

# Saskatchewan HISTORY

★ Massacre  
at  
Cypress  
Hills

BY  
PAUL F. SHARP

★ Reminiscences

BY  
RAY COATES



# Saskatchewan History

Volume VII

Autumn 1954

Number 3

## Contents

MASSACRE AT CYPRESS HILLS.....	Paul F. Sharp	81
BAVARIAN FOLK WAYS IN LANGENBURG.....	Gilbert Johnson	100
DOCUMENTS OF WESTERN HISTORY		
Prices and Wages in 1890.....		102
RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES		
To The Golden West, 1903: Part I.....	Ray Coates	104
THE NEWSPAPER SCRAPBOOK.....		110
GOLDEN JUBILEE NEWS.....		112
BOOK REVIEWS.....		115
FREMONT, <i>Les Secretaires de Riel</i> : by Hilda Neatby.		
CHAPMAN, <i>Jud Battell's Story of the Early Days of the West</i> ;		
GEREIN, <i>History of Odessa</i> ;		
ELSON, <i>Origin and History of Fartown, S.D., No. 1856 With Reminiscences 1903-48</i> : by Elizabeth Heidt.		
FAST, <i>To Find the Daily Bread</i> : by Dorothy Kamen-Kaye.		
NEAL, <i>A Souvenir of Regina, Queen City of the Plains</i> : by Lewis H. Thomas.		
NOTES AND CORRESPONDENCE.....		120

(Cover Design by McGregor Hone, Regina)

Editor: LEWIS H. THOMAS

Advisory Board: HILDA NEATBY, ALEX. R. CAMERON, JOHN H. ARCHER, J. D. HERBERT

Business Manager: ALLAN R. TURNER

Correspondence should be addressed to *Saskatchewan History*,  
Saskatchewan Archives Office, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Published three times a year under the auspices of the Saskatchewan Archives Board

The articles in this magazine are indexed in the CANADIAN INDEX

Yearly subscription, \$1.00; junior subscription (for students), 50c;  
sustaining subscription, \$5.00 per year  
Plus education and hospitalization tax.

The Editorial Board and the Saskatchewan Archives Board assume no responsibility for  
statements made by contributors.

Copyright 1954

THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD

## Massacre at Cypress Hills

The following article by Professor Paul F. Sharp, professor of history at Iowa State College, first appeared in Vol. 4, No. 1 of *Montana Magazine of History* (Winter, 1954). It is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author and the Historical Society of Montana, which publishes this journal. The article is a chapter in the forthcoming book by Professor Sharp entitled *Whoop-Up Country, A Study of the Canadian-American West*. We feel sure that our readers will appreciate the author's scholarly analysis of this episode of the territorial period in Saskatchewan. Comments on the article will be welcomed by Professor Sharp.

The Editor

**F**REQUENT massacres darkly stain the pages of western history. But few of them challenge the historian as much as the skirmish between whites and Indians in the low-lying Cypress Hills of southern Saskatchewan. Here in May, 1873 a bloody fight between a party of hunters and traders from Fort Benton and a band of North Assiniboines touched off an ugly international incident which greatly heightened the tension already existing between Britain and the United States and fanned the smoldering embers of national spirit into angry flame on both sides of the international boundary in North America.

In such an atmosphere, national bias quickly distorted fact into fiction to create as vigorous a set of legends and myths as surrounded any similar incident in American history. To the south, American historians pieced together a story of valiant frontiersmen bravely fighting for their lives against fearful odds as vicious and depraved savages sought to "wipe them out." To the north, Canadian historians painted a dark picture of violent American border ruffians, drunk with whiskey and greed, brutally slaughtering innocent and defenseless Indians without purpose or justification. Neither interpretation seems defensible in view of the available evidence, and neither does credit to the objectivity or scholarship of those who, by reason of inadequate research or national bias, have perpetuated legend as history or myth as truth.

Tragedy at Cypress Hills began with a commonplace frontier incident. A small party of wolfers, returning from a winter of hunting in the northern reaches of the Whoop-Up country, camped on the Teton river only five miles from Fort Benton. Since they were so close to the river town and were surrounded by ranches, the men relaxed the vigil so carefully maintained during the long trip down the Whoop-Up trail. But they were betrayed by this false sense of security; and while their night herders slept, a band of thieving Indians made off with their horses. The men awoke to find themselves the victims of an honorable but dangerous Indian sport.<sup>1</sup>

Here was another of the bitter conflicts between the white man's highly developed sense of property ownership and the Indian's quite different set of values.

<sup>1</sup> This seems to be the only phase of the entire incident above dispute. Major sources for this aspect of the story are the eye-witness accounts of the participants, including John C. Duval, "Cypress Hills Massacre, A True Account", *Helena Independent*, Nov. 18, 1886; Donald Graham's account as reprinted in Hugh Dempsey, "Cypress Hills Massacre", *Montana Magazine of History*, Autumn, 1953, 1-9; testimony in the extradition trial in *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 8, 1875; and testimony in the Winnipeg trial, *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876, and *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876; a "true account" in the *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; and the first newspaper account of the fight in the *Helena Daily Herald*, June 11, 1873.

To the plains Indians, horse stealing was a highly regarded achievement, bringing to the successful thief much of the same honor and recognition which modern American society confers upon the baseball player who steals home base. But the wolfers did not regard it as a game. To be left on the plains without their horses was a serious matter, and they broke camp thoroughly aroused by the audacity as well as by the success of the Indian raiders. After ascertaining that their horses were indeed stolen and not estrayed, they moved down the trail into Fort Benton, a party of angry and determined men.

In Fort Benton, their pleas for assistance in apprehending the culprits and in recovering their stolen property fell on deaf ears. There, the military commander refused their request, arguing that his force of army regulars was too small to provide an escort for such a mission. Thus, left to their own devices, the wolfers organized an expedition, one fated to violence and bloodshed through the absence of authorized law enforcement.

Moreover, the Whoop-Up country into which they rode was virtually a derelict land, possessing neither effective laws nor agents to enforce them. This vast region had only recently been transferred from the Hudson's Bay Company to the Dominion of Canada, and no officers of the Crown were present to stay their hands or prevent violence.

