the influence of organized medicine on hospital boards, community clinic doctors were denied hospital privileges. In response to lobbying efforts on the part of the CHSAs, the provincial government set up a Royal Commission on Hospital Staff Appointments under Justice Mervyn Woods. The Woods Commission reported in December of 1963 that clinic doctors were being unfairly discriminated against and recommended the granting of hospital privileges. Subsequently, the Hospital Standards Act was passed, providing an appeal procedure for doctors denied or delayed in obtaining hospital privileges. This legislation was repealed after the NDP lost the 1964 provincial election to the Liberals under the leadership of Ross Thatcher.<sup>28</sup>

### 1964-1971

Although the Liberal Minister of Public Health, David Steuart, ensured that clinic doctors were admitted to the province's hospitals, several policy initiatives threatened the financial solvency of the CHSAs. First, the Thatcher government introduced deterrent fees on the pretext that patients were abusing the health care system. In the view of the CHSAs, these user fees deterred proper utilization of their facilities and services. The three clinics in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert mobilized the general public under the banner of "Citizens for Defense of Medicare," held protest marches, and gathered 35,000 signatures on a petition. This activism marked the beginning of the CHSAs' long history of campaigning for the preservation of medicare. To shield its members from the costs and adverse effects of the user charges, the three urban clinics set up a Mutual Protection Plan. For \$7.50 (single) or \$15 (family) the clinics assumed the cost of the user fees. The plan was running a surplus when these charges were discontinued by the NDP in 1970.<sup>29</sup>

In 1966 the government cancelled the clinics' contracts to provide minor surgery. This financial blow was followed and compounded by the discontinuation of a number of laboratory, x-ray and physiotherapy contracts. The loss of these revenue sources added to the urban clinics' burgeoning deficits and weakened the community clinic movement as a whole. In 1966 the provincial office had to close, with the association's debt of approximately \$50,000 written off by Federated Co-operatives Limited and the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool. By 1972 only ten of the twenty-five CHSAs that had succeeded in establishing facilities were still operating clinics. And only in the cities of Prince Albert, Saskatoon and Regina were the CHSAs successful in establishing multispecialty group practices.<sup>30</sup>

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27 Rands, *Privilege and Policy*, 66-70.

28 *Ibid.*, 83-93; Gruending, *The First 10 Years*, 17.

29 *Ibid.*, 20.

30 Reid, *More than Medicare*, 29; D.O. Anderson, "The Feasibility of a Study of the Community Clinics and Other Group Practices in Saskatchewan." Report Commissioned by the Director of Medical Care, Department of National Health and Welfare, 1 November 1969, pp. 15-16; Gruending, *The First Ten Years*, 10, 19.

The Liberals' financial assault on the CHSAs occurred despite studies by clinic physicians suggesting that the community clinics reduced government health care expenditures. Dr. Orville Hjertaas in Prince Albert, and Drs. Samuel Wolfe and Robin F. Badgley in Saskatoon found that in the community clinics the overall costs per patient were lower than those of fee-for-service practitioners; CHSA patients were less likely to be hospitalized and CHSA physicians were more productive.<sup>31</sup> To facilitate such studies, in 1968, the Saskatoon CHSA set up the Saskatoon Community Health Foundation, a registered charity, to provide funds for research into the delivery of medical care. While the provincial government was unmoved by such findings, these claims attracted the attention of the federal government which was then greatly concerned about the rising costs of health care in the context of its funding commitments to provincial health care plans. In the early 1970s the federal government commissioned a study to investigate the cost-effectiveness of the community clinics.<sup>32</sup> Since then several studies by government and non-government agencies found, by using data from Saskatchewan community clinics, that community-sponsored health centres with salaried group practice offer significant cost reductions as well as noneconomic advantages.<sup>33</sup>

The clinics' deficits and the restrictive funding arrangement impeded the CHSAs' original objective of utilizing the prevention and health promotion services of allied professionals along with those of physicians. As the clinics' main income source was their physicians' fee-for-service earnings, the implementation of preventive programs reduced income. Subsequently, as Dr. Hjertaas noted in 1982, preventative programs were "under-funded and under-emphasized."<sup>34</sup> However, the Prince Albert clinic did hire a nutritionist. And through the provision of a grant from the Milbank Foundation of New York the Saskatoon clinic was able to appoint, in the 1960s, the first social worker to be attached to a community health centre.<sup>35</sup> This proved to be a unique and important contribution to Canadian group practice. A study of patient referrals designed by the social worker, Genevieve Teed, and Dr. Samuel Wolf revealed that a social worker in a group practice may serve to deter or reduce some hospital stays and direct patients to other sources of aid.<sup>36</sup> Following the lead of the Saskatoon CHSA, the Regina and Prince Albert clinics also obtained social workers. The Saskatoon clinic was the source of further innovation and progressive health care policy with the introduction of a prescription drug plan in the late 1960s.

### **The Saskatoon Community Clinic and the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan**

Based on an analysis of the drug-prescribing habits of its physicians during the late

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31 PACC, O.K. Hjertaas, Medical Director's Report, 24 April 1972; O.K. Hjertaas, "A Study of Health Care Economics in a Consumer Sponsored Group Practice in Saskatchewan," *Group Health and Welfare News* 10 February 1969; Wolfe S. et al: "A Description and Analysis of the Work of a Group of Doctors," *Milbank Memorial Fund Quarterly* 46 (1968): 103.

32 See D.O. Anderson and A. Crichton, *What Price Group Practice?* (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1973).

33 See for example, Douglas E. Angus and Pran Manga, *Co-op/Consumer Sponsored Health Care Delivery Effectiveness* (Ottawa: Canadian Co-operative Association, 1990).

34 PACC, O.K. Hjertaas, "Retirement Report to Board," 14 April 1982, p. 9.

35 Community Health Services Association, Saskatoon (hereafter CHSAs), Account of the 20th anniversary celebration of Medicare and Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association, 5 June 1982.

36 *Ibid.*, p. 27; Samuel Wolfe and Genevieve Teed, "A Study of the Work of a Medical Social Worker in a Group Medical Practice," *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, 27 May 1967.

1960s, the Saskatoon CHSA developed a drug formulary that was used by its non-profit pharmacy. Competitive tendering, together with the increasing number of generic products from Canada's pharmaceutical industry, afforded considerable reductions in the cost of drugs prescribed by clinic doctors. These savings were brought to the NDP's attention by a board member and a clinic physician serving on the 1971 NDP election platform committee, which devised a health plank promising a publicly financed prescription drug program. After the NDP returned to power under the leadership of Allan Blakeney in 1972, the influence of the Saskatoon clinic continued, especially on the new government committee charged with devising a drug plan. The Saskatoon clinic's drug plan served as the model for the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Program introduced in 1975 — the first and, until the Progressive Conservative government reduced its coverage in the 1980s, the only universal prescription drug insurance in Canada. Because of the bulk quantities the government would centrally purchase, Saskatchewan was able to obtain drugs at very low prices for its drug insurance program.<sup>37</sup>

### Global Budgets

The NDP's 1971 health policy also promised support for the CHSAs through the introduction of "alternative" methods of financing health services. The clinic physicians' fee-for-service billings were still regarded by the CHSAs as an unsatisfactory method of financing for reasons noted above. In August of 1971, the Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert clinics began what CHSA representatives in attendance have described as tough negotiations with a less than enthusiastic provincial government for a new funding arrangement. After a near breakdown in negotiations, the provincial government agreed to the introduction of global budgeting, effective 1 March 1972. Under this funding method the three urban CHSAs received a lump sum of monies based on past fee-for-service payments from the Saskatchewan Medical Insurance Commission and the Saskatchewan Hospital Insurance Plan. This arrangement allowed the community clinics to hire doctors on salaries negotiated between the clinic boards and physicians. Also included in this first budget were provisions for outpatient and social services, health education and nutrition counselling. New programs have since been added to this baseline after negotiations with the provincial government. Global budgets are negotiated on a yearly basis and are based predominantly on the utilization of clinic services over the previous year. The CHSAs retained the responsibility for raising money for land, buildings and equipment. The remaining six clinics in rural Saskatchewan continued to operate on a fee-for-service basis.

The new funding arrangements were greeted with severe condemnation by organized medicine in the province. This hostility was cited by the NDP Health minister at the time, Walter Smishek, as a reason for the provincial government's reluctance to assist the CHSAs in alleviating their crippling accumulated debt. The CHSAs felt they were instrumental in bringing to an end the 1962 doctors' strike and, therefore, were justified in receiving state assistance with the debt acquired in setting up the clinics. In a 1988 interview Smishek stated that the provincial cabinet believed the introduction of legislation to assist with the settlement of CHSA debt would have

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37 CHSAs, Brenda Mager, Judy Brady, John Bury, "In Memoriam — The Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan," *Focus* 23, no. 4 (July-August 1987); Jim Harding, "The Welfare State as a Therapeutic State: The Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan 1974-1982," in Harding, *Social Policy and Social Justice: The NDP Government in Saskatchewan during the Blakeney Years* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994), 92.

triggered a fierce protest from the SCPS. The cabinet believed the public would not have understood the need for another confrontation with the medical profession.<sup>38</sup>

Global budgeting brought new life to the three urban community clinics. First, in addition to facilitating salary remuneration, the relief from financial responsibility and anxiety afforded by the new funding arrangements permitted clinic doctors to concentrate on their work and quality control. The Saskatoon CHSA physicians were also able to offer medical training within the clinic in association with the medical school at the University of Saskatchewan. Medical students from across Canada chose to spend time at the Saskatoon clinic in order to learn new approaches to health care delivery.<sup>39</sup>

Second, the new funding arrangements allowed the clinics' consumer boards to be more involved in the decision making and administration of the clinics, as the majority of monies now came from the government directly to the CHSAs rather than from fee-for-service billings covered by the Medical Care Insurance Commission. Global budgeting also permitted the Regina CHSA to regain the administrative control of its clinic that it had ceded to the doctors in return for assuming accumulated debt. This transition occurred with some tension and growing pains. For example, Regina clinic physicians were unwilling to work for a lay board, and left with their patients. The Regina CHSA had to recruit new physicians and begin to slowly rebuild its membership and patient list.<sup>40</sup>

Third, with the financial stability afforded by global funding, the three urban clinics were able to expand their facilities and implement programming that, in the words of Saskatoon CHSA President Rennie Feast, they could only "dream" of in the past.<sup>41</sup> New programs were added and devised, based on the input of members and patients. Understanding that social problems lie at the root of many illnesses which cannot be addressed through curative measures, the Saskatoon CHSA implemented a large number of programs to deal with unplanned pregnancies, marital disputes, parenthood and childhood, unemployment, and poverty. Group therapy, chiropody, prenatal and home care programs were also established. In the area of group practice, the role of the nurse was expanded.

The Regina CHSA established counselling, nutrition and chiropody programs, as well as a senior citizen health checkup service. This new programming enabled the Regina CHSA to rebuild its membership and patient list after the exodus of doctors.<sup>42</sup> With the introduction of a program for early detection of cancer in women, the Regina CHSA serves a large clientele of women.<sup>43</sup>

The Prince Albert community clinic added a social worker to its personnel and launched an extensive home care program. A wide range of health promotion programs was also introduced.<sup>44</sup>

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38 Reid, *More than Medicare*, 44.

39 CHSAS, Margaret Mahood, Medical Director, "[Report] for the Eleventh Annual Meeting, March 30, 1974."

40 T. Kue Young, "Lay-Professional Conflict in a Canadian Community Health Centre: A Case Report," in Coburn, D'Arcy, New and Torrance (eds.), *Health And Canadian Society: Sociological Perspectives* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1981), 307-9.

41 CHSAS, Rennie Fast, "Board Report," *Focus*, January-February 1994.

42 Reid, *More than Medicare*, 45.

43 The Community Health Co-operative Federation of Saskatchewan, Brief to the Saskatchewan Commission on Directions in Health Care, March 1989, p. 56.

Of all these new programs, the chiropody schemes had the most impact on provincial health policy. Chiropody programs were implemented in Regina and Saskatoon after a survey of their memberships revealed that foot care was sorely lacking in those communities. The Saskatoon CHSA's appeals for provincial funding support were initially rejected, although the Department of Health promised to consider funding for a pilot project. In view of the need for this service the board decided to proceed without government financing. An increase in membership assessments was implemented to finance a scheme. This program was so successful and the need so great that private practitioners in the Saskatoon area, who were traditionally opposed to the CHSAs, were sending their patients to the clinic. In this context, the Progressive Conservative government of Grant Devine, which came to power in 1982, decided to finance a provincewide chiropody program. Dr. Ritchie of the Regina Community Clinic was recruited for the position of director. Subsequently, the provincial plan, implemented in 1984, resembled the one that he had designed for the Regina CHSA.<sup>45</sup>

In addition to adding new programs, the three urban CHSA's also engaged in a great deal of outreach to the underprivileged in their communities, as well as in rural and northern Saskatchewan where health services have been traditionally less accessible.

In its first foray into outreach, the Regina CHSA worked with members of the North Central Community Society to establish its health centre, with clinic personnel providing services.<sup>46</sup> Later, the Regina Community Clinic would provide services to the rural community of Southey.

In addition to providing medical services to its satellite clinic in Canwood, which was established in 1964, the nutritionist at the Prince Albert community clinic participated in nutrition programs on five Indian reserves.<sup>47</sup>

The Saskatoon CHSA concentrated on providing and expanding medical service beyond its traditional middle-class membership and patients to other groups such as minorities and the poor. To this end, a satellite clinic was established in a low-income area of Saskatoon, and a community health nurse was hired. Working with local residents the Saskatoon CHSA was able to devise programs designed specifically for the needs of the area's population of new immigrants, aboriginal people and poor people.