With surprising speed the expedition outfitted itself for the trek across the plains. There is no evidence that the men lingered in Benton, finding strength or courage in the many saloons facing the busy river front. Despite this lack of evidence, several writers have made much of the party's fondness for "Montana Redeye," and one writer, claiming information directly from the Indians, describes the manner in which they spent the winter in the river town nursing their wrath: "In many a barroom session the wolfers boasted of the dreadful vengeance they would heap on the redmen when the poplars were in leaf again."<sup>2</sup> But this is entirely fictitious, for they left on the following day.

The men who rode north from Benton that day were typical hunters, trappers and wolfers of the high border country, neither better nor worse. Experienced in Indian warfare and schooled in plains lore, they were quite capable of caring for themselves whatever the emergency. Heavily armed with the latest repeating rifles and revolvers, they thought themselves a match for any roaming band of hostile Indians they might encounter.

To establish the character of the men in the little party is a difficult exercise in historical evidence. Testimony varies widely, depending upon the bias of the witnesses. On the whole, it seems clear that thus far historians have too harshly judged the group. By contemporary western standards they were typical frontiersmen—"thirteen Kit Carsons" as one newspaper dramatically phrased it, "advanced guards of civilization" in the no less modest words of yet another.<sup>3</sup>

By the standards of eastern society, whether Canadian or American, they were crude vulgarians, whose occupations and environment had shaped them to

<sup>2</sup> P. M. Abel, "The Cypress Hills Massacre", *Country Guide* (Winnipeg) May, 1951.

<sup>3</sup> *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; *Bozeman Times*, July 6, 1875.



View looking east across Battle Creek at site of Cypress Hills massacre.

a coarseness and toughness thought characteristic of the frontier. To argue from this, however, that they were naturally cold-blooded murderers capable of any crime to satiate their passion for vengeance is to reach a conclusion rather more severe than is justified by the available records of the careers of the men involved.

Only Thomas Hardwick had a "tough" reputation, one fully described by his sobriquet, "Green River Renegade." Most of the others, however, were veterans of previous conflicts with Indians, which had left them victims of the universal western view that violence and bloodshed were inevitable in their contacts with the redmen. But the judgment that they were therefore capable of any crime, however depraved, is an unwarranted assumption based on the widely accepted exaggeration that western society comprised "desperadoes, murderers

and degenerates, in short, a majority of the white population."<sup>4</sup> This picture of the western community may provide a proper atmosphere for a Hollywood thriller, but it does not accord with the facts of the social history of the region.

These were men of the West whose experience had taught them to fear violence from the Indian. Some of them were also veterans of the Civil War with the experience of four years of violent conflict shaping their conduct. This was a dangerous combination, for it prepared them to regard violence against the



This marker erected at massacre site by Maple Creek citizens may be inaccurate. Since Professor Sharp states that the massacre took place on a Sunday, the earliest date would be Sunday, May 4, 1873.

<sup>4</sup> John Peter Turner, *The Northwest Mounted Police*, 1:79.

Indians as natural and to praise the destruction of Indian power as promoting civilization. Thus, they were ill-equipped to grant concessions to avoid conflict or to seek peaceful answers to urgent problems.

This was also an international brigade. Though denounced in contemporary Canadian newspapers as "American gangsters," "American scum," and "American frontiersmen," and stigmatized by later historians as "one of the Missouri river gangs," or as "American gunmen," it was actually an Anglo-American party with citizens of both nationalities well represented. Of those whose nationalities can be ascertained, Ed Grace and Donald Graham were Anglo-Canadians, while George Hammond, Jeff Devereaux, S. Vincent and Alexis Lebompard were among the several French-Canadians involved in the melee at Cypress Hills.

With all possible speed and without particular caution, the Benton party pushed hard on the trail of the stolen horses. Natural leadership quickly asserted itself so that without an election or any formal balloting, John Evans took command. This large, well-built, good-natured frontiersman was dubbed the "Chief" by his companions in recognition of their confidence in his ability to direct the band in its dangerous mission.

Evans had demonstrated this same quality of leadership during the previous season when he served as captain of the Spitzee cavalry. This extra-legal organization of trappers and wolfers in the Highwood river region sought to prevent the sale of rapid-firing weapons and ammunition to the Indians by traders from Fort Benton. While this was its manifest purpose, many Benton traders believed its real design was to force the T. C. Power company out of the lucrative Whoop-Up traffic, thus leaving I. G. Baker's traders in undisputed possession. Certainly Tom Power and his chief lieutenant, John J. Healy, were convinced that Evans and his Spitzee cavalry played this devious game.

On top of this, George Hammond, who was soon to join Evans in the fight at Cypress Hills, had openly challenged Johnny Healy in the days of the Spitzee cavalry. The two traders came to blows over the Spitzee affair, accusing each other of "dirty cowardice" and "thieving deceit." Thus several of the chief figures in the struggle for control of the Whoop-Up trade the previous year were now involved in the fight at Cypress Hills. T. C. Power and his friends had not forgotten the past incident, nor had they forgiven the I. G. Baker people for what they regarded a vicious attempt to ruin their trade.

When I. G. Baker's allies, Evans and Hammond in particular, became involved in the shameful affair at Cypress Hills, the Power traders found an unexpected opportunity for revenge and an unlooked for chance to reverse the pressure of the previous year. Now they hoped to exclude the Baker traders from the field. But their maneuvers were far more subtle than the crude threats of the Spitzee cavalry, for they used the American and Canadian governments to eliminate their rivals and to advance the firm's monopolistic goals. Thus the affair of the Spitzee cavalry, which has always been treated as an isolated incident, is of greatest importance in understanding the hue and cry which accompanied the Cypress Hills melee.

But such thoughts were far from their minds as the Benton men hastened northward. At the Marias river a near tragedy threw a dark shadow of gloom over the entire group when one of the men almost lost his life while fording the river. There, three of the party were ordered to drive the horses across the swollen stream while the others made rafts to carry their food and equipment to the farther side.

All went well in the fording operation until one of the three tired in mid-stream and suddenly called for help. Panic momentarily paralyzed the party and the tension greatly increased when their tired horses refused to re-enter the water to assist the drowning man. Finally, Donald Graham swam back to his companion and pulled him out of the treacherous waters, but the two men were completely exhausted and the party was forced to spend the remainder of the day resting and recruiting its strength.

On the following morning the men resumed their journey, traveling night and day with but short rests and tenaciously following a trail which led them north into the Cypress Hills. In this rough and eroded region with its deep ravines and thick stands of coyote willows, the trail became too faint to follow and they were forced to give up their search. This was disappointing, but Abel Farwell's trading post on Battle Creek was only a few miles distant and there they hoped to rest their horses and gather information concerning the stolen property.

When about five miles from Fort Farwell, as the crude little trading post was called, the men halted to make camp. Here they decided to send two of their number into the trading area to reconnoiter. Thus it fell to John Evans and Thomas Hardwick to reveal their presence to Farwell and to secure what information he might have about their mission.

Farwell greeted his old friends cordially, urging them to bring in the rest of the party to join his men for dinner and to spend the night at his post. Evans, however, was too concerned about the lost trail for social amenities and pressed Farwell for information. He was particularly anxious about the nearby camp of Little Soldier's North Assiniboines, where some of his men believed they would find the stolen horses. He bluntly came to the point, were they the thieves? "No", said the trader, "the camp has only five or six horses, and they have not got yours."<sup>5</sup>

This was disappointing news and Evans hurried back to his companions to share it with them. It was a cruel blow to their high hopes of finding the horses on the morrow and of returning at once to Fort Benton. Evans later recalled his bitter frustration: "sick and disappointed at not having obtained our horses and tired after a long day's ride, we laid down to sleep after exchanging news."<sup>6</sup> Hardwick, however, remained with Farwell to enjoy the comforts of the little fort, including its well-stocked liquor chest.

<sup>5</sup> Farwell's testimony is found in several scattered sources. The chief source used throughout this account is in Consular Dispatch 219, James Wickes Taylor to J. L. Cadwalader, Sept. 22, 1875, General Records of the State Department, National Archives. Other accounts are in *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 8, 15, 22, 1875; *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876; *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 26, 1876.

<sup>6</sup> *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1876.

The Benton party reached Fort Farwell at a most unfortunate time. For weeks the surrounding district had been feverish with excitement as restless Indians, frightened half-breeds and greedy traders lived under an armed truce. The very evening of their arrival witnessed the climax of an ugly incident dating back to the previous month when a band of seventeen Indians abused Farwell's hospitality and slipped away with thirty of his horses while his guards slept. Among these horses was one owned by the French-Canadian, George Hammond, who generously paid the Indian bringing it in. Unhappily, the disappearance of this same horse the following day touched off the fight which became known to history as the Cypress Hills massacre.

Fort Farwell was only one of four trading posts built in this district in the autumn of 1872. After the winter's trading, however, I. G. Baker's bulltrains collected the furs and two of the posts were abandoned. Abel Farwell, assisted by his interpreter, Alexis Lebompard, continued to trade as a representative of T. C. Power Company of Benton. Less than two hundred yards away, but across the creek, another post remained open under the management of Moses Solomon. In this post, as assistants or as hunters, lived three other white men soon to be deeply involved in the fracas, John McFarland, George Bell and Philander Vogle.

So tense were conditions around these two posts that several Indian skirmishes had already served as grim harbingers of the approaching tragedy. Fort Solomon was the particular target of Indian resentment, for Solomon and his traders had treated the Indians badly, often reducing them to drunken insensibility and cheating them shamelessly. By May, hatred for the white traders had reached fever pitch among the Indians and plans for a showdown with the callous traders were already underway when the Benton party arrived.

Not far from the two trading posts a large settlement of half-breeds watched this guerrilla warfare with growing apprehension. A wave of fear swept this community of freighters and hunters when a band of enraged Indians killed a white trader named Paul Rivers.

Frequent Indian threats to wipe out Fort Solomon reached the unhappy Métis community during the month of April. On one occasion, the Indians bluntly warned Joseph Laverdure, a half-breed freighter in Abel Farwell's employ, that despite the close ties between their people and his, the Métis would be hurt if they got in the way when "a hundred guns go off."<sup>7</sup>

Sometime later, and only two days before the fight, a badly frightened Assiniboine appeared in the half-breed winter camp. His story of an impending attack upon Fort Solomon confirmed the Métis' fears and gave added emphasis to the repeated warnings already current in their camp.

On top of this, the half-breeds received a direct warning less than two hours before the fight, when another Indian from Little Soldier's camp added his testimony. "It is a pity you half-breeds are here, for we have determined to clean out the whites and take all their stock. As soon as the Americans come out of

<sup>7</sup> Consular Dispatch 219, Taylor to Cadwalader, Sept. 22, 1875.



the fort we intend to take all they have and if they make any resistance we will fight them.”<sup>8</sup>

Into this hell's broth of tension and hatred rode the men from Benton. Here was an explosive situation. Only the slightest spark would set off another bloody conflict so familiar in the relations between whites and Indians on the Great Plains.

To make disaster a certainty on that Sunday in early May, whites and redmen alike spent much of the morning drinking heavily. Moses Solomon's whiskey trade with the Indians had already caused great difficulties; now Abel Farwell joined in the traffic by providing drinks from the supplies he had purchased earlier from William Rowe when that trader abandoned his wretched traffic and departed for Fort Benton. Farwell later denied that he ever traded in spirits arguing that he bought out Rowe's stock only “to keep him out of the business”.<sup>9</sup> While Farwell's sentiments appear entirely commendable, there is adequate evidence to indict him along with Solomon for this reprehensible business.<sup>10</sup>

Shortly after noon the Sabbath calm was broken by George Hammond's shout that the Indians had again stolen his horse. Quickly the Benton traders crowded around the excited man demanding to know what had happened. “What is it all about?” they asked.

“Why, they have stolen my horse again, let's go over and take theirs in return,” said the thoroughly aroused Hammond. To the Métis he told a similar story in French, ending his recital with the threat, “For that horse I'll have two.” Gun in hand, he started angrily for the Indian camp closely followed by several of the Benton party who were willing to assist him in recovering the missing animal.

What really happened from that moment onward is shrouded in a haze of contradictory and confused testimony. There is no thoroughly reliable account of the massacre and most of the witnesses contradicted their own testimony at one time or other. To reconstruct with complete accuracy the detailed events at Cypress Hills is impossible, but the main events can be pieced together from the maze of evidence.

Abel Farwell testified later that he sought vainly to restrain Hammond, urging caution with the plea that the Indians did not have his horse. When this failed to appease the determined French-Canadian, Farwell volunteered to go into the Indian camp alone to speak to Little Soldier.

Immediately, he turned toward the Indian camp, hurrying through the coulee and across the remaining distance to Little Soldier's tent. There, he quizzed the Indian chief about the missing horse, which Little Soldier insisted had not been stolen but was even then grazing on a slight hill some distance beyond Farwell's post. Unhappily, Little Soldier was too drunk to act decisively or to hold his

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup> *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876.