In 1977 the Saskatoon CHSA established an optometry program for northern Saskatchewan with a contract from the Department of Northern Saskatchewan and Health and Welfare Canada.<sup>48</sup>

The town of Delisle approached the Saskatoon CHSA for assistance when its hospital was closed by the provincial government in the early 1970s.<sup>49</sup> Subsequently,

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44 PACC, O.K. Hjertaas, "Retirement Report to Board," 14 April 1982., p. 8.

45 CHSAS, Minutes of Membership Meeting Held at Western Co-op College, 15 November 1974; CHSAS, Clinical Co-ordinators Annual Report 1980; Reid, *More than Medicare*, 54.

46 *Ibid.*, 53.

47 PACC, Linda Jensen, Presentation to Honourable Justice Emmett M. Hall, At The Co-operative Health Centre Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, 29 January 1980, on nutrition education programs, p. 3.

48 CHSAS, "Clinical Co-ordinator's Report — 1977-1978," *Focus* 14, no. 3 (May-June 1978).

49 CHSAS, "Summary of Annual Meeting, CHSA, held Wednesday, January 28, 1981 at the Lawson Heights School."

clinic personnel provided a medical, x-ray and physiotherapy service to its new Community Health and Social Services Centre. In 1980 the rural community of Waldheim approached the clinic for assistance in providing a similar service.<sup>50</sup>

The Saskatoon CHSA also assisted the Wynyard community clinic in preparing its first global budget.

In 1980 the board of the Wynyard CHSA decided that it was time either to dissolve the association or to establish a “real” community clinic. This rural CHSA had been acting primarily as a landlord, renting office space to physicians who agreed with their ideas on medical care. In May of 1981, the Department of Health agreed to allocate funding to the clinic on a global basis on condition that it find a doctor willing to work on salary.<sup>51</sup>

Although the advent of global budgets allowed the CHSAs to fulfill their original objectives, they were prevented from reaching their full potential by the provincial government’s fiscal conservatism. CHSA budgets grew tighter year by year and did not keep pace with inflation.<sup>52</sup>

### 1982-1991

The NDP lost the 1982 provincial election to the right-wing populist Progressive Conservative Party under the leadership of Grant Devine. Veteran board members, recalling the difficulties of the 1960s under Ross Thatcher’s Liberals, feared that the CHSAs were headed for hard times.<sup>53</sup> In particular, they were concerned that the new government might severely alter or terminate global budgeting. This premonition proved groundless, as the anticipated assault on the clinics did not occur. The clinics’ funding arrangements remained unchanged. Moreover, government funding via the Saskatchewan Hospital Services Plan (SHSP) made it possible for the Saskatoon CHSA to open a new satellite clinic (Northern Heights Clinic) in the residential suburb of River Heights.<sup>54</sup> However, in subsequent years, the CHSAs suffered from severe underfunding as the fiscal restraint imposed during the later years of the Blakeney administration in the health care sector continued and was more stringently applied by the Devine Conservatives.

Beginning in 1985, there was no increase in funding to health services funded by the Department of Health. In order to maintain programming and keep up with increased utilization of their services the clinics ran deficits, raised member assessments and sought more donations. However, as their representations for increased funding went unheeded and budgetary restraint continued, the CHSAs found it necessary to exercise extreme cost-control measures, including staff cuts and layoffs as well as wage reductions to physicians and administrators.<sup>55</sup>

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50 CHSAS, John McConnel, “Director’s Report,” *Focus* 16, no. 3 (May-June 1980).

51 Wendy Roy, “Staying Healthy Co-operatively,” *Western People*, 22 June 1982.

52 Reid, *More than Medicare*, 54.

53 CHSA, President’s Message to the Annual Meeting of Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association Limited, 4 June 1983.

54 Ibid.

55 CHSAS, C. A. Robson, President’s Report to the 25th Annual Meeting of C.H.S. (Saskatoon) Ass’n Ltd., 3 June 1987; Community Health Services Association, Regina (hereafter CHSAR), Tom Marwick, “Executive Director’s Report,” *Pulse* 19 (June 1988); Reid, *More than Medicare*, 55; CHSAS, Trevor Shepstone, Report To Annual Meeting, 12 June 1987; CHSAS, *Focus* 21, no. 2 (March-April 1985); CHSAS, Judith Martin, Administrator’s Report, Annual General Meeting, 15 June 1988.

In this context, CHSA programming suffered. Indeed, the Regina clinic had to discontinue some programs completely and was unable to introduce new ones. Nor could it serve all the people who wanted access to its facilities and services.<sup>56</sup>

The Saskatoon CHSA initially placed its programming plans on hold, but later resolved to proceed with some new programs because they were urgently needed in the community and would improve the profile of the clinic and encourage its use. In addition to more counselling programs, a health maintenance program for women aged 45-64 was introduced. Moreover, after the province's universal drug plan was discontinued, the Saskatoon CHSA offered financial assistance to those who could not afford prescription drugs. To support these initiatives and to continue to improve and experiment with better methods of health services delivery the Saskatoon CHSA increasingly relied on its Community Health Foundation, which in 1984-85 received approval from Revenue Canada to receive donations for projects other than research.<sup>57</sup>

The Prince Albert clinic also found it difficult to add new or expanded programs, but managed to do so by relying on voluntary funding.<sup>58</sup>

The CHSAs were wary of publicly criticizing the government's health policy, owing to their dependence on government funding and the fact that their funding arrangements with SHSP had thirty-day cancellation clauses. However, as budgetary restraints continued and included the discontinuation of the Saskatchewan Prescription Drug Plan that the Saskatoon community clinic had pioneered, as well as the children's dental plan introduced by the NDP in 1974, the CHSAs decided that the health funding cuts had to be met with strong protests. In cooperation with the Saskatchewan Health Coalition and CUPE, the Community Health Co-operative Federation (CHCF) held a well-attended and publicized protest march in Regina on 20 June 1987; a similar march had taken place in Saskatoon on 17 June 1987.<sup>59</sup>

Adding to the clinics' frustrations with the Devine government was the suppression of a 1983 Saskatchewan Health survey of the Saskatoon and Prince Albert CHSAs revealing that their services led to lower per capita health care costs, lower prescription drug utilization, fewer hospitalizations and shorter hospital stays. It was only after intense lobbying by the CHSAs that the government released the results of this study in 1989. As with the earlier studies, the CHSAs hoped that these findings would result in increased funding and recognition. While there were several minor changes to funding policy in 1991 that afforded greater flexibility and improved the clinics' financial position, there were no increases in funding. Moreover, the Commission on Directions in Health Care, appointed by the provincial government in 1989 to review Saskatchewan's health care system and make recommendations for its reform, virtually ignored the community clinics. The Commission's final report simply stated that the legal and funding status of the community clinics should be reviewed and clarified by another committee.

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56 CHSAR, *Pulse* 19 (June 1988); *Pulse* 20 (June 1989); Reid, *More than Medicare*, 45.

57 CHSAS, Report on 1987 AGM: Resolutions and Follow-Up in the Order as Voted on the 1987 AGM; CHSAS, Trevor Shepstone, Report to Annual Meeting, 12 June 1985; CHSAS, Administrator's Report Annual General Meeting, 15 June 1988; C.A. Robson, President's Report to the 25th Annual Meeting of C.H.S. (Saskatoon) Ass'n Ltd., 3 June 1987; CHSAS, *Focus* 21, no. 6 (November-December 1985).

58 PACC, Stan Rice, "Administrator's Annual Report," 8 June 1988.

59 CHSAS, C.A. Robinson, President's Report Annual General Meeting, 15 June 1988.

## Wellness and the NDP: 1992-1998

In mid-January 1992, after the NDP had been returned to power, CHCF representatives met with the minister of Health, Louise Simard, for the first time in ten years. They were assured of the new government's commitment to community-based alternatives in care and delivery, and of a continuing role for community clinics in health reform.<sup>60</sup> This positive reception, coupled with the unveiling of the provincial government's health reform agenda in February, made the CHSAs optimistic that the financial and legislative security they had sought for so long would now finally be realized.

The new government's health reform agenda entailed the closure and conversion of approximately fifty-one rural hospitals into community health centres, and the establishment of elected district health boards responsible for the planning, administration and delivery of services in their jurisdictions based on community needs assessments. These structural reforms were to be accompanied by a new holistic approach to health and illness, the so-called "wellness" model, emphasizing disease prevention, health promotion, consumer participation, the integration of institutional, community-based and preventive services, and the reduction of health inequities among low-income and aboriginal peoples.<sup>61</sup>

As the CHSAs observed, the government health reform program and the wellness model were consistent with the community clinics' founding principles that they had sought to embody and promote from their inception. Accordingly, despite reservations about their place in this new order and their future relationship with the proposed district health boards, the CHSAs enthusiastically endorsed the government's reform initiatives and declared that they would cooperate with the provincial government and the new district health boards in reforming the province's health care system. The Prince Albert CHSA even considered promoting the government's health care reforms to a skeptical public. In its 1992 annual report the board of directors noted that the cooperative health centre "has a role to play to help allay the fears and misinformation [re: wellness], which are founded on lack of understanding."<sup>62</sup>

In Prince Albert, the CHSA assumed a leadership role in the development of the local health board. Clinic staff, including Stan Rice (administrator of the Prince Albert CHSA and a long-time leader of the community clinic movement) and Paige Finney (Program Development Officer), were seconded to the new health board to formulate policy and get programming off the ground. In 1993 Stan Rice accepted a permanent position as Chief Executive Administrator of the Prince Albert Health Board. The CHSA representatives also contributed to various working groups and committees set up to examine and devise existing and new community-based services for Prince Albert.<sup>63</sup> In addition, the Prince Albert Community Clinic shared information and provided assistance with purchasing, laundry services, and realizing efficiencies. Through such cooperation with the local health board, the clinic's medical director foresaw an "enhancement of our services."<sup>64</sup>

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60 CHSAR, *Pulse* 23 (June 1992).

61 Province of Saskatchewan, *A Saskatchewan Vision for Health: A Framework for Change* (Regina: Saskatchewan Health, 1992).

62 PACC, Board of Director's Report, 1992.

63 PACC, Lydia Uhlik, Administrator's Report, 1993.

64 PACC, Medical Directors Report, circa 1992.

Throughout its active cooperation and participation in the formation of the Prince Albert Health District, the clinic's administrators and physicians remained committed to maintaining their autonomy. Accordingly, it shared with the other CHSAs a profound disappointment and concern when informed in 1994 that the provincial government intended to transfer funding responsibility for the community clinics over to the district health boards.<sup>65</sup>

In a discussion paper concerning the proposed funding transfer, the Saskatoon CHSA observed that the district health boards had "shown little interest in, or support for our services and community based services in general ... they appear to be primarily focused on the acute care agenda."<sup>66</sup> Indeed, when representatives of the Regina CHSA met with the Regina District Health Board for the first time in November 1992 they found that district health board members had "very little knowledge of the community clinic model."<sup>67</sup> In this context, the CHSAs feared for their autonomy and ability to provide the quality and variety of services made possible by global budgets from Saskatchewan Health. In addition, the Saskatoon CHSA, the most "politically active" of the community clinics, feared that funding control might compromise its capacity to independently advocate for the health care interests of its members and patients. The Saskatoon clinic would risk conflict with the district health board due to advocacy positions taken on behalf of clinic members, which in turn might affect the district health board's willingness to support clinic programs.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, the CHSAs were determined to resist the proposed funding transfer.

In November of 1994 the CHCF presented a brief to the provincial government requesting that Saskatchewan Health continue to fund CHSAs directly, and that any decision to transfer funding responsibility to district health boards be deferred for a minimum of three years. Should the provincial government proceed to transfer fiscal responsibility for CHSAs, legislation and/or regulations protecting their health care delivery models and funding should be established prior to the transfer. The Federation reiterated its support for health care reform and its commitment to working with the district health boards to provide effective, economic, and efficient health care delivery. This could be accomplished through affiliation agreements addressing the involvement of CHSAs in joint needs assessment, planning, coordination and service delivery.<sup>69</sup> The minister promised to review the proposed transfer and committed global funding under Saskatchewan Health for another year.

In subsequent years, while Saskatchewan Health continued to provide global budgets on a year-by-year basis, it appeared that the clinics would eventually fall under the jurisdiction of district health boards.<sup>70</sup> However, their campaign of resistance seems to have succeeded.

In 1997, federation representatives adopted a set of principles which, they hoped,

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65 CHSAS, Discussion Paper: Community Health Services Associations Affiliation Agreements with District Health Boards (Provided By Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association to its Members), 7 October 1994; CHSAS, Annual Report, (1993-94).

66 CHSAS, Discussion Paper: Community Health Services Associations Affiliation Agreements with District Health Boards (Provided By Community Health Services (Saskatoon) Association to its Members), 7 October 1994.

67 Ibid; CHSA, Annual Report, 1993.

68 CHSAS, Discussion Paper, *supra*, 7 October 1995.

69 CHCF, Brief to the Cabinet of the Government of Saskatchewan, November 1994.

70 CHSAR, Annual Report, 1996.

would form the basis of a tripartite agreement with Saskatchewan Health and the district health boards. These principles are: 1) the CHSAs will retain their autonomy and governance models; 2) Saskatchewan Health will continue to provide global funding for the delivery of primary health care for the populations served by the clinics; 3) cooperative health centres will seek incremental funding from district health boards for additional community needs, and they will consult with the boards before introducing new community programming; and 4) the district health boards and cooperative health centres will work together to identify and address health needs in the communities they serve.<sup>71</sup>

When the Federation met with Saskatchewan Health in April 1998, it was agreed to set up a committee of representatives from the three parties to fast-track the signing of this agreement by the end of June 1998. This agreement has yet to be ratified.<sup>72</sup>

In the meantime, the CHSAs have sought to strengthen their relationships with the district health boards. These relationships vary a great deal and have evolved differently from district to district.