<sup>10</sup> Farwell's reputation as a whiskey trader was widely known in Fort Benton. The evidence of Baptiste Champagne (Consular Dispatch 219) is particularly damaging to his case.

young warriors in check. They at once showed keen resentment at the provocative manner in which the white men approached their camp and began abusing the traders with taunts and insults. Farwell used every possible device to quiet the Indians and get them to listen to reason. Little Soldier readily acquiesced, even going so far as to offer two of his own horses as hostages to Hammond until the missing horse could be recovered.

Meanwhile, this seeming hostility by the young braves frightened the Benton men. Their apprehension quickly became alarm as they discerned the women hurrying away and the men casting off their garments in apparent preparation for combat. To protect themselves in the coming fight, the men crowded into the coulee which was three to eight feet deep and ran within fifty yards of the Indian camp. This movement, in turn, aroused Little Soldier and his Indians to ask why the white men took such menacing positions.

At this point, Farwell later claimed, he heard Thomas Hardwick calling from the coulee and ordering him to get out of the way or get shot. With a warning to the Indians to scatter, Farwell returned to the men in the coulee to plead for sanity. "Would you shoot at a party of Indians when there was a white man among them?" he asked.

"If you had come out when you were first told, we would have had a good shot," answered the sullen Hardwick.

Farwell then explained Little Soldier's proposition, but the men refused to believe his story. They feared his duplicity or, at best, his inability to understand the Indian's speech. To play for time, Farwell said he would get Alexis Lebompard to confirm his story and turned to call his interpreter from the fort. Before he could move more than a few steps, he saw George Hammond fire into the Indians and a wild fight immediately broke out.

Protected by their cutbank fortress, the whites poured volley after volley into the exposed Indians with deadly effect. Three times, however, the courageous warriors charged the coulee, only to be repulsed with heavy losses. Years later, time had not dimmed John Duval's memory of the courage and tenacity of Little Soldier's braves: "Three times those plucky warriors returned to almost certain death."<sup>11</sup>

After their third costly attack, the Indians withdrew to a coulee behind their camp from which they kept up a vigorous fire against the whites. To dislodge them from this position, Evans and Hardwick mounted their horses and rode to a hill overlooking the Indian stronghold. From this vantage point, the two men raked the Indian ranks with telling effect.

Instead of fleeing, the Assiniboines executed a flanking movement of their own through a thicket of willows and small trees. This maneuver was so effective that Hardwick and Evans were suddenly in grave danger and several of the white men rushed to their aid. At the head of this rescue party rode Ed Grace, "a Canadian of great bravery." His rashness cost him his life, for the moment he entered the woods, a concealed Indian sent a bullet through his heart.

---

<sup>11</sup> Duval, "Cypress Hills Massacre".

Grace's death greatly sobered the Benton party. Soon they withdrew to the fort which commanded a view of the Indian camp and from which they laid down a field of fire so effective in its devastation that it prevented the Indians from returning to their lodges. At nightfall, they scattered, giving up their camp and leaving their dead on the field.

From this point onward, Farwell's account is a saturnalia of unrestrained bloodlust and brutality. Little Soldier, too drunk to flee, was found hiding in a lodge where he was killed by S. Vincent; his head was cut off and mounted on a pole as a grisly trophy of victory. Farwell also charged that Indian squaws left in the camp were abused and children brutally slain along with adults.

At dawn the Benton men finished their gruesome work. A melancholy scene of death and violence greeted them at the Indian camp, for defiling the fresh greenness of the Spring meadow were the bodies of dead warriors, and scattered about by the capricious whims of combat lay the pitifully few possessions of the Indians. After burying some of the dead, the white men pulled down the empty lodges and burned the abandoned clothing in a great pyre.<sup>12</sup>

Next they faced the unpleasant task of burying their own dead. After some debate, they decided to place Grace's body under the floor of Solomon's fort. Then, to conceal his burial place from Indian discovery and to prevent the enraged survivors from later mutilating his body, they soaked the green logs with coal oil and burned the post to the ground.

That afternoon they resumed their search for the missing horses. This time they rode almost straight west into the Whoop-Up country, where they hoped to find a party of Bloods alleged to be the thieves. Then too, the Cypress Hills district had suddenly become very unhealthy for white men, for only twenty miles north lay a large camp of Crees, friends and allies of the Assiniboines.

Some days later they reached Fort Whoop-Up where they learned of a camp of Bloods farther west which might shelter their stolen property. With more rashness than wisdom they rode on to what was nearly a second disaster, for this camp turned out to be one of one-hundred and fifty lodges of well-armed mounted Indians.

Here they were greeted with open hostility. Donald Graham's account of the affair, the only detailed record of this incident, is tense with suppressed excitement. With their weapons ready for instant use the Indians sullenly welcomed their uninvited guests. One young boy rode beside the white men, flexing his bow and arrow and repeating again and again, "I know I can kill a white man."

With a courage more apparent than real, the men rode directly to the head chief's tent. Here they found an ancient chief, clad in the blue coat of an American soldier but wearing a King George medal on his breast. To him they told their story, but were much relieved to learn that their horses were not in that camp.

---

<sup>12</sup> Contemporary estimates of the number of Indians slain in the fight range from fifteen to thirty-six; later estimates reaching two hundred, seem greatly exaggerated.

Had trouble started, Graham and his companions "knew that not one of us would get away."<sup>13</sup>

Without further ceremony or argument, the worried men rode out of the camp. Out of sight of the Indians, they spurred their horses and rode hard until nightfall, putting as much distance between them and the Bloods as possible. Even then, they mounted a strong guard during the night to prevent a surprise attack from their late hosts.

Meanwhile, Farwell and several of the Cypress traders hurried to Benton as rapidly as possible. There they broke the news of the bloody fight and were acclaimed noble frontiersmen who had taught the Indians a costly but necessary lesson.

In the years that followed, Abel Farwell's account of these events was accepted without qualification as an accurate eye-witness report. Unfortunately, his story of the decapitation of Little Soldier appears to be a fabrication, and other serious problems challenge the accuracy and reliability of his testimony.