In terms of funding, the current NDP administration has restored some of the revenue the CHSAs were deprived of during the Devine administration. There have been no new cuts, and Saskatchewan Health has provided some modest increases to the CHSA global budgets. However, these funding increases were considerably less than inflationary costs and much lower than those granted to the district health boards. They could by no means meet the increasing demands for services, let alone alleviate the clinics' lingering financing difficulties.<sup>73</sup>

It is only through further cost-control and ingenuity that the community clinics have been able to maintain their impressive array of health and social services. At the same time, and despite limited resources, the CHSAs continue to respond to calls for assistance from communities that lost services as the province closed health care facilities. The CHSAs continue to reach out to alleviate the health care needs of the underprivileged in these communities, as the following examples indicate.

After the rural community of Birch Hills lost its hospital and, in turn, its resident physician as part of the closure of fifty-one rural hospitals throughout the province, the Prince Albert CHSA was approached and agreed to provide medical and other health services for its new health centre. The Prince Albert CHSA continues to provide physician and health services to the rural communities of Canwood and Birch Hills, while the communities of Delisle and Borden are served by the Saskatoon CHSA. The Saskatoon CHSA doubled the space at its westside clinic in order to expand and enrich programming for its patients, many of whom suffered from discrimination, unemployment and poverty. In Regina, the CHSA chose a traditionally underserved area of the city for the relocation of its main clinic in 1996.<sup>74</sup>

Adding to the CHSAs' disappointment and unfulfilled expectations has been the provincial government's health centre policy. The Federation had hoped that health centres would be developed along the lines of Saskatchewan's community clinics with

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71 CHSAR, Annual Report, 1998.

72 Ibid.

73 CHSAS, Annual Report, 1993-1994; CHSAR, Annual Report, 1993.

74 CHSAS, Annual Report, 1993-1994; PACC, Prince Albert Community Clinic Medical Group Annual Report: for the 1998 Annual General Meeting; PACC, Dr. R. J. Unsworth, Medical Director's Report, 1993; Interview with Donna Braun, Community Relations, CHSAR, July 1998.

a strong emphasis on community ownership and consumer involvement in their design and delivery. However, there was little commitment or interest amongst district health boards, Saskatchewan Health, or the Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development Branch in the grass-roots development of cooperative health centres. Undeterred from its vision of expanding its model of health care delivery in Saskatchewan, the Federation has turned to the larger cooperative movement in the province to facilitate this objective. The CHSAs have requested that the cooperative sector assist in identifying, financing and working with communities interested in developing cooperative health centres. As a first step towards this initiative, the cooperative sector has been asked to fund the appointment and activities of a cooperative health centre developer for a three-year project.<sup>75</sup>

## **Conclusion**

Saskatchewan's CHSAs are the legacy and expression of the popular demand for consumer control of health services and salaried group practice clinics in the province dating back to the early 1900s. Like the Saskatchewan Anti-Tuberculosis League, these third-sector agencies have been the prime movers and source of health reform in Saskatchewan. They were instrumental in the establishment of state-financed medical and prescription drug insurance in Saskatchewan. Since then they have led the struggle to defend and prevent the erosion of these social security programs. Despite the lack of political commitment and legislative legitimacy, inadequate funding, the difficulty in attracting medical personnel and the opposition of organized medicine, the CHSAs have been able to offer an alternative to traditional curative medicine. Through salaried group practice and consumer participation, the CHSAs provide quality and innovative health and social services to the citizens of Saskatchewan. The CHSAs have each faced similar adversities and have come together to achieve a mutual objective; yet, owing to the diversity of patients, memberships and communities, each CHSA is distinct and has its own unique historical place in the development of health care in Saskatchewan.

## **NOTE**

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75 Community Health Co-operative Federation Limited, Proposal for the Involvement of the Saskatchewan Co-operative Community in the Development of Co-operative Health Centres in Saskatchewan, 20 October 1997, p. 5.

## Another Father of Confederation?

*Allen Ronaghan*

The proposal that Louis Riel should be honoured posthumously with the title “Father of Confederation” has had a mixed reception among the historiographers of our country, and particularly those of the province of Ontario. This is not at all remarkable, given the part played by that province in the affairs which involved Riel.

Should Riel be honoured as a Father of Confederation? Certainly not, if attendance at one or more of the Confederation conferences is the sole qualification for that honour. Riel was unfortunate enough to come from a portion of British North America which was not even invited to be present at Charlottetown, Quebec or London. How is it then, that his name is mentioned so many years after those conferences, especially since for many of those years he has borne the title of “rebel”?

This is one of the ironies of Canadian history, one of those conundrums which trouble historians from time to time because of the difficulties in obtaining and using sound evidence about what happened. There is no doubt that in 1885 Louis Riel “levied” war “upon her majesty,” to use the words of an eminent American historian.<sup>1</sup> History tells us that Riel was tried for treason and hanged in 1885. Can a man who was tried for treason be also a Father of Confederation?

One commentator has used the word “heritage” as something distinct from “history.”<sup>2</sup> I can sympathize with this comment. Once, as a young man, I overheard a conversation in which two elderly gentlemen discussed this very point. One of them made the remark that “Riel was tried for treason and hanged for the murder of Thomas Scott.” The Thomas Scott in question was executed fifteen years earlier, in 1885, and Louis Riel certainly did not murder him, although Riel was tried for that murder in the Ontario press in 1870 and found guilty. Is it still necessary for us to decide which is history and which is heritage? There is something “passing strange” in this.

The principal events of the resistance of 1869 and 1870 have been well outlined by several of our prominent historians, so it is not necessary to go into detail on those events here. It is well known that the Métis people, still suspicious of those in authority because of the events of the Guillaume Sayer trial in which Riel’s father played a leading part, viewed with alarm the actions and words of those sent by Canada to Red River in 1868 and 1869.<sup>3</sup>

It had been comparatively simple in 1849 to organize a group of men and a petition for, among other things, the removal of the bigot Thom from the bench of

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1 Desmond Morton, “Reconfiguring Riel Does Not Change History,” *Ottawa Citizen*, 22 January 1998.

2 *Ibid.*

3 W.L. Morton, “Sayer,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* 7 (hereafter *DCB*): 776-77.

the Red River Settlement's only court.<sup>4</sup> Mobilizing the Settlement in the face of the menace posed by the boastful young Canadians and in the absence of any statement of policy from Britain, from Canada or from the Hudson's Bay Company at the time of the purchase, was quite another matter.<sup>5</sup> The old Métis councillors looked at the problem and fled onto the plains so that they would not have to face it head on.<sup>6</sup> The void in leadership was filled by younger men. The steps taken by Riel and his companions are familiar to students of our history: the formation of a national committee; the efforts to enlist the support of the English-speaking portion of the Settlement; the stopping of the surveyors; the occupation of Fort Garry; the refusal to allow Lieutenant Governor designate McDougall to enter Rupert's Land; the efforts to form a provisional government and send delegates to Ottawa. Not so well known are the acts of the opposition: the undercover efforts at interference by John C. Schultz<sup>7</sup>; the gathering and surrender of the "enlisted" men at Schultz's houses<sup>8</sup>; the escape of Thomas Scott and others<sup>9</sup>; Scott's part in the march of the Portage men to the rendezvous at Kildonan at a time when the entire Settlement had agreed upon a provisional government<sup>10</sup>; the deaths of Sutherland and Parisien.<sup>11</sup> These attempts at interference at Red River only came to an end with the departure of Schultz, Lynch and Mair, and with the trial and execution of Thomas Scott on 4 March. Attempts at interference continued at full speed in Ontario, however, and featured a media campaign in the Ontario press and Colonel G.T. Denison's willingness to use the levers of power in the Orange lodges of Ontario.<sup>12</sup> The result was a thoroughly aroused province of Ontario and a shaken federal government.

In order to keep our perspective about Riel's work in 1869 and 1870, we must remember that the Red River Settlement had not become a Crown colony, but was still under Hudson's Bay Company rule. The natural centre of the Settlement was upper Fort Garry, and here it was that the governor and council met. After the occupation of Fort Garry on 2 November 1869, Riel and the National Committee were the effective, if not the legal, government of the Settlement. They found themselves having to act simultaneously in matters that would later be described as municipal, provincial and federal, while at the same time having to care for the men taken prisoner while "levying war" against the only government in the Settlement. Their success was so evident and acceptance so general that the American observer James W. Taylor wrote that "elsewhere than in an English colony, it would long ago have been recognized at Washington."<sup>13</sup>

Not so generally known are the policies of the Canadian government with regard

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- 4 Kathryn M. Bindon, "Adam Thom," *DCB* 11: 874-76.
  - 5 Abbé G. Dugas, *Histoire Véridique des Faits Qui Ont Préparé le Mouvement des Métis à la Rivière Rouge en 1869* (n.p.), 29; Alexander Begg, *The Creation of Manitoba* (Toronto: Hunter, 1871), 21.
  - 6 Isaac Cowie, *The Company of Adventurers* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1913), 381.
  - 7 G.F.G. Stanley, *The Collected Writings of Louis Riel* 1 (n.p.): 33-34, Riel to Schultz, November 27, 1869.
  - 8 W.L. Morton (ed.), *Alexander Begg's Red River Journal* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1969), 205-17, entries for December 4-December 7, 1869.
  - 9 Morton, *Begg's Journal*, 256, entry for January 9, 1870.
  - 10 Article by "R. McC," *St. Paul Daily Pioneer*, April 2, 1870.
  - 11 Morton, *Begg's Journal*, 314, entry for February 17, 1870.
  - 12 Colonel G.T. Denison, *The Struggle for Imperial Unity* (New York: Macmillan, 1909), 22-32.
  - 13 W.L. Morton (ed.), *Manitoba: Birth of a Province* (Altona, MB: D.W. Friesen, 1965), 50, James W. Taylor to Hamilton Fish, April 19, 1870.

to the Red River Settlement and Rupert's Land. It was not known, for example, which men or groups of men were to shoulder the rifles which were in transit to Red River at the time McDougall was prevented from entering Rupert's Land.<sup>14</sup> The Métis, of course, had their fears.

We are left wondering, too, why it was that McDougall was so reluctant to speak to the National Committee about Canada's intentions. Could he not, through Provencher, have begun talks with the National Committee? Why did he, instead, send Colonel Dennis to join forces with Schultz in efforts to upset that committee?

A Red River Expeditionary Force was part of Canadian government policy as early as January of 1870 — long before the execution of Scott — when contracts were let for the construction of the necessary boats, and preparation went forward steadily from then on. The campaign in the Ontario press about the “murder” of Scott only added impetus to what had already been decided.

Why was an expeditionary force considered to be essential? Rupert's Land was British territory, and there were many ties of relationship between people there and families in old Canada. To answer this question we must read the language of the Cabinet's Minute of Council dated 11 February 1870. This Minute expressed the fear that the insurgent leaders would insist upon demands made in the Manifesto or Declaration of Rights, “several of which are inadmissible.” The Minute also expressed the fear that the delegates might return to Fort Garry “smarting under the sense of failure” and, “unless confronted by a Military Force and a strengthened Government, make violent appeals to the people and raise a second insurrection on a more formidable basis.” The Minute did not specify which demands were “inadmissible.”<sup>15</sup>

Which demands were inadmissible? Several lists of rights composed by Red River people have come down to us for study, and anyone familiar with the British North America Act, as the Métis and their advisors certainly were, must have thought that the admission of Red River to the new Confederation would be almost automatic, once the delegates had had a chance to express their wishes.<sup>16</sup>

One can understand the puzzlement of Riel and his associates, in the winter of 1869-70, at the refusal or inability of those sent to Red River — Thibault, de Salaberry and Smith — to give positive assurances concerning what the people of Red River wished to see guaranteed in any arrangement which allowed them to be a part of Canada.<sup>17</sup> Instead, Smith came equipped with money to enable him to subvert the government at Fort Garry.<sup>18</sup>

The three Red River delegates — Judge Black, Father Ritchot and Alfred Scott — were soon to find out which demands were “inadmissible,” and they found this out at roughly the same time that they learned of the sending of the Expeditionary Force. They could see only too well that from that day forward they were negotiating while a gun was being pointed at them.<sup>19</sup>

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14 National Archives of Canada (NA), RG2, 1, Vol. 17, PC 708; Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 51-52.

15 NA, Macdonald Papers, Vol. 101, Minute of Council, 11 February 1870.

16 See, for example, Morton, *Begg's Journal*, 209-10, 515-19.

17 Canada, *Sessional Papers*, 1870 (12), Howe to Thibault, December 4, 1869.

18 Beckles Willson, *The Life of Lord Strathcona* (n.p.), 217; Provincial Archives of Manitoba, letter of Pierre Léveillé, *New Nation*, 27 May 1870.

19 Morton, *Birth of a Province*; Ritchot's Diary, 27 April 1870, p. 138.

Cartier and Macdonald were offering to create a province out of a portion of Rupert's Land, a province which, unlike the original four, would not have control of its chief natural resource, its ungranted lands.<sup>20</sup> These lands were to be "vested in the Crown, and administered by the Government of Canada for the purposes of the Dominion."<sup>21</sup> In so doing Cartier and Macdonald were, in effect, crossing a Rubicon — making a change in the British North America Act, a change which they well knew the people of Rupert's Land did not wish to accept.<sup>22</sup>

The three delegates had no way of knowing that at the same time they were objecting to this feature of the arrangement John C. Schultz was threatening to make public his opposition to it. Lionized throughout Ontario as the "suffering loyalist" of Red River, Schultz posed a serious threat to the government's plans. The threat was met with substance and dispatch. Schultz agreed to receive \$11,000 in lieu of claims he was making for losses at Red River.<sup>23</sup> This money came not from government funds but from money which Sir Francis Hincks made available privately for the purpose.<sup>24</sup>

The Red River delegates finally accepted a compromise by which a grant of 1.4 million acres was to be made available for the "children of the half-breed heads of families," a compromise which became section 31 of the Manitoba Act. This compromise and the payment to Schultz cleared the way for the passage of the Manitoba Act.

In May of 1870, at the same time that the Manitoba bill was introduced in the House of Commons, Charles Mair and "Canada First" began a process which would bring about an emigration of Ontario farmers to Red River and interfere both with the implementation of government policy and with Métis plans to abide by that policy.<sup>25</sup> The process began with a letter to the *Globe* and continued with the organization of the North-West Emigration Aid Society.<sup>26</sup> The result was that during the winter of 1870-71 farmers all across Ontario began to sell off their farms and chattels, and to prepare for a move to the new province.

Before he left Ottawa to return to Red River, Ritchot asked Cartier who was to govern at Red River pending the arrival of the Lieutenant Governor. Cartier replied that Riel should "continue to maintain order and govern the country as he has done up to the present moment."<sup>27</sup> Cartier also gave Ritchot a letter stating that section 31 of the Manitoba Act would be implemented in such a way "as to meet the wishes of the Half-breed residents."<sup>28</sup>

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20 Morton, *Manitoba: Birth of a Province*, 97 (Northcote's Diary).

21 Manitoba Act, Section 30; see also Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 405.

22 Morton, *Manitoba: Birth of a Province*, 140 (Ritchot's Diary).

23 Supplement to the *Manitoban*, February 25, 1871.

24 *Manitoban*, March 11, 1871, from the *Telegraph* report of the February 20, 1871, debate in the House of Commons; see also *Ottawa Free Press*, February 20, 1871, *Ottawa Citizen*, February 21, 1871, *Globe*, February 21, 1871.

25 *Globe*, May 16, 1870; Colonel G.T. Denison, *Soldiering in Canada* (Toronto: G.N. Morag and Company, 1900), 179; Denison, *Struggle for Imperial Unity*, 43.

26 *Globe*, August 4, 1870. The constitution is in the Metropolitan Toronto Library, Denison Papers.

27 Canada. House of Commons, *Journals*, 1874, VIII, Appendix No. 6, "Report of the Select Committee," 71, 81.

28 It should be noted here that the diary for May 28 as printed in Morton, *Manitoba: Birth of a Province*, is defective, lacking six sentences. Compare with the version published in *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française* 17, no. 4 (March 1964): 560. The text of Cartier's letter is in "Report of the Select Committee," 74, Cartier to Ritchot, May 23, 1870.

Meanwhile, the uproar in Ontario and the news of the sending of an expeditionary force were causing some concern at Red River.<sup>29</sup> Men with experience recognized that whatever the Canadian authorities might say — and the Governor General had referred to it as an “errand of peace” — the purpose of the Force could only be punitive.<sup>30</sup> Riel was immediately under pressure to take steps to oppose it.<sup>31</sup> Riel, however, urged everyone to wait until they had heard the report of Father Ritchot. On 17 June, the day of Ritchot’s arrival by steamboat, the noise of the twenty-one-gun salute and the general jubilation surrounding his return made it a day that Gabriel Dumont never forgot.<sup>32</sup> Yet the news that there was no amnesty cast a shadow over affairs. Dumont and others were certain that the force was punitive and offered help to oppose it at certain key spots on the Winnipeg River. All the prestige that Riel had with these people was necessary to restrain them. The pressure on Riel was so great that on 28 June Bishop Taché left the Settlement on the steamboat *International*.<sup>33</sup> He had quieted the demands on Riel by declaring that he would go to Ottawa and press for an amnesty.<sup>34</sup>

The delegates had been promised an amnesty at the beginning of negotiations<sup>35</sup> and, with the Fenian attack repulsed and the Red River Expeditionary Force under way, Cartier, acting as prime minister during the illness of Macdonald, turned his attention to composing the memorandum which would accompany Father Ritchot’s petition for it. This took up Cartier’s evenings for more than a week. When he had finished he passed the memorandum to the office of the Governor General for transmission to London.<sup>36</sup> Sir John Young also forwarded to London a letter he had received from Dr. Lynch, one of the “Canadian” party at Red River, which asked that no amnesty be granted.<sup>37</sup> This, along with a note from Young saying that Cartier’s memorandum should not be regarded as a minute of a united cabinet, deprived it of all force, and no action was taken.<sup>38</sup> There would be no amnesty.

When Sir Garnet Wolseley failed to send emissaries to the provisional government on 23 August 1870, and made prisoners of the emissaries sent by Riel, his Force ceased to be a “mission of peace” and became an invading army.<sup>39</sup> In so doing Wolseley broke his own word, as well as that of the Governor General, and carried out “Canada First” policy rather than official Canadian or British policy. Also his disposition of the militia

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29 Morton, *Begg’s Journal*, 375-77, entries for May 24, 26, 27, 30, 31, 1870.

30 Canada. Senate, *Debates*, May 23, 1870, p. 236.

31 Michael Bamholder (trans.), *Gabriel Dumont Speaks* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1993), 31; Morton, *Begg’s Journal*, 374-75, entry for May 23, 1870.

32 Morton, *Begg’s Journal*, 382; George Woodcock, *Gabriel Dumont* (Don Mills, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1978), 81.

33 Morton, *Begg’s Journal*, 385.

34 See “L’Amnistie” in *Le Méis*, February 28, 1874, reproduced from *Le Nouveau Monde*, February 4, 1874.

35 Morton, *Manitoba: Birth of a Province*, 139, Ritchot’s Diary; *ibid.*, 57, Taylor to Fish, May 2, 1870.

36 “Report of the Select Committee,” 168-69, deposition of George Futvoye. The memorandum itself is on pages 171-78.

37 *Ibid.*, 195-97.

38 *Ibid.*, 169-70.

39 The term is Wolseley’s: “Our mission is one of peace, and the sole object of the Expedition is to secure Her Majesty’s Sovereign authority,” Morton, *Begg’s Journal*, 392. References to those taken prisoner are in several sources: *La Minerve*, September 9 and 10, 1870; NA, M. Bell Irvine, “Journal of the Red River Expedition,” MG29, E5; NA, Lieutenant H.S.H. Riddell, *The Red River Expedition of 1870* (n.p.), 139-40.

units left in the new province carried out Schultz's policy — that the Métis would have to give way<sup>40</sup> — rather than making any serious attempts to maintain law and order. What the St. Paul press described as a “reign of terror” lasted throughout the time that the Ontario Rifles were at Fort Garry, and caused Lieutenant Governor Archibald no end of trouble.<sup>41</sup> He attempted to put together a viable administration while knowing full well that the man who had the confidence of the majority of the people of the province — who should have been premier — was forced to remain in hiding.<sup>42</sup>

Riel and his supporters had only temporarily interrupted the carrying out of Canadian government policy. Having recuperated in Prince Edward Island and on the Parliament Hill grounds, Macdonald now turned to that policy again. On 2 January 1871, a committee of the Privy Council for Canada approved a memorandum of the Minister of Justice concerning the constitutionality of the Manitoba Act of 1870, and advised the Governor General “to move the Earl of Kimberley to submit to the Imperial Parliament a measure confirming the Act of the Canadian Parliament above referred to, and containing the other provisions enumerated in the said annexed memorandum.” The basis for concern was stated to be that doubts had “been entertained respecting the powers of the Parliament of Canada to establish Provinces... .”<sup>43</sup> In taking this high ground the Canadian government effectively concentrated the attention of British authorities upon Canada's competence as a new nation to legislate for its own territories. The Earl of Kimberley said, in introducing the bill in the House of Lords:

The law officers of the Crown were of opinion that these acts [the North-West Territories Act and the Manitoba Act] were valid, as not beyond the powers of the Canadian Parliament: but doubts having been expressed the Canadian Parliament had addressed the Crown for an Act in the Imperial Parliament confirming their validity.<sup>44</sup>

The bill passed both Houses of Parliament of the United Kingdom without debate on 29 June 1871, not long before the end of the confrontation at Rivière aux Îlets de Bois.

This confrontation began in April when the emigration artificially induced by Charles Mair and “Canada First” began to reach Manitoba. It continued through May and June and into July, as Ontario farmers squatted on lands the Métis had looked forward to claiming under section 31 of the Manitoba Act. A less disciplined people would have slaughtered the intruders. However, the influence of Riel and the men in contact with him along with the assurances of Archibald prevented bloodshed, and the Métis had to give way to the Ontario newcomers.<sup>45</sup>

The two orders-in-council of 25 April and 26 May broke the word of Cartier, of

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40 Begg, *Creation of Manitoba*, 21; Alexander Begg, *Dot It Down: A Story of Life in the North-West* (Toronto: Hunter Rose, 1871), 282, 327.

41 The violence began when Schultz and his men put the New Nation press out of action on September 6, 1870, and continued all through the winter of 1870 and into the spring of 1871. References to the violence are numerous: C.S.P. 1871 (No. 20), Archibald to Howe, September 17, 1870; United States National Archives and Records Service (USNARS) microfilm T24 Roll 1, Taylor Papers, Taylor to Davis, January 6, 1871; *Le Nouveau Monde*, February 3, 1871; Cowie, *Company of Adventurers*, 429-30.

42 “Report of the Select Committee,” 150-51, Archibald's deposition; *ibid.*, 151-52, Archibald to Howe, January 20, 1872.

43 Preamble to the B.N.A Act of 1871.

44 British Parliamentary *Debates*, 3rd Series, Vol. 206, p. 1171.

45 “Report of the Select Committee,” Archibald's deposition; *ibid.*, 139-42, “Memorandum connected with Fenian Invasion of Manitoba in October, 1871.”

Archibald, and of Riel and the men in contact with him. The people were left frustrated, bitter and angry. If, as Archibald pointed out to the Canadian government, there ever was a time when an indication of outside support could have meant abandonment of the Canadian connection by the Métis, this was that time. It was precisely then that word came that Riel's former associate O'Donoghue was on his way through Minnesota with a Fenian force of undisclosed strength.<sup>46</sup>

Archibald saw at once that the situation was critical. If the embittered Métis population between Winnipeg and the border were to rise in support of O'Donoghue and anything like a civil war were to break out, the Fenians among the Irish workers on the two railroads then being built in Minnesota could be attracted by the chance of plundering Fort Garry and Winnipeg. Manitoba could be lost to Canada.<sup>47</sup>

There were differences of opinion among the leaders of these Métis. Some, like John Bruce, saw an opportunity to bring about the annexation of Manitoba to the United States. However, beginning on 28 September, eleven of the men in contact with Riel met with him to discuss strategy. The first meeting lasted seven hours and ended with the decision to declare themselves in favor of the Canadian connection. Meetings were held in the Métis parishes, and in an agonizingly slow process the people were persuaded to give their support to Archibald and Canada. The culmination came on 8 October, when Archibald went to St. Boniface and accepted the support of Riel and his troops.<sup>48</sup> The Ontario press, following the lead of Schultz's *Liberal*, went wild in its denunciation of Archibald for shaking the "bloody hand" of Riel.<sup>49</sup> There were calls for Archibald's resignation and, indeed, when Archibald realized that the government was accepting the *Liberal's* interpretation of events, his resignation was forwarded to Ottawa.

With the passing of the Dominion Lands Act in April of 1872, the last rivet was in place where federal government policy on the West was concerned. Far from giving the Métis the promised 1.4 million acres priority, the Act made "such lands as ... may be required to satisfy the ... claims created under Section 31" of the Manitoba Act subject to rights "defined or created under this Act."<sup>50</sup> Thus a volunteer who had come to Manitoba in August 1870 was as entitled to a grant of land as a Métis whose family had been in Rupert's Land for decades.

Remarkably enough, the situation in Manitoba in 1872 was not unlike what the arrogant and boastful young Canadians had predicted in the summer and fall of 1869 when the men of the Métis National Committee had been stung into taking action. The Métis were becoming hewers of wood and drawers of water, or were being forced to "give way" and dispersed into the vastness of the West. The chief resource of a province was under the control of a department located not in the provincial capital but in the distant federal capital, and headed by a man who had never seen either that land or the people living in it. To add insult to injury, the land was being used, not for the purposes of Manitoba but for the "purposes of the Dominion."<sup>51</sup> The people of

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46 Ibid., 140.

47 Ibid., 139.

48 A.H. de Trémaudan, "Louis Riel and the Fenian Raid of 1871," in *Canadian Historical Review* 4 (1923): 133-36; "Report of the Select Committee," 142, Archibald's deposition; *ibid.*, 180, Girard's deposition.

49 USNARS, Taylor Papers, T24, Roll 1, clippings from *The Manitoba Liberal*, October 11, 1871.

50 Dominion Lands Act, Section 105, 35 Victoria Cap. XXIII.

51 Manitoba Act, section 30.

Manitoba had striven to avoid this fate and their efforts had resulted in so little violence that the whole affair looked peaceful when compared with contemporary popular movements elsewhere. Amnesty, however, was not part of government policy: an “indignation meeting” in Toronto had given a “direction to the settlement of affairs in Red River.”<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, the man who should have been premier had to remain in hiding because a government formed by him might have asked awkward questions, and the Canadian government’s subterfuge would have been revealed before the steps needed to make the Manitoba Act legal could be taken.

It can be seen now that the severe policies of “Canada First” actually worked in favour of the accomplishment of the policies of Cartier and Macdonald. These gentlemen were more interested in gaining the control and use of western lands for settlers and railway capitalists than they were in other considerations. So we may conclude that under their guidance our country took a wrong turn, a turn which has kept us divided for more than a century.

It is time now for us to look dispassionately at a man whom the Canadian government wronged. Louis Riel opted for Canada again and again, both when in power at Fort Garry and when in hiding in southern Manitoba. It is time for us to honour his memory.

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52 “Report of the Select Committee,” 41-42, Taché’s deposition.