Basic to his story is the claim that he honestly played the role of peacemaker, seeking to hold in check the bloodlust and passion of murderers. But this is open to question, for it was widely known among the traders that Farwell could not speak the Indians' language, except for the simplest terms used in the trading. Lebopard, his interpreter, later testified, "I knew from my relation with Farwell and the Indians that he could not understand them."<sup>14</sup>

Far more important is the question of Farwell's disinterestedness. His lack of prejudice is the foundation upon which his account rests; thus far it has been taken for granted. From the beginning of the controversy, however, Farwell faced accusations such as "paid informer," "hired tool," and "biased witness." But these always appeared to be false charges of men facing justice through the honest testimony of a disinterested witness who sacrificed friendship and social status to tell the hard truth.

This analysis of Farwell's account is rudely shattered by evidence unearthed by the State Department in its effort to learn the truth about the affair. By 1875, the fight at Cypress Hills had become an international incident, compelling Secretary of State Hamilton Fish to launch a thorough investigation. To this difficult task he assigned James Wickes Taylor, distinguished publicist and long-time American consul in Winnipeg.

Taylor's investigations revealed a startling situation, one which raised serious doubts as to the trader's reliability as a witness. Farwell, he informed the State Department, "was the instrument of a scheme" launched by T. C. Power and Company "to misrepresent what was an ordinary Indian fight, as an outrage by the whites, and by criminal prosecutions, to exclude competition from the Cypress Hills in the trade for buffalo robes."<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Dempsey, "Cypress Hills Massacre" 9.

<sup>14</sup> *Winnipeg Standard*, June 24, 1876.

<sup>15</sup> Consular Dispatch 241, Taylor to Fish, August 1, 1876.

Why historians have ignored the mountain of evidence from eye-witnesses other than Farwell and his Indian wife is another interesting mystery. Accounts by active participants who testified with a noose about their necks are properly suspect. There remains, however, yet another set of important records. These are the eye-witness reports of men not involved in the actual fighting, but who watched safely from a distance. Their testimony sheds considerable light on the entire affair, especially on such moot questions as to which side fired first. Joseph Laverdure, for example, testified that "the Assiniboines fired first, but not at the Americans, they fired at random giving out cries of contempt or provocation."<sup>16</sup> The Benton men then replied to the challenge thus touching off the fight.

Another Métis witness, Joseph Vital Turcotte, testified in a similar vein. "I saw them cross the river to go to the Indian camp; they went forward near the coulee; four Indians came towards them naked, apparently challenging them; the Benton party were on foot, as they were going towards the coulee four shots were fired by the Indians; almost at the same moment the Americans fired."<sup>17</sup> Thus, Farwell's testimony on such a simple matter as how the fight started was contradicted by reliable witnesses.

Whatever the truth about the Cypress Hills incident, its aftermath is perfectly clear. News of the brutal fight aroused greatest indignation throughout Canada. It came as a climax to a decade of lawlessness and crime in the Whoop-Up country and deeply offended the sense of law and order of the eastern provinces. The shocking story from Battle Creek, gaining in exaggeration and distortion as it spread, hastened the formation of a police force to patrol the vast unoccupied plains north of the forty-ninth parallel. Though the Macdonald government had already introduced a bill in Parliament to organize the Northwest Mounted Police, the terrible news from the West reinforced the need for immediate action. Public clamor to end the disgraceful whiskey trade from Fort Benton and the keen resentment at this invasion of Canadian sovereignty by freebooters and whiskey traders strengthened the sinews of Canadian nationalism and touched the raw nerves of anti-Americanism, always close to the surface.

Official investigation of the incident began in Washington. In August, 1873, letters protesting the outrage reached the Department of Interior from its Indian agents. Since the affair had occurred on British soil, the department immediately transferred the case to Secretary of State Hamilton Fish for action. Two days later, Fish dispatched a note with all available evidence to Sir Edward Thornton, British Minister in Washington.<sup>18</sup> Thus, a frontier fight occurring on the periphery of Canadian-American settlement in the West became a diplomatic question involving Washington, Ottawa and London.

For the next two years, Canadian officials sought the men responsible for the Cypress Hills fight. Sir John A. Macdonald launched the inquiry by instructing Gilbert McMicken, commissioner of Dominion police in Winnipeg, to investigate the case. McMicken failed to reach Bismarck before the river season closed,

<sup>16</sup> *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup> Fish to Thornton, August 15, 1873.

however, and his orders were cancelled. By the following year the Northwest Mounted Police were organized and took over the investigations.<sup>19</sup>

Not until the Spring of 1875 were the police able to take action on information in their possession. In May, Lt. Col. Acheson G. Irvine was specially commissioned to continue the investigation by going to Fort Benton to prepare extradition warrants for the alleged murderers. Irvine's trip to Fort Benton, up the river from Bismarck on the little steamer Fontanelle and then across the Indian infested prairie, opened his eyes to the problems of law enforcement in the American West. Good fortune also led him to find Alexis Lebompard at a little post on the Missouri river. Without revealing his real purpose, Irvine employed the aging plainsman as a guide and from him secured considerable valuable information. Lebompard later proved to be an important witness in the trials at Helena and Winnipeg.

Fort Benton merchants greeted the Canadian officer cordially and assisted him in his mission. Irvine found the Conrad brothers, Charles and William, particularly valuable sources of information. These partners of I. G. Baker, along with the rest of the business community in Fort Benton, were weary of the costly and wasteful conflicts disturbing their trade in the Whoop-Up country. They had earlier welcomed the arrival of the Mounties as a guarantee of peace in that troubled region; now they were determined to assist in ridding their community of men who persisted in regarding Fort Benton as a frontier fur trading post rather than a commercial and financial center.

Meanwhile, Col. James F. Macleod, an assistant commissioner in the Force, entered Montana from Fort Macleod on a similar mission. The two officers were so successful in completing their case against Evans and his men that on May 7th the British Minister in Washington requested warrants for their arrest and extradition on charges of murdering the Assiniboine Indians two years earlier. Warrants were therefore issued for the arrest of John Evans, Thomas Hardwick, Trevanian Hale, John Duval, George Bell, Jeff Devereaux, Philander Vogle, George Hammond, John Marshall, Charles Smith, Charles Harper and Moses Solomon.

Federal machinery was set in motion at once to apprehend the alleged murderers. Officials in Washington instructed Montana's territorial governor, B. F. Potts, to co-operate with Canadian officers; and United States marshals Charles D. Hard and X. Biedler were sent similar instructions.

On June 21, 1875, seven of the wanted men were arrested in Fort Benton. Local officers, including Sheriff Hale of Chouteau county, refused to assist Canadian and federal officials. Fears of an aroused public opinion cooled their enthusiasm for co-operation and hopes for continued public favor paralyzed their will to act. So the arrests were made by federal marshals assisted by army troops stationed at Fort Benton. This unpopular action by federal officials increased the tension between local and federal officials and clearly revealed one of the major difficulties of enforcing laws on the American side of the frontier. Under

<sup>19</sup> John Peter Turner, *Northwest Mounted Police* I: 84-5; 101-2; 217-34.

federal guard, the men were then transferred to Helena for an extradition hearing before United States Commissioner W. E. Cullen.

Public reaction throughout Montana was immediate and violent. The arrests aroused intense, even hysterical opposition, and touched off public demonstrations throughout the territory. Causes for this reaction are not difficult to find, for the arrests violated the universally accepted view in the American West that white men could take the law into their own hands against the aborigines. Many Montanans also objected to the arrests as a use of governmental power to assist the Hudson's Bay Company in its efforts to eliminate American competition from the Whoop-Up country. Independent traders in Fort Benton felt keenly on this issue and refused to believe that the Canadian government acted in good faith. For many years the belief persisted that the Northwest Mounted Police only served the interests of the company "in their attempt to monopolize the trade of the Northwest."<sup>20</sup>

Deep-seated tensions and prejudices came to the surface in this heated controversy. Petitions circulated widely denouncing "British invasion" of American rights and picturing the Benton men as innocent victims of the "Anglo-Canadian Indian pacification policy." Anglo-phobia had its brief day in Montana as a result of the arrests, for the extradition trial at Helena opened the floodgates of prejudice to release a torrent of bitterness that reached astonishing heights of vituperation and exaggeration.

Always in the foreground of this agitation was a small but highly articulate group of Irish Fenians in Fort Benton. "Col." J. J. Donnelly, lawyer, justice of the peace, and professional agitator, led the Fenians in their attempt to make a cause celebre of the arrests. Donnelly's long record as a Fenian spokesman recommended him for this role. The self-styled "Colonel" had already led two abortive invasions of Canada, one from New Hampshire and another from North Dakota. Now the "Colonel" occupied the stage of public clamor for a last moment of glory, preaching hatred of neighboring Canada and her British institutions.

More important in arousing public fears was the universal sentiment that Indian power could only be held in restraint by such incidents as that at Cypress Hills. Citizens in the Bozeman district, for example, protested the arrest of Evans and his friends with the argument that "there is but one way to punish and bring to account these savage perpetrators—that is, to *pursue and punish according to their own method of warfare.*"<sup>21</sup>

Many Montana editors and spokesmen openly defended the massacre. They argued that it was a positive good, insisting that it was not a crime, but offered a salutary lesson to the redmen. The editor of the *Fort Benton Record* summarized this argument with the pointed question, "if the whites are to be punished for protecting their lives against Indians, will they not at once renew the hostilities of former years, under the impression that no matter what depredations they

<sup>20</sup> For a vigorous statement of this argument see letter to editor from Jack Blount, *Fort Benton Record*, May 15, 1875.

<sup>21</sup> *Bozeman Times*, July 6, 1875.

commit, their victims alone will be the sufferers?"<sup>22</sup> If the Cypress Hills incident did nothing else, it exposed the terrible failure of American Indian policy and revealed the tragic weakness of a frontier philosophy which argued for the rule of law for one segment of the community, while allowing the anarchy of violence for another.

On July 7, 1875, Commissioner Cullen began the hearings. Though excited miners pressed into the crowded courthouse and exuberant demonstrations broke out in neighboring saloons and filled Helena's streets, Cullen kept his head and refused to be stampeded by local prejudice and clamor.

Much of the best legal talent in the territory matched skill and resourcefulness in the heat of the packed courtroom. Colonel Wilbur F. Sanders presented the Canadian case with great vigor and enthusiasm, though Merritt C. Page, district attorney and chief prosecutor, appeared extremely reluctant to defy the public agitation swirling about the court.

To defend the prisoners, Joseph K. Toole directed a formidable battery of lawyers from the firms of Johnson and Toole, Shober and Lowry, and Chumasero and Chadwick. Though Canadian officials appear not to have known, this selection of lawyers revealed the political implications of the extradition case, for Sanders spoke for a Republican group bitterly opposed to the Irish Democrats of Joseph K. Toole.

Canadian officers applauded Sanders' vigor and courage when he denounced the Benton men as "Belly river wolfers, outlaws, smugglers, cut-throats, horse-thieves and squaw-men." They gave no indication, if indeed they ever knew, that much of this was inspired by the political motive of discrediting the strong Irish Democrats of Fort Benton. Sanders' attack was so violent that five years later in the general elections of 1880, the Benton Democrats were still popularly called the "Belly river wolfers" and the "Whoop-Up Democrats." They never forgave Sanders for his role in the Helena trial and the whip-lash of his tongue remained a bitter memory for many years.

Evidence presented in the hearings proved contradictory and inconclusive. Abel Farwell, chief witness for the prosecution, told a confused story. Evidence from fellow traders implicated Farwell in the nasty business of whiskey trading and weakened his testimony by challenging his character. Commissioner Cullen discharged the prisoners on the ground that the Canadian government had not presented sufficient proof of an assault with intent to commit murder. "It is difficult to believe," said Cullen, "that an impartial jury, whether in the United States or Dominion of Canada, would find these defendants guilty upon this testimony of either offenses charged against them . . ."<sup>23</sup> Two years later, this judgment was sustained when a Winnipeg jury freed three of the Benton men under similar conditions.

<sup>22</sup> *Fort Benton Record*, June 26, 1875; Dec. 21, 1877.

<sup>23</sup> *Helena Weekly Herald*, July 29, 1875.



Jubilant crowds greeted the news of Cullen's decision. A torch-light parade through Helena's main streets expressed their enthusiasm, and liquor flowed freely as Montanans celebrated the return to freedom of their wolfer heroes.

With shocking suddenness the Helena trial reached an unexpected climax when local officers arrested Col. James F. Macleod. This farcical turn of events came as a result of Jeff Devereaux's charge of false arrest against the Canadian officer. Chief Justice D. S. Wade speedily dismissed the charge, for Macleod had acted "strictly under orders of his own government and with the approval of the government of the United States."<sup>24</sup>

Helena's celebration seemed tame and colorless in contrast to the hysterical welcome Fort Benton lavished upon its returning heroes. "With flags flying, band playing and horses prancing," the little frontier town devoted an entire day to greeting its ex-prisoners.