## FORUM

### On Janine Stingel's "Revising the Historiography of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta: The Untold Story of Canadian Jewry"

*Alvin Finkel*

This article in the last issue of *Prairie Forum* represents poor research and worse logic. It libels John Irving. The logic of the article goes as follows:

1. The Canadian Jewish Congress (Canadian Jewish Conference) showed John Irving a file that indicated Social Credit in Canada was rife with anti-Semitism.
2. Irving went ahead and wrote a book on Social Credit that avoided the issue of the movement's anti-Jewish underpinnings.
3. Therefore John Irving is guilty of creating a notion of Social Credit that whitewashes the movement.

Utter nonsense. In the first case, we don't get a single word here on what the case of the Canadian Jewish Conference against Social Credit was. We are simply to assume they were right and Irving wrong. Secondly, we aren't told what Irving was writing about versus what the Canadian Jewish Conference was keeping a file on. Irving was writing a book on the evolution of Social Credit in Alberta until the 1935 election; following the chic research trends of the 1950s, he presented the party as the product of a kind of mass psychosis. While the book was not what the Canadian Jewish Conference might have ordered up, it was hardly a flattering portrait of either the Social Credit party or the people of Alberta.

I presume (since the author says nothing about the Canadian Jewish Conference evidence, I assume it's the same stuff that one finds in books on Social Credit and other subjects on Alberta politics, including Stingel's) that what was in the Canadian Jewish Conference file was Major Douglas's ravings against Jews and the fairly sick stuff that appeared in Social Credit publications at the end of World War II. Most of it would have little importance for Irving's book. Unless the Canadian Jewish Conference had evidence that Social Credit, during its first election in Alberta, was mainly peddling anti-Semitism, they could not have much influence on Irving's writing. There was certainly an undercurrent of anti-Semitism in the Social Credit party; but the leaders, Aberhart and Manning, were not anti-Semitic and did not make veiled references to Jews as they enunciated their silly conspiracy theories. Stingel provides no evidence, indeed does not feel the need to provide evidence, that Douglasite anti-Semitism as opposed to Bible Bill Aberhart's promises of financial freedom won the 1935 provincial election.

Now, it sounds from the article as if the Canadian Jewish Conference thought they had a right to dictate to John Irving what he should write a book about. Pretty nervy, I think. But not nearly so nervy as the author of this article who manages to denounce Irving's book and trumpet the Canadian Jewish Conference case without mentioning anything about the contents of either his book or the Canadian Jewish Conference's

evidence. While Janine Stingel, in her recent book, *Social Discredit*, makes a contribution to the scholarship on Alberta history by revealing the depths of anti-Semitism in the Social Credit movement, she has a tendency to label everyone who was connected with Social Credit as an anti-Semite. Now she goes one step further and implies anti-Semitism as a motive for those who write about Social Credit but fail to discuss its anti-Semitism.

## A Reply to Finkel's Critique

*Janine Stingel*

In response to Alvin Finkel's critique and criticism of my article, "Revising the Historiography of the Social Credit Movement in Alberta," I would encourage readers to read my article, for if they read only Finkel's assessment of it they will have a skewed view indeed. My article gave a comprehensive overview of Social Credit historiography, including Finkel's *The Social Credit Phenomenon in Alberta*, and analyzed what other scholars have said about Social Credit's anti-Semitism. The second part of the article told a story about one Social Credit scholar, John Irving, and his encounter with officers of the Canadian Jewish Congress regarding Social Credit's anti-Semitism. The article offered an interpretation of how Social Credit historiography developed and how Irving contributed to an obfuscation of the inherent anti-Semitism within Social Credit philosophy. It is important to note that at no time did I state or even vaguely imply that John Irving was an anti-Semite. For Finkel to accuse me of "libelling" John Irving is both reactionary and unprofessional. Any allegation of libel is serious indeed, and not something to play fast and loose with. I should not have to caution Professor Finkel to be careful when choosing legal terms to criticize another scholar's work.

Concerning the evidence put forward in this article, Finkel is perhaps justified in his dissatisfaction with my failure to fully prove the case of the Canadian Jewish Congress, but in a footnote I have guided the reader to my forthcoming book, *Social Discredit*, to learn everything there is to know about the Canadian Jewish Congress's case. In this respect, I look forward to the inevitable review by Finkel of my upcoming book.

My intention in this article, and in my book, was not to paint horns and tails on the Social Crediters. Finkel has read much more and also much less into my work than he should. The Social Credit movement was based on an anti-Semitic philosophy and, consequently, there were manifestations of anti-Semitism. But there is a difference between discussing the ideology of a movement and its manifestations and accusing all followers of the movement of being of a certain stripe. Finkel should appreciate this rather obvious subtlety. Moreover, aside from turf protection, I see little reason why Finkel is so eager to defend the Social Crediters — methinks the professor doth protest too much. I have done the research and the evidence speaks for itself. It is up to Finkel and others to conduct a careful reading of the evidence, analyze my arguments, and draw their own conclusions — but not to accuse me of libel. If I could make my own *ad hominem* statement, it would be this: move over, Alvin, and relax. There is room for one more Social Credit scholar in this obscure pond.



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Discover Saskatchewan: A Guide to Historic Sites*, by Meika Lalonde and Elton LaClare. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1998. Pp. 206.

In what follows, I want first to pay tribute to those who were involved in the writing of this much needed book, then talk a bit about how it is constructed and what may delight the eye of the reader. Next I want to mention a few things that grabbed my attention, both positively and negatively, and conclude with an overall assessment.

It seems fitting to begin by acknowledging the men and women who made this book possible because it really must have been a gigantic undertaking. The series editor, Ralph Nilson, deserves high commendation for conceiving the idea in the first place, and for his courage and determination in seeing the project through to completion. The editorial sub-committee, and the individuals and foundations who made money available without which it might never have seen the light of day, and the people who did the legwork, all are to be complimented for their role in its creation. Make no mistake, the task of assembling and sorting and classifying such a large amount of disparate data, and organizing them in a coherent way must have been a real challenge. The residents, and former residents of the Province of Saskatchewan, and countless others, are the beneficiaries of their constancy, and bless them for that.

The book is organized into travel regions, under such colourful titles as the Horseshoe Region, which, as its name suggests, comprises the southwest corner of the province. And Horizon Country, recognizing "that there are more hours of sunshine in this area than anywhere in the country," which covers the southeast. The remainder of the province's travel area is divided into seven regions, and an explanation for how they got their names is provided near the end of the book. Two additional chapters delineate the extraordinary number of fascinating markers and sites in the cities of Regina and Saskatoon, respectively.

The authors choose an apt bit of verse to introduce each chapter. In the case of the Horseshoe Region, Connie Kaldor's "Hymn from Pincher Creek" is used. They pick out an important concept characterizing the region or an especially important place to begin the story, and then move on from there. Presumably, there is some logic to the way they go from one site to another, but it is not what one might expect from following a road map. The starting place in this instance is the Cypress Hills: its geology; the many trading posts to be found in the area; and the historic sites associated with the early days of what is now known as the RCMP. An insert tells us "that the Cypress Hills are the highest point of land between Labrador and the Rockies," but the fact that this is the only territory in Saskatchewan that is unglaciated is only hinted at. In any event, all of this is certainly an eye-grabbing place to start. The next port of call in this region is Swift Current! After "doing" Swift Current, they work westward, skirting the Great Sand Hills, commenting on the many sites to observe in passing by, and in due course, arrive at Maple Creek. From that historic town they move on to the communities of Val Marie, Bracken, and Shaunavon, in each of which there are more than a few interesting things to see. The chapter concludes with Eastend, featuring such sites as Stegner House (*Wolf Willow*), the Eastend Historical

Museum, and the Eastend Fossil Research Station, where T-Rex was found. No mention, however, of how Eastend got its name!

The other regions are equally inviting. Space precludes much elaboration. What I will do, instead, is point selectively to a few of the things that stood out for me.

Although my mother, a Barr Colonist, lived in a sod house, I have never yet seen one. But thanks to this fascinating book, I am going to be able to do so yet. It seems that there are at least two of them still standing. One is to be found in travel region No. 2, Great Trails Getaway, near Gravelbourg. Built in 1909, the *Baker Homestead* was inhabited until 1974. Of course, once in that vicinity, the text makes clear, the sod house would not be the only attraction by any means. The other sod house is located near Kindersley in travel region No. 4, the Prairie Schooner Region. It is the *Addison House*, built in 1911, “the oldest continuously occupied sod building in the province”!

The book is made more attractive by a section of 24 coloured photographs, and by the use of boxes to highlight interesting facts. Some examples of the latter are the following. In travel region No. 9, Northern Shores, we find this: “Did you know ... that Cumberland House was the first permanent settlement in the Western interior?” I didn’t know that. If I had been asked, I would have guessed Battleford. And in travel region No. 8, Northwest Saskatchewan Calling, we find this: “The northern village of Green Lake is rendered from the Woods Cree appellation, *akwakopiwi-sakahikan*, for the lake located south of the community. Directly translated, the Cree word means the ‘lake filled with green algae.’” For the browser, these inserts will be both highly informative and entertaining.

Other historic facts that appealed to me are found in travel region No. 6, Land of the Living Sky, where we find, first, *Sts. Donatien and Rogatien Roman Catholic Church*, built in 1904, the oldest continually used church in the diocese of Saskatoon. It also happens to be where Jeanne Sauvé, former Governor General of Canada, was baptized in 1922. The second item concerns the *Douglas Vintage House*, in Foam Lake: “[It] was constructed in 1915 and served as a residence for seventy-five years. ... Some fortunate visitors have the opportunity to sample fresh bread baked in the outdoor clay oven at the rear of the house.”

Residents of Regina and Saskatoon will be astounded when they read of the extraordinary number of historic sites right under their noses. In the chapter on Regina, there are thirty different items of interest to be explored. For example, we find that there is a “Doll’s House” — a residence at 2812 McCallum Avenue. And “Indicative of the rapid urban growth experienced in Regina in the decades before World War I, *Henderson Terrace*, [on] Eighteenth Avenue, is a simplified version of the Georgian terrace or rowhouse, popular in Britain during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The red brick dwelling was constructed in 1913.” Understandably, a good deal of space is given to the background of Government House, which “ceased to operate as an official residence in 1945.” It certainly did. Omitted from the story, however, is that it was converted in that year to a hospital for veterans, and all of the original furniture and rugs were auctioned off. Twenty-five years later, when it was reopened, it had to be “returned” to its late Victorian magnificence at public expense, but not with the original furnishings!

The Saskatoon story is equally compelling, with twenty-five historic sites listed. It concludes with a tribute to Saskatchewan’s only prime minister, John Diefenbaker, and the museum created in his name.

At the end of the book we find “Prairie Trails,” a list of thirty-five different historic trails that one can take. An “Inventory,” by region, provides the reader with additional

the main text, which the heritage enthusiast will find invaluable. Finally, there is a "Timeline," dating what has happened in the regions beginning with the prehistoric period, 18,000 B.C., and ending in 1991.

It would be surprising if an encyclopedic book like this got to the printer without any errors. There are minor mistakes — spelling, words omitted, etc. What is not expected, however, especially in a book which will be used in schools throughout the province, is such things as the misuse of the word "while," and the pedantic and ubiquitous "an" before the word historic. And if technical terms are to be used, like "Lynchgate tower," "architrave dentils," "medieval barbicon," and "atl-atls," a glossary would be appropriate. Furthermore, Naicam is not on Highway 5; birch is not a softwood, and a "burn" is a small stream or brook, not a body of water; and Luthi's LL.D. is mentioned, but not Allen Sapp's.

Despite its blemishes this is an excellent book. It is often said that Canadians have no heroes, no Davey Crockett, for instance. However, we do have them in abundance. The story just isn't told. This book spells out who some of the exciting historic figures were, and where and what their contribution. It deserves to be read widely and it has been priced low enough to make this possible. We are told that this is the first one in a series, let us hope that the others are well in hand, and will be forthcoming soon.

By the time I had read half of this remarkable book I had made up my mind that I was never going to leave home (in Saskatchewan) without it. Furthermore, I decided to "turn over a new leaf" and allow enough time when making trips, to stop and look at the many splendid sights that earnest, thoughtful and resourceful people in this exciting province have made available. Heretofore, I have always been in such a hurry "to get there" that I have roared right past important landmarks that were right on the roadside. Now, I have decided, I will even drive more than a few kilometres off the main road to inform myself of our incomparable history. By the time I had concluded reading it, I had decided to buy copies for my brothers and sisters who live in Ontario and British Columbia, to give each of them an additional incentive to return for our Millennium celebrations, and also, to celebrate 2005 with us. I hope that others do that, too!

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*Discover Saskatchewan: A User's Guide To Regional Parks*, by Michael Clancy and Anna Clancy. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 230.

The late Arthur Lower and Harold Innis got it right. If you wish to study the history and political economy of a region or nation, you have first to get to know the land. To that end, *Discover Saskatchewan* will prove a useful guide.

The authors have visited each of the 101 regional parks in the province, classified them according to the ecoregion within which they fall, and written a history and description of each of the parks. Of particular value is a map of the four ecozones of the province and a concluding appendix which describes the ecoregions within the zones.

In an introduction to the guide, Ralph Nilson correctly points out that the parks are very much a reflection and result of the culture of Saskatchewan. The earliest (1915) —

farmers and residents for the purpose of taking advantage of the remarkable bounty of nature to provide a venue for local recreation. In 1960 the CCF government passed the Regional Parks Act, which provided provincial, financial assistance to local initiative in the development and operation of regional parks.

The guide contains maps identifying the location of each park. Each entry provides basic information for the park: where it is and how to get there, services offered, recreational facilities available, special events, postal address, phone and fax numbers. Many of the parks in the southwest and northwest are associated with the history of the region before the advent of settlement and the wheat economy. Most important of all, and taken together, they offer a firsthand experience with the incredible diversity of this vast province. Scholars of the Canadian Plains would do well to visit and become acquainted with them.

A guide of this kind deserves to be updated and reissued. In that connection, the authors and the CPRC should be encouraged to include a bibliography that provides the reader with references to the history and ecology of the regions within which the parks are located.

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*Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear: The Life and Adventures of Theresa Gowanlock and Theresa Delaney*, by Theresa Gowanlock and Theresa Delaney, with a scholarly introduction by Sarah Carter. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 78, photographs, illustrations.

An 1885 edition of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* is kept in the Special Collections department of the main library at the University of Regina. That means that it cannot leave the library. The slim brown volume is rather fragile, its pages yellowed and brittle with age, and it is a rather plain-looking book, overall. What lies between its covers, however, has none of the dullness of the book's exterior. For therein, and read by people the world over, are Theresa Delaney's and Theresa Gowanlock's stories about being captive in the Cree Chief Big Bear's camp.

Theresa Delaney (née Fulford, the paternal great-aunt of writer and journalist Robert Fulford) and Theresa Gowanlock gained notoriety in 1885 when, after their husbands were killed by Plains Cree, they were taken hostage. They were not alone in the Cree camp; in fact, they were among eighty hostages of diverse ancestry, taken and held for two months. Yet, most of the media focus was on them, and as a result, rumours about the women's harsh treatment and even of their deaths abounded. Soon after their departure from the Crees, Delaney and Gowanlock made public statements denouncing the rumours; in fact, they declared that they had been treated well and had even been protected by Big Bear and his men. A short time later, in what appears to be a complete change of mind, both Theresas published narratives very different from the first accounts they gave of their capture. Herein lies the mystery: Why did Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock change their stories?

No one may ever be able to answer this question to everyone's satisfaction and readers of the day must have been in a quandry about which version of the Theresas' stories to believe. In any case, it was the book version published by the Gowanlock

very popular at the time so the book turned out to be a great success; in fact, it caused quite a stir around the world.

The problem with the original edition of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear*, however, is that the narratives lacked an objective context in which readers might situate and, therefore, better judge the veracity of the Therasas' conflicting accounts of what happened to them in captivity. In other words, there was no other voice in the original book to balance their rather sensational narratives. Readers left to determine where the truth lies were likely to have fallen under the influence of the more sensational texts.

The Canadian Plains Research Center's reprint of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* is a welcome addition because it has added what was missing in the 1885 edition: a scholarly introduction. The current edition now has just that, an introduction by University of Calgary historian Sarah Carter. Carter doesn't completely solve the mystery about the women's changed stories, but she does provide the balance obtained through a close examination of the issues and attitudes central to that period in history. In fact, Carter's introduction sheds a good deal of light on the full range of influences that may have affected the Therasas' decisions: influences related to gender and race, and to the popularity and expectations of the genre known as the "captivity narrative." Out of the broad historical context that Carter provides as a backdrop to this curious story, emerge new and thought-provoking questions about why the two Therasas changed their stories.

Investigating what really happened to Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock in captivity, by the way, is not new research for Carter — in her 1990 book, *Capturing Women, The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*, she explored in even greater depth, the confusing influences of the age, that may have had some impact on the way the stories appeared in the 1885 book. Those observations, however, are in another book. With the CPRC's reprint, readers now have ready access both to Carter's views about the capture of "Ontario's fair daughters" and to the original captivity narratives by Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock. Because Carter's careful reassessment of the period provides readers with a less one-sided and more complicated picture, her introduction is a welcome companion piece to those original narratives. It is all the more welcome for the new insights and clues Carter offers. Even so, readers still have to judge for themselves what they think happened.

The narrative portions by Theresa Delaney and Theresa Gowanlock in the 1999 edition are identical to those published in the 1885 edition, and the new edition, like the old, also includes the original photographs and illustrations by F.W. Sutherland. *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* is a relatively quick read because the women's changed stories are a mystery, and mysteries — this one is no exception — are always page-turners. The book, a mere seventy-eight pages long, can also be read in less than a day.

Sarah Carter's introduction is an important feature of the 1999 edition, because of the historical context Carter provides in it. Indeed, her introduction will be of particular interest to anyone who has already read *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear*. Those who are not familiar with this period in history generally, may find this book leads them to want to read other works by Carter, because this is not her first investigation into the period or the story about the "two white women captives." All readers — those familiar with or new to the story about the two Therasas — will find themselves pondering Carter's thought-provoking insights into the period, that produced the influences that may have caused the Therasas to change their stories. Carter's speculations are persuasive, to say the least.

Recently, new books, examining the period in Canadian history known as the Northwest Rebellion or *Resistance*, have emerged to provide different versions of what happened during that confusing event. This reprint of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* joins the growing body of research that is casting some doubt on accepted, one-sided versions of that history. And because Carter's introduction now accompanies the two Therasas' narratives, readers get more pieces of the puzzle between the covers of the same book. About the only thing that I as a reader wished had been included in an appendix, is a sample of one of the Therasas' statements to the press in which they announced they "had been subjected to no cruelties or indignities." It is a minor point, however, since it can be easily tracked down through Carter's footnotes. The 1999 edition of *Two Months in the Camp of Big Bear* is enriched by Carter's clearly written introduction, making the 1885 edition a more complete story than it has been for more than a century.

### Related Reading

Carter, Sarah. *Capturing Women: The Manipulation of Cultural Imagery in Canada's Prairie West*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997.

Carter, Sarah. *Lost Harvests: Prairie Indian Reserve Farmers and Government Policy*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990.

Fulford, Robert. "Big Bear, Frog Lake and My Aunt Theresa." *Saturday Night* (June 1976): 9-10.

Stonechild, Blair and Bill Waiser. *Loyal Till Death: Indians and the North-West Rebellion*. Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1997.

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*Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I*, by L. James Dempsey. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 123, photographs, tables.

In the 1990s, academics began to explore aboriginal veterans' experiences. The experiences of World War II Indian veterans has dominated the popular and academic treatment of aboriginal veterans. World War I Indian soldiers have received very little notice by popular writers, and even less from academics. L. James Dempsey is the only academic to examine World War I Canadian Indian soldiers' experiences; his new book *Warriors of the King: Prairie Indians in World War I* is the first monograph to be published in Canada about twentieth-century Canadian aboriginal soldiers.

Dempsey aims to examine the reasons western Canadian Indians enlisted in World War I. Prairie Indians enlisted in the war because of the continued existence of a warrior ethic. His argument, however, does not stand up, primarily because Dempsey does not clearly articulate what exactly he means by warrior. The closest he comes to a definition is when he states that an experienced Indian warrior was "a brave, intelligent, and resourceful fighting man, one who attributed his success in war to the power of his spiritual protector" (4). It seems that Dempsey believes that to be a warrior meant going to battle. Dempsey does concede that many Indians enlisted in the war to escape the poverty of the reserves and because they possessed a strong loyalty to the British Crown. However, for Dempsey, the warrior ethic becomes a catch-all phrase. If a man enlists to see the world, he has an sense of adventure. His sense of adventure is due to his warrior ethic. If a man enlists because his friends have enlisted, this is also due to the existence of the warrior ethic.

Dempsey's warrior ethic is rooted in the image of the Indian of the 1800s and is connected to traditional culture. This image is highly romanticized. Associated with this image is the idea that to gain status as a man one had to aspire to be a warrior. Dempsey relies upon a source notably romanticized in its style and representation of Indians. He quotes from Dan Kennedy, an Assiniboine Chief who published numerous Indian legends in the Regina *Leader-Post* during the 1950s: "It is better for a man to be killed in battle, than die of old age or sickness." To be a warrior a man had to be spiritually gifted. In the pre-reserve era warriors used spirit helpers, dreams, visions, amulets, fasts, songs and other spiritual supports to facilitate their successes. Once on reserves men's warrior ethic "diminished in intensity" but their "propensity for war had been redirected into religious ceremonies..." (1). In Dempsey's interpretation, a man who participates in traditional ceremonies such as Sun Dances is expressing his warrior culture. Although Dempsey spends a considerable time discussing the continuance of the warrior ethic on prairie reserves, the evidence he provides does not conclusively show whether men who participated in ceremonies in the reserves era were expressing their warrior ethic or simply expressing their spirituality.

In his haste to connect the pre-reserve warrior ethic to the reserve period, Dempsey makes historically weak inferences. One example of this occurs when he describes how in the pre-reserve period, boys as part of the warrior ethic chose partners with whom they would travel and eventually accompany to war. These "selecting comrades," Dempsey claims, continued into the reserve period, as boys in residential schools chose partners with whom they would engage in games and other activities. Dempsey fails to explicitly link these two periods. Therefore, a conclusion that a continued pattern existed cannot be reached.

Dempsey makes several unsubstantiated claims. In one example, he states that in the pre-reserve era Cree names were "bestowed in the traditional way by an elder and often were warlike in nature, such as the Cree names Killed First, Man Who Shoots Straight, and Gives a Gun" (11). These names are no doubt reflective of Cree culture, but to claim that they are reflective of a warrior ethic is presumptuous. These particular names could just as likely be associated with hunting and not war. In another example, Dempsey states that during Sun Dances the old men would tell the younger men about their war exploits. This acted to keep the warrior ethic alive in the younger generation. Dempsey, however, does not cite the source of this information.

Dempsey's lack of historical analysis is also evident in his approach to the number of Indian enlistees in World War I. The Indian Department did not keep very good records of Indian soldiers, making it difficult to know the exact number of Indian enlistees. The Indian Department claims that between 3,500 to 4,000 Indians enlisted in the war. Dempsey states that this figure is incorrect. Unfortunately, considering Indian enlistment is central to his discussion, he does not venture to provide his own estimate. Instead, he simply states "an exact count will never be known" (viii). Strangely, in the conclusion he also claims that over 400 hundred western Canadian Indians fought in the war — how he arrived at this number he does not say.

The text format belies the book's actual length. The length of text, not including appendices, bibliography and the index, is eighty-four pages. If the footnotes were endnotes, as they are in most history books, the text of this book would be considerable shorter. In addition, there are several pages that are simply blank but are counted as pages. This editorial choice leaves the reader with an impression that the book is shallow.

Dempsey's footnoting in places is questionable. In some instances his footnotes divert the reader's attention. He informs the reader that at the outbreak of World

War I Indians enlisted even though fifty years had passed since they last fought. The author asserts that this demonstrates a strong traditional culture still existed. His lengthy footnote consists of several quotes from Indian agents decrying the lack of progress on the reserves and attributing this to the Indians' cultural traits: "Owing to tribal custom, the progress is slow"; "The old people have not accepted progressive ideas and old pagan ways are followed"; and "There are too many of the older and what one might call stagnationist element in this band for them to make rapid movement" (16). The statements do not substantiate Dempsey's claim that a strong traditional culture existed at the outbreak of the War. All that these statements show is that the Indian agents attributed the lack of progress to Indian cultural traits; these comments do not indicate the strength of the culture. They do, however, act to stir up an emotional response and sidetrack the reader from Dempsey's claim.

It is not uncommon for authors to cite their previous works, but Dempsey does not do so in a forthright manner. On page 46, he states that elders would have encouraged their sons to support the British Crown. In the footnote Dempsey cites Michael L. Tate's article "From Scout to Doughboy"; in that piece, Tate refers to an article previously written by Dempsey. Since this is the only reference to Tate's work, it does not add breadth to the research but simply another entry to Dempsey's bibliography.

There are redeeming features to the book. Dempsey's discussion on Indian deserters is strong. He states Indians did not desert out of cowardice but because they were either lonely or because they misunderstood army regulations. He provides several examples to substantiate his claim. Some Indian men left the army to help with family farms; these men were subsequently arrested for desertion. Other men deserted because they had become separated from friends with whom they had enlisted. The army recognized that some Indians may not have fully understood what was expected of them. In February 1917, the army made a special provision for any Indian who deserted. They would be allowed back into the army, albeit in the labour battalions, without facing disciplinary action.

Although this section is well done, Dempsey does not score a direct hit. One of the desertions he describes may not be a case of misunderstanding. Dempsey outlines the case of a man from the Birtle Agency in Manitoba who enlisted in April 1916 and then deserted in July of the same year. He was sighted shortly afterwards back on his reserve where he had married the Chief's daughter. He lied to the reserve's school principal, saying that he had been discharged due to poor health. Dempsey does not provide any additional information that would suggest that this man did not understand army regulations. The fact this man lied suggests that he may have understood something about army regulations. It could have been that he tried to hide the fact that he deserted out of fear. Granted, this is speculation. There is a significant gap in the information about this particular case to question Dempsey's claim.

Another strength is found in his use of photographs and appendices. Most of the photographs show either men in their army units or boys in cadets units. A few of the photographs do stand out from the others. One is of two Blood women and a local minister; one of the women, Sikski Mountain Horse, lost her son, Albert Mountain Horse, earlier in the war. Another photograph is a candid shot of three Blood men at Albert Mountain Horse's funeral. All the photographs, but these ones in particular, provide a stark image of Indians during World War I. One noticeable shortcoming of the photograph section is that all but one photograph are of Alberta Indians, the only exception being a photograph of a group from the File Hills Agency in Saskatchewan. There are no photographs of Indians from Manitoba.

Dempsey also includes four appendices containing pertinent information. In the

first appendix is a list of Indians who enlisted in the war. Though the list is not complete, the information is significant. The list, by agency, contains names of Indians who enlisted, where and when they enlisted, their rank, their unit, where they served, whether they were deserters, wounded or killed, and when they were discharged. The other appendices include tables detailing the land acquired from reserves utilized by the Soldier Settlement Board; the amount of Indian contributions to the Patriotic Fund by band and agency; and the amount of payments made by Indian soldiers. The latter table is somewhat confusing because it does not indicate what exactly these soldiers were paying for. Nevertheless, the appendices add to the overall information presented in the book.