That evening, a mass meeting gathered in Solomon's hall to express its enthusiastic pleasure. A carefully selected civic committee staged the event in a hall "tastefully decorated" with a large American flag on which appeared the fighting slogans, "Home Once More," and "Didn't Extradite." Beneath Old Glory a crayon drawing of the British lion in full retreat with an American eagle twisting his tail, completed the patriotic motif.

After a few preliminary formalities, "Col." J. J. Donnelly harangued the audience with an impassioned speech filled with bitterness and venom. The happy purpose of greeting Fort Benton's returning citizens quickly disappeared in a welter of denunciations, particularly against the federal and Canadian authorities arranging the arrests. "But for the official clothed in a little brief authority, who would thus trample upon the rights of American citizens for the gratification of a Canadian policeman," roared the enraged Fenian, "I have no language sufficiently strong to express my contempt."<sup>25</sup>

Feeling ran high in the river town for many months. Irate citizens treated Farwell with "silent contempt" as an informer and a "hired witness." On at least one occasion, the unhappy trader received a letter threatening physical violence. Soon he moved north of the border where employment with the Canadian government relieved much of the tension and stigma of life in Fort Benton. John Evans, on the other hand, quickly capitalized on his unexpected popularity. With a keen eye for business opportunity, the "Chief" opened his own establishment in Fort Benton, the "Extradition Saloon."

Fort Benton's enthusiasm quickly turned to dismay as news reached the town that three more of the Cypress Hills participants faced trial in Canada. There, the Mounted Police arrested Philander Vogle, George M. Bell, and James Hughes for the "wanton and atrocious slaughter of peaceable and inoffensive people." Dismay became rage as the details of the arrest and transfer of the men to Winnipeg for trial reached Fort Benton from the north.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Turner, *Northwest Mounted Police* I: 35. See also James T. Stanford's eye-witness account in *Hill Country Democrat* (Havre) August 20, 1926.

<sup>25</sup> *Fort Benton Record*, August 7, 1875.

At once, the *Fort Benton Record* seized upon the arrests to launch a new crusade. Without restraint the editor poured out his wrath upon the Canadian government for its "secret hearings" which quietly arrested the men and hustled them off to Fort Garry, "away from their witnesses and all intercourse with their friends." This treatment, he charged, was a "modern star chamber" and an insult to the American people who were told by the Canadians that "the evidence upon which a conscientious American juror refused to commit, was more than sufficient to convict an American in Canada."<sup>26</sup>

Happily, the atmosphere in Winnipeg argued for a judicial treatment of the evidence. Far removed from the excitements and tensions of the frontier, the Queen's court administered justice without the prejudicial pressure of public clamor. On October 13, 1875, with Chief Justice C. J. Wood presiding, the court presented bills of indictment against the prisoners and committed them to trial.

In Winnipeg, however, the Fort Benton men faced a discouraging situation. Over a thousand miles from their homes and without a penny to finance their defense, they turned to James Wickes Taylor, the American consul, for advice. Taylor's attitude, though formally correct and officially helpful, did little to encourage them to hope for strong support from that quarter. Soon they sought aid from their distant friends in Montana. Through published pleas and in private correspondence they told of their plight and implored financial assistance.

Wisely, they directed most of their pleas to John Evans. Nor did the Benton saloon-keeper disappoint them. He wrote assurances that their old friends would assist and, good as his word, soon collected nearly four hundred dollars for the defense. Since the lawyer's fees alone promised to exceed five hundred dollars, this was far from adequate, but the resourceful Evans promised that further aid was on the way.

Behind the scenes, moreover, events conspired to assist the prisoners. Taylor, whose first reaction was one of cool formality, now became convinced that the men actually had a strong case which justice demanded must be presented as effectively as possible. The Benton men could hardly have found a more able or influential advocate. Judicial in temperament, scholarly in tastes, and universally respected throughout Canada, Taylor was in a splendid position to organize their defense.

To argue their case, the American consul immediately secured the services of S. C. Biggs, an able and prominent Winnipeg barrister. Then he turned his immense energies to unearthing every scrap of evidence for his superiors in Washington. From these investigations, Taylor soon decided that the "massacre" was in reality a "frontier fight" in which the Indians, as well as the whites, shared the guilt. "It ought not be called a massacre," concluded the consul. Moreover, he became increasingly alarmed that "serious international complications" would arise from the trial.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, Sept. 4, 11, and Nov. 13, 1875.

<sup>27</sup> Taylor to William Pound, March 20, 1876; Taylor to N. P. Langford, Feb. 28, 1876 in Taylor Letterbooks, St. Paul. N. P. Langford to Martin Maginnis, March 11, 1876 in Maginnis Papers, Helena.

In Washington, State Department officials shared Taylor's concern. Both in Winnipeg and Washington, the chief worry centered around the lack of witnesses for the defense. Though the department "made every effort to relieve the prisoners by application through the British Minister," it quickly realized that the key to their defense rested with the eye-witnesses in Fort Benton. Unfortunately, these witnesses were also under indictment for the same crime and refused to testify in Winnipeg unless granted assurances of "safe conduct" and immunity from arrest while in Canada. These the Canadian government, for obvious reasons, could not grant.<sup>28</sup>

Taylor despaired of organizing a defense without these vital witnesses. The State Department strongly supported the Winnipeg consul, arguing to the British government that a fair trial for these American citizens was an impossibility without them.<sup>29</sup> Through the representations of the department and the arguments of Taylor, the Chief Justice postponed the trial until the following June while their efforts continued to secure evidence for the defense. Ungraciously and quite falsely, the *Fort Benton Record* greeted the news of the postponement as another proof of British injustice in which the men were to be held in prison yet another year before coming to trial.

Taylor's worries grew as he sought vainly to prepare a defense. In desperation, he hit upon the idea of a commission appointed by the Canadian government to secure depositions from the absent witnesses. His hopes soared when J. H. Cameron introduced a bill into the Canadian House of Commons permitting such a commission to examine witnesses and present their evidence in criminal cases. The Cameron bill had its first reading on February 23rd, and its second reading on March 23rd; then it was referred to the committee on private bills where it quietly died.