Dempsey's book opens the door to twentieth-century Canadian aboriginal military history. Dempsey's argument, however, is unconvincing, his referencing questionable, and his treatment of the topic superficial. As a result, the door to this field of study is left wide open and ready for serious academic treatment.

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*Cree: Language of the Plains/nēhiyawēwin: paskwāwi-pikiskwēwin*, Jean Okimāsis and Solomon Ratt. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 1999. Pp. 136.

*Cree: Language of the Plains* is a useful Cree language resource, ideal for student and reference use. The book is a reprint of previous editions which were published by the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College. The book has been useful for hundreds of students of the Cree language, and undoubtedly will continue to be in its new, attractive format. The text is structured in a clear and cohesive manner. Throughout the book there are useful charts which will help the readers seeking to improve their fluency in Cree. Furthermore, the book is written in an accessible style which allows many people to read it and use it.

This book is the culmination of years of classroom use and represents an important milestone in the development of Cree as a written language. A great deal of time has been put into the collection of the words and examples, involving help from Darren Okemaysim and Doreen Oakes. Given the dialectal diversity of the Cree language and the challenge of putting the language in print, the book is indeed impressive in its results. The movement from spoken language to written language is indeed difficult given the reticence of some. However, the book provides a template for instructors working in other dialects to develop materials.

Nouns and verbs of the Cree language are treated thoroughly. The book includes useful chapters on nouns (chapter 4) and verbs (chapters 9, 12, 13, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26). However, a chart listing all of the inflections for transitive verbs would have been extremely useful for easy reference. Such sections are essential for students learning to speak Cree and those who wish to develop their fluency. Also, more stems could have been provided to help acquaint students to compounding, a pervasive phenomenon in Cree: in conversations the construction of sentences is often realized through the imaginative compounding of stems.

Context is important in language acquisition. The accompanying workbook is useful in that it helps students to learn in a contextual manner. However, there could

and “daycare,” to help students describe the contemporary world of their experiences. Context is also important in terms of students having aids and guides for the accurate duplication of the sounds of Cree. Unfortunately, there is no mention of the stress patterns in Cree: this would be helpful both for beginning students and for speakers who may have to articulate rules. Also, to aid in its effectiveness as a reference tool, a table with Cree syllabics would have been helpful. As a final suggestion, perhaps short stories in Cree should have been included to give the students more context in which to develop knowledge of the words and grammatical features of the language.

*Cree: Language of the Plains* is a useful contribution to Cree language studies. The book has emerged out of years of hard work by the authors and is an excellent textbook for Cree language study. The orthography throughout the book is accurate and thus maintains and expands the standard of written Cree set by Ida McLeod and Freda Ahenakew. The workbook adds to the effectiveness of the text by providing students material for drill work. The six accompanying tapes, sold separately, provide the indispensable complement to individual language learning. For anyone wishing to learn or improve their Cree, and for those who wish to have both a handy reference book and working materials, *Cree: Language of the Plains* is an indispensable tool.

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*A Female Economy: Women's Work in a Prairie Province 1870-1970*, by Mary Kinnear. Montreal/Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 1998.

Mary Kinnear sets out to document women's labour in Manitoba in a hundred-year span between Manitoba's entrance into Confederation and the Report of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women, noting that women's unpaid work was largely invisible, and following internationally prominent feminist development consultant Marilyn Waring's definition of work: “any activity culminating in a service or product, regardless of whether that activity is paid.” Kinnear describes her project thusly: “I take women who had historical lives and see how they experienced the past through their work. The women themselves are the centre of my analysis. ... Whenever possible, I let them tell their own story in their own words.” (8)

She does this by way of documenting narrative, which problematically means those whose lives were considered worth recording, are now worth quoting. This eliminates whole categories of women who were marginalized then by race, class and ethnicity, and by gender. Here, a feminist analysis would have raised these intersecting exclusions as indicative of something important in the historical record, an absence to be explained.

Promisingly, Kinnear notes that women are not heterogenous and that class, ethnicity, and race create differences beyond the commonality of sex. Still, virtually all women's status was “derivative”: class was determined by one's husband's class. (Little has changed in this regard.) Yet, there is not much examination within the data categories of precisely how these differences shaped different experiences. There is little analysis of the kinds of structures and processes (patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism) that were instrumental in configuring women's experiences, in all their diversity. This is the book's great weakness. Perhaps this was a decision to let the

historical narrative be the uninterpreted story, but the choice of some material over others presupposes methodological, ideological and other filters then (in which records survive) and now. History is not a simple narrative, but chaotic strands of competing narratives, shaped by subjectivity and by relations of dominance and subordination. This is not evident in the presentation of Kinnear's material.

The nine chapters begin with "Parameters," where the subject matter and intellectual parameters are defined, and move through "Foreigners on Someone Else's Ground" (considering the immigrant origins of most Manitobans, in addition to the First Nations and the Metis, and the ways in which ethnicity shaped the population composition); "Prescriptions," which looks at work and gender in Manitoba, in relation to some political debates on this in the United States and Britain. This chapter documents what was progressive legislation at the time, for example, Mother's Allowances, and the tensions between maternalist and feminist public policy. It also documents the regressive policy moves made in relation to women's work, such as disproportionate reductions to female teachers' incomes in 1933, justified by the rationale of women's secondary and temporary employment role. The reader is moved from 1870 to 1970 with an overview of these kinds of public policy — social normativity tensions, though the years from 1930 to 1970 are treated fairly superficially.

"Education and Training" takes a look at the socialization done by schools, which included enforced assimilation for aboriginal children in state schools and preparing girls to take on their socially prescribed gender roles. A modest education overlaid with religious instruction and guidance in domestic skills was the best available for most girls, though only aboriginal students had to endure colonial supremacy in the classroom. Following World War I more women completed school and entered university, a positive trajectory that continues through to today. Still, Kinnear concludes that the gender role of women still includes responsibility for what Waring has called the "shitwork": domestic drudgery and child care, either alone or in addition to obligations in the paid labour force. In one sentence in the conclusion, Kinnear credits the women's movement with the increasing challenge by women for society to contemplate the possibility that women could and should realistically be both mothers and earners, though she does not take up the policy options that have been advocated by the women's movement for implementation of this option.

In "Homemaking" Kinnear traces the legislative tools of patriarchy without naming the p-word: women were socially expected to provide the domestic labour for the maintenance of the family, while their legal identity was subsumed into that of their husbands. Women's property, legal and civil rights were compromised by marriage, which was a virtually state and church imposed "option." Divorce was difficult till 1969. Child support was virtually non-existent historically, and divorced women were socially suspect. Social, religious and state apparatus, then, fused in support of patriarchy. Aboriginal women, whose social, political and economic status was in most cases originally substantially better than that of European women, were considered as objects for state-enforced civilization and feminization, with the former to include instruction in domesticity as well as colonial superiority. There is some discussion of the difficult physical nature of women's domestic work, and the economic pressures on more women to "work."

In "Farmwork" women's contributions to the family farm and the agricultural sector are explored. Women historically had only derivative property rights, and so farm women contributed labour but did not share in the property titles, nor could they claim an equal share of the economic fruits of their labours. This state continued

reduced the need for women's physical labour in the fields, except when the men were "unavailable or unaffordable."

"Paid Labour" is perhaps the book's strongest chapter, both in terms of evenness of data over the historical period, and analysis of that data. It looks at the social assumptions in trends in legislation, such as the need to protect [white] women's virtue and reproductive health. Here, we see the fusion of state and market patriarchy with that of the patriarchal family form: men's interests in women's uses drove legislation, rather than women's self-defined interests. Kinnear does a good job of tracing the tensions between maternalist and feminist (or at least progressive) labour legislation, a tension made prominent by the normalization of women in the labour force following World War I. This chapter documents the trend for women to do in the labour force what they have done for free domestically: caregiving, especially of the young, the old, and the sick; and low-status service jobs. Domestic duties continue to be women's primary responsibility, with class separating those women who did/do the "double day" from those who hire other [often minority] women to do this work for them, for low wages. Employers resisted unions, accommodating working women's family lives, and pressure to pay decently. The last was defended with the justificatory and class-blind nostrums about women's work being secondary to the family (male) wage, and temporary till a man took over financial responsibility via marriage. Through to at least the 1950s [but anecdotal evidence suggests much later] women were routinely fired when they married.

"Public Service Work" covers especially the era when more women were in public service; that is, following World War I. Not coincidentally, *white* women got the vote in 1920. Women's sense of public capacity and entitlement to the fruits and opportunities of citizenship was enhanced by their ability to vote. Tying some of these strands together would have strengthened this chapter. Still, Kinnear looks at women in social welfare work, in political movements, and in electoral politics, and documents how women both had to invoke their gender (bringing womanly qualities to politics) and transcend their gender (not bringing particularity as women to public matters) in order to succeed.

Finally, "Looking Back" concludes that women have always had to "negotiate simultaneous demands of work, family, and self." The interesting and important work of showing the ways in which that negotiation have played out would have strengthened the book. Although Kinnear does raise the tension between maternalist and feminist social impulses, the economic, political and social factors shaping that negotiation are under-explored.

The book is a welcome addition to the slim body of empirical work on women's work. However, it suffers from a lack of conceptual clarity. For example, the context in which women work is a shifting one, formed by social mores, but more importantly, by economics and politics. The changing role of the state within the century under review has significantly affected women's work, though nowhere is this taken up. The struggles of the women's movement, in all its diversity, have been the catalyst for what changes have occurred to enhance women's roles in politics, the economy, and civil society. Yet, the women's movement is barely acknowledged. The state itself is a colonial enterprise, premised on the appropriation of indigenous nations' lands, resources and political power: this provides some context for the invisibility of indigenous women in the historical narratives and deserves to be taken up. Kinnear notes that "(w)hite immigrants had been attracted by the prospect of land." We ask: whose land? This is the land advertised by the federal government in its "come to Canada and get land and grow rich" immigration campaigns. Acquisition of aborigi-

agenda for Project Canada in 1870. But it is precisely this economic and political analysis, resonant today in contemporary issues, that Kinnear avoids.

While Kinnear makes an effort to take note of aboriginal women's existence and of the fact that their work conditions were differently circumscribed than were those of non-aboriginal women, this reads as an afterthought. No serious effort is made to document, theorize or analyze the conditions framing aboriginal women's work, the most significant of which is colonialism and its structural apparatus. Kinnear mentions the Indian Act's infamous pre-1985 membership provisions, but colonialism is far more pervasive than this.

Kinnear's reluctance to consider economic and political context weakens the book of much of its explanatory power. The Canadian state evolved from 1870, from a fairly limited and centralized government framed by a constitution devoid of notions of rights claims, through a rapid industrialization and coalescence of a "staples" economy; through World War I and on into the 1950s; through the crash of the western economies in 1929 and the subsequent emergence of Keynesian economics and the welfare state, whose mandate it was to promote social well-being. This transformed many women, both into citizens (white women got the vote in 1920 but status Indians, including women, only got the vote in 1960) and into active agents in the paid labour force. The consequent social tensions around wage and employment inequity, sex and race discrimination in the workplace, and childcare needs, drew public policy responses that would have been unthinkable earlier. The way in which the economy is regulated, the dominant modes of economic production and social regulatory and reproductive mechanisms structure women's role in paid and unpaid work. In short, it is precisely the economic and political transformations that changed the nature of women's work.

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*Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature*, by Deborah Keahey. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1998. Pp. 178.

Some years ago, I discovered in the writing of feminist art historian Griselda Pollock an appropriate methodology for our intellectual life and times. Pollock advocated a "fruitful raiding" of theory to accomplish a less reductionist critical narrative of women's painting. Reading Deborah Keahey's *Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature*, I was reminded of Pollock's phrase. Keahey ranges far and wide in her attempts, professional and personal, to understand and script the nature of so-called "regional" writing, surveying no less than seventeen examples of Canadian prairie literature across genres. Her intent with this book is to diffuse "sweeping theories" and "institutional pressures" that are "reductive and exclusionary." She believes that

the all-encompassing, totalizing theories so characteristic of today's post-colonial studies (which often over-generalize across regional, national, international, and other borders) run the risk of replicating colonial patterns of domination and control. (158)

With a metaphor that only a reader of Canadian prairie literature can appreciate, she points her critique of the theorizing about regional literature that has gone before

her. Here is the foreground figure for her own canvas depicting the literature of her “home place”:

I have an image in mind of the successful literary critic as a kind of Caleb Gare figure, out surveying his fields, caressing his flax, and eagerly contemplating the economic rewards and social esteem it will bring him. Substitute “thesis” for “flax” and you get what I mean.

The result of Keahey’s fruitful raiding, on the other hand, reveals an “incessant pluralism” that resists the formulaic theorizing about Canadian and “regional” literature that came of age in the Canadian academy and its subsidiaries, Canada’s publishing houses. The old regional cosmopolitan debate of Canadian letters, so controversial to generations of critics, seems to have had a lasting effect. In part, that is what Keahey is still responding to when she complains that texts produced in southern Ontario or “central Canada” are considered Canadian literature rather than regional literature. Where Keahey departs from the traditional debate is in her appraisal of that complaint. For her, regional identity, “like other forms of imagined communities, is both problematic and productive” (161):

On the one hand we have the desire to name, know, affiliate, congregate, and identify on the basis of perceived shared experience, interests, or concerns, in order to accrue the personal, social, economic and political benefits of that ‘group identity’, and the action it enables. On the other hand we have ample knowledge of the ways such identifications exclude, silence, marginalize, objectify, over-simplify, stereotype, and oppress. (159)

In the post-everything critical world within which Keahey attempts to understand regional literature, the precarious balancing between the problematic and the productive finds definition in five shades of “homemaking,” each with its subtle tonal differences. Chapter One, “Imperial Inscriptions,” reveals the multiple, ethnocentric layers of “colonial overdetermination” which have characterized both sincere and parodic portraits of the homestead or home place. Here, Keahey discusses two novels of the 1920s, Martha Ostenso’s *Wild Geese* and Robert Stead’s *Grain*, and two plays from the last decades of the twentieth century, Kelly Rebar’s *Bordertown Café* and Ian Ross’s *farWel*. What ties these works together, for all their differences in tone and time, are the mythic ideals surrounding the home embedded in the exclusionary “political unconscious” of each: the immigrant search for wealth in a promising new land; the heroic investment in an Empire of “common wealth”; the attraction and aversion to things American; and the promise of self-government in a regained land.

In Chapter Two, “Relative Geographies,” Keahey plays with the physicist’s space-time continuum. Another option for the writer, she says, is “the creation of home in the mind, the imagination, in mental rather than physical landscapes, and not *through* time but *ahead* of it” (44). She chooses the landscapes of three literary minds: Kristijana Gunnar, David Arnason, and Laura Goodman Salverson. Each of these ostensibly autobiographical texts spills over genre boundaries in diverse ways, just as the ostensibly similar Icelandic immigrant backgrounds from which these writers derive reveal diversity.

Chapter Three, “Centres of Gravity,” provides a discussion of how “home” comes to symbolize the human relationships to which we are drawn and from which we must all too often, paradoxically, escape. Keahey’s discussions of Frederick Philip Grove’s *Over Prairie Trails* and Lorna Crozier’s *Inventing the Hawk* make for particularly good reading. In Grove’s text, Keahey sees a performative act: “Text as confession, text as guilt” (72), but most of all text as justification for the romantic self in Grove’s autobiography. Crozier’s text offers a view from the other side of romance — the

Keahey is evident in this section of her book, revealing in her tone an appreciation for Crozier's poetry and her "refusal, for the most part, to idealize or oversimplify" (80). The juxtapositioning of these works provides opportunity for interesting gender analysis, too. That is what Keahey attempts with her discussion of Dennis Cooley's *this only home*, a work of "new environmentalism" — one that considers the effects not of the land on humans but of humans on the land" (92). I think, though, that the treatment of this book is not self-conscious enough of the thesis it posits. Earth is female but fragile; there is something disturbingly romantic and masculine in Cooley's text. Still, "Centres of Gravity" is to my mind the creative centre of Keahey's book.

Chapter Four, "Displacement and Replacement," makes evident how much Canadian prairie literature has partaken in modernism's fascination with alienation as the metaphor for human living, but also reveals how academic and simplistic such discussions have been when compared to the realities and complexities of displacement of First Peoples and Metis, sometimes by immigrant populations. The texts discussed in this chapter include Emma Lee Warrior's "Compatriots," Maria Campbell's *Halfbreed*, Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many*, and Uma Parameswaran's *Trishanku*. The latter, in a reading Keahey's supplements with Parameswaran's own critical commentary on her book of poems, provides the "replacement" of the chapter's title. When the writer sees Ganga in the Assiniboine, explains Keahey, she has created "an expanded sense of being at home in several different cultural realms ... [as a] positive view of diversity" (120). That may work for the immigrant, but what Keahey all but misses in her discussion of Warrior and Campbell's works is the restorative power of humour. In fact, Campbell may have been better represented in this chapter with her more recent colourful and typographically respectful *Stories of the Road Allowance People*. I agree with Keahey that *Halfbreed* was for too long overlooked in the academy, but overlooking Campbell's later work may be an even greater mistake.

For me, Chapter Five, "Placing the Self in Motion," for all its nodding to Robert Kroetsch's male/female and horse/house dichotomies, and despite the inclusion of Kroetsch and Fred Wah, is really only about my favorite work of prairie literature and home-phobia, Aritha Van Herk's *No Fixed Address*. Itself a meta-text of almost all prairie literature that has preceded it — a measure of Van Herk's own critical writing about and consumption of those texts — *No Fixed Address* is the one work that could have formed a chapter of its own. So much of what Keahey talks about in *Making it Home: Place in Canadian Prairie Literature* is to be found in some parodic way in Van Herk's text. While Keahey's analysis is engaging in so many parts of her book, I cannot help but feel that like so many others, she has failed to appreciate the profundity and humor of what *No Fixed Address* has to offer.

There are writers noticeably absent from Keahey's book — for good or ill: Sinclair Ross, Margaret Laurence (at least in a book about homeplace, "Where the World Began"), and Carol Shields. And there is, significantly, no discussion of gay/lesbian texts in this discussion of home. But good books only make us want more. And on the whole, Deborah Keahey *has* written a good book. Wouldn't it be ironic if it became the thing she seems most to abhor: the "big idea" of some new generation of critics.

Wendy Schissel

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*With Scarcely a Ripple: Anglo-Canadian Migration into the United States and Western Canada, 1880-1920*, by Randy William Widdis. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1998. Pp. 418, photos, maps, notes, index, appendix.

For three generations the scholarship of the Canadian Prairies has been energized and constrained by a potently nationalist tradition. Political economy at its heart, this tradition has produced profound understandings of the regional situation. It is a powerful, blinkered horse. It acknowledges a multitude of regional cultures, but cannot embrace them. It comprehends geography, but not environment. Most of all, it stands on guard at the 49th Parallel.

At this writing, however, a dozen or more scholars are at work on books or dissertations that pursue prairie topics across the international border, self-consciously invoking continentalist, comparative, or borderlands perspectives. In *With Scarcely a Ripple*, geographer Randy William Widdis seeks to get ahead of this cadre. The book is a troublesome tour de force.

The work seems innocent, even boring, at first. Widdis consumes scores of pages going over secondary work on migration and border regions, and even after that he never quite succeeds in distinguishing between review of literature and presentation of findings. Dissertation habits die hard, but they do show mastery of the literature. The author then painstakingly describes the context for emigration from English Canadian Ontario, providing an abundance of data, some of which provide insights as to migrations, some of which is just data.

In the meat of the book Widdis describes and analyzes migration from Ontario to three destinations — New York, North Dakota, and Saskatchewan. The migration to North Dakota, for instance, he describes as “a predominantly rural-rural migration” (p. 264) in search of land, an example of chain and cluster migration. Here and elsewhere he nicely reverses conventional thought about migration as being disruptive and points out that movers such as these in fact sought continuities, sought to keep families together by opening opportunities for all members. He observes that Anglo-Canadians occupied a niche in North Dakota similar to that of Yankee Americans. It is unfortunate that in consideration of ethnic neighbours, he persists in calling Germans from Russia “Russians,” but his findings on the Anglo-Canadians are well-reasoned.

It is in the third region of examination, Saskatchewan, where the sound of axes grinding becomes clearly audible. Droning on throughout an otherwise laudable discussion of the undeniable importance of Anglo-Canadian occupation of the Prairies is a futile defense of that Liberal fantasy, the “returning Canadian” coming home from the United States to claim a prairie patrimony. Widdis never succeeds in identifying appreciable numbers of these darlings, but he dwells upon them anyway.

The final chapter makes it all make sense. No wonder the author wrote of American land agents who “preyed on” (p. 256) Canadians but sees Canadian agents as only trying to “tap” the “receptive” (p. 290) pool from the south. Widdis, his feet planted in the present, is determined to maintain the “common will that transcends centrifugal forces” (p. 352) — that is, Anglo-Canadian nationalism — against the “new world order” (p. 353) led by Americans and bent on destruction of local autonomies. He argues that only a continuing nationalist conception can protect regional identities against ravaging Americanism.

No doubt ugly Americanism is a threat to cultures and identities everywhere, but to assign guardianship of regional identity to Anglo-Canadian nationalists — this indeed is to consign the chicken house to the foxes.

Thomas D. Isern

### Randy Widdis Responds

Thomas Isern begins his review with a warning to the reader that my book is a “troublesome tour de force,” an interesting judgement for both its ironical nature and its ambiguity. I will overlook his sarcasm and focus my opening remarks on what I take to be the central objection. Isern is concerned with what he views is my nationalist bias, claiming I am arguing “that only a continuing nationalist conception can protect regional identities against ravaging Americanism.” In case it slipped his mind, the book explores the turn-of-the-century experiences of Anglo-Canadian immigrants, one of the largest and least understood ethnic groups in the United States. *With Scarcely A Ripple*, the first study to link persistence, immigration, internal migration, and return migration, looks beyond the narrowly defined geographical and temporal boundaries of the aggregate census to clarify the social, economic, and demographic adjustments made by both transient and persistent Anglo-Canadians in different settings. Nowhere in this brief review does the reviewer inform the reader as to the purpose, sources, methods, and findings of the book. Instead, he chooses to focus upon and overreact to a speculative argument I make in the last five pages. In doing so, the reader is left without much idea of what the book is about and instead is subject to Isern’s misinterpretation of what I offer merely as a set of reflections about the present as informed by an understanding of the past.

Isern does the book a disservice when he brands it as a nationalist diatribe. In fact, I make it very clear that the study is informed by a perspective that actually challenges the east-west exegesis of Canadian development by balancing this perspective with one that recognizes the north-south links that played such a crucial role in the evolution of Canadian society. At one point in the book I argue that it is incumbent for researchers “to seek the middle ground between the extremes of nationalism and continentalism” (p. 355). As for my comment regarding a “common will that transcends centrifugal forces” (p. 352), Isern is guilty of quoting this phrase out of context. Here I am talking about how Canada exists most clearly as an ideal that its citizens are aiming towards but nowhere do I state that this ideal exists in reality or that it serves as a basis for anti-Americanism. The struggle to achieve this common will in the face of regional separation, cultural diversity, geographical barriers and strong forces of integration and continentalism is indeed the story of Canada. And while the Canadian, or at least the Anglo-Canadian identity, is moulded to a significant extent by a regional consciousness shaped by cultural plurality and geographical isolation, the frame used by Canadians to orient themselves in territory is bounded east and west by the rest of Canada and north and south by their transborder relationship with the United States.

My speculative argument regarding the homogenizing impact of global culture, again just a personal reflection in the coda of the book, is somehow equated with anti-Americanism by Isern, a gross overreaction on his part. Early in the book, I refer to Northrop Frye’s belief that the important existential question perplexing Canadians is not “Who am I” but rather “Where is here?” In Canada, identity is closely linked to geography and borders — socio-economic, geopolitical and psychological — which have always played a role in the development of a Canadian identity. “What is constant in the Canadian experience is that all groups in different regions and at different times have interpreted their identity vis-à-vis their relationship with the United States” (p. 19). And in this context, the border is meaningful to Canadians. When I assert that “global culture, produced for the most part by media and corporate giants in New York and Los Angeles, has increased the sense that real life takes place somewhere else, not in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Gananoque, Ontario, Regina, Saskatchewan, *Watertown, New York* or *Grand Forks, North Dakota* [my italics]” (p. 354), I am presenting an argument that ignores the 49th Parallel and simply emphasizes that the homogenizing forces of

global environment, place may no longer be viewed as the defining element of our identity because the meanings of borders are changing in such a way that their traditional functions are becoming blurred. Yet I balance this view when I state that place, regional identification and borders remain important for states and people because such boundaries and territories symbolize theoretical sovereignty in a world increasingly dominated by economic blocs and giant transnational corporations (p. 8). Indeed, I admit, it may be argued that underneath North American consumer culture there exists a significant, and perhaps, an increasing degree of localism. I would submit to Professor Isern that these comments are as applicable for communities in North Dakota as they are in Saskatchewan.

In his very cursory and inadequate discussion of what he calls “the meat of the book,” Isern makes a valid point that I perhaps go into too much detail in my discussion of migration, border regions and the context for emigration. My only defense is that I felt it important to describe in detail the dimensions and context of Canadian emigration for an audience in both countries which is largely unaware of the size and regional complexity of such a movement. Indeed my use of data sources previously unused or largely ignored has been commended by two other reviewers of this book.

Finally, Isern criticizes what he sees as my “futile defense of that Liberal fantasy, the ‘returning Canadian’ coming home from the United States to claim a prairie patrimony.” This is a ludicrous claim in light of statements made in the book such as:

This movement differs considerably from the classic return migration identified by Ravenstein. The majority of Canadian-born migrating from the United States to Saskatchewan were not returning to their home communities or even their regions of origin but instead were moving to another frontier which happened to be part of the country from which they originated. Affiliation with Canada may have played some role in the return migrants’ decision-making, but besides the recollections of a limited sample in the local histories, we have no way of determining the relative importance of this factor. It is very clear that economic opportunity and the presence of kin and kith were influential factors in their decisions to move north of the forty-ninth parallel. (p. 345)

There is much in the book that Isern neglects to discuss including how by using a variety of sources ranging from official government records to family genealogies to local histories, I demonstrate that this migration was influenced by the decomposition of rural societies, the expansion of urban-industrial opportunities, and the opening of new frontiers. He fails to elaborate on my conclusion that although there was no universal Anglo-Canadian experience, kinship ties and an accommodating and familiar host culture facilitated the survival of these immigrants and their integration into American society. He disregards my finding that attachments to local identity and family were especially important because they contributed to their eventual destination, economic survival, and the permanence of their residency. But I am most disappointed by the fact that this reviewer deliberately misleads the reader about my intentions especially in light of other reviews written by Americans that applaud my effort to address a topic that is much more complex than most would believe. To paint a picture that portrays me as a biased nationalist and an anti-American is irresponsible and unfair. Why this book would engender such a reaction is beyond me, especially in light of the positive responses that I have so far received on both sides of the border. I suggest in the book that the border is a wall of mirrors reflecting different meanings and that for Anglo-Canadians in particular, by examining the nature of our relations with America, we in turn see ourselves (p. 353). I would suggest to Professor Isern that perhaps he needs to take a good look in that mirror as well.

Randy Widdis

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