To add to the consul's concern, he now feared that the Canadian government demanded a conviction because its Indian policy in the West required a token punishment to impress its Indian wards. "I am full of apprehension," he wrote Washington. "The Authorities propose holding a treaty with the Indians in the vicinity of Cypress Hills this summer and hope for a favorable result of their negotiations, if the prisoners are condemned to death . . . Their danger is that they may be sacrificed from considerations of government policy."<sup>30</sup>

By early June, Taylor confessed to Hamilton Fish by telegram that he despaired, "waiting from day to day for a favorable turn of events." This shift in fortune came in a most unexpected fashion when James McKay, a prominent Scotch half-breed and a member of the provincial government, volunteered to assist the defense. Moreover, when the case came to trial, McKay testified that he knew Little Soldier and his band of Assiniboines as "Indians who would rob, pillage and murder if they had the opportunity."<sup>31</sup>

<sup>28</sup> "Report of a Committee of the Privy Council", approved by the Governor General of Canada, December 17, 1875.

<sup>29</sup> Consular Dispatch 239, State Department to Taylor, April 25, 1876. "The trial should not take place without giving the prisoners the benefit of the testimony which is ready to be produced."

<sup>30</sup> Consular Dispatch 239, Taylor to State Department, June 8, 1876.

<sup>31</sup> Taylor to McKay, May 23, 1876 in Taylor Letterbooks; *Winnipeg Free Press*, June 24, 1876.

When the trial convened on June 20, 1876, Taylor's hopes had considerably revived. Within three days these hopes were fully justified by a dramatic turn of events which undermined the Crown case and led to the acquittal of the prisoners.

Along with Farwell, the government brought eight witnesses to the trial, four Métis and four Indians. These witnesses, everyone believed, were brought to support Farwell's testimony. Before their appearance, however, they visited a priest who severely cautioned them to tell the truth under their sacred oath. The surprising result of these interviews was that only one Métis and one Indian testified for the prosecution while three of the witnesses, though brought to Winnipeg at great government expense, testified for the defense.

On June 23rd, Taylor happily telegraphed Washington, "Bell, Hughes and Vogle acquitted . . . Testimony of informer Farwell not fully supported by other witnesses for prosecution. Please inform Governor of Montana."<sup>32</sup>

Chief Justice Wood concluded the trial with a charge to the jury which comprised the most thoughtful and accurate summary of the Cypress Hills affair. While there was no evidence that the men had participated in murder, said the judge, there was no justification for the fight in the conduct of the Indians. Whiskey was the real culprit and this fight was another of its fearful effects upon the western Indians.

Though the Chief Justice did not emphasize it, far more than the guilt or innocence of three individual frontiersmen was on trial in the Winnipeg court. Under indictment was a frontier society which tolerated the sale of whiskey to the Indians and encouraged violence against them when disagreements arose.

James Wickes Taylor suggested other interesting aspects of the affair in his analysis for State Department officials. He was convinced by the evidence that T. C. Power had imposed upon the Canadian government and that their employee, Abel Farwell, was the "instrument of the scheme which proved entirely successful . . . His testimony in the extradition proceedings at Helena was impeached and I have no doubt that he perjured himself."<sup>33</sup>

As important as the trial itself was its aftermath. The tradition quickly developed in the Canadian West that the men received "very strict sentences."<sup>34</sup> Thus the police won the esteem and friendship of the Indians who were convinced that the Queen's justice fell equally upon the red and white. Curiously, not only is this carefully nourished tradition of severe punishment false, but the men actually considered demanding indemnities from the Canadian government for their long incarcerations and to pay their heavy travel and trial costs.

Not until 1882, however, did the Cypress Hills case reach its legal end. In March of that year, the Canadian government dismissed the indictments against all the Fort Benton wolfers. "It seems a long time to have waited," Taylor wrote

<sup>32</sup> Telegram in Dispatch 241, Taylor to Cadwalader, August 1, 1876.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> J. W. Horan, *West No'West, A History of Alberta*, 24.

Evans, "but I have had to overcome a great amount of prejudice in this case, but 'alls well that ends well'."<sup>35</sup>

In any event, few incidents in the colorful history of the Whoop-Up country touched as many basic problems as the Cypress Hills affair. And no incident in the long history of Canadian-American occupation of the North American frontier demonstrates more clearly the fundamental differences between the two neighbors in their conquest of the Great Plains.

<sup>35</sup> Taylor to J. H. Evans, March 20, 1882 in Taylor Letterbooks.

—PAUL F. SHARP.

---

#### THE N.W.M.P. AT ROCHE PERCEE, 1874

The column was encamped on the banks of the Souris River, in a circular valley surrounded on almost every side by a range of hills some thirty to forty feet in height. Wood, water and grass were abundant, and coal also could be gathered on the right bank of the river. The quality of this coal was tested by our blacksmiths who used it during our stay there. Although this coal, on account of its friability, is not likely to be exported any great distance, it will nevertheless be a great boon for the settlers in that region, where wood will soon be scarce.

On our right, and about half a mile from the camp, stood Roche Percee, a pierced rock, as its name indicates. Seen from a distance, one would take it for a statue, whose arms rested on two adjacent supports. An isolated rock, in the midst of a plain, will naturally attract the attention of a traveller: and in company with some of my comrades, I went to visit this one, which is covered with hieroglyphic characters, indecipherable for us, but doubtlessly representing memorable events that once took place in that country.

The third day after our arrival being a Sunday, and, as everybody is aware, the Sabbath day being consecrated in the British Dominions to rest and prayer, we were that morning ordered to get ready for Church parade. This was the first divine service held since our departure from Dufferin. As the Mounted Police was composed of men belonging to different denominations, and there being no chaplain attached to the corps, I was wondering who would act in their stead. But I soon heard that, under such circumstances, it was the duty of officers to act in the place of ministers of the gospel. At ten o'clock a.m. as the six divisions stood ready for orders, Colonel French, who was an Episcopalian, called for the men that belonged to his denomination, and Roman Catholics, Methodists, and Presbyterians were called for, in like manner by officers of their respective creeds. Some denominations held their meetings on the hills, others in the valley. And it was a grand sight to see 300 men standing in the wilderness, several hundred miles from civilization, giving thanks, in different manners, and offering prayer to their Creator. Although several thousand miles separated us from our friends in the other provinces, our thoughts and hearts were with theirs, and their prayers and ours were of like nature, and had in view our preservation and the success of the expedition.

—Jean D'Artigue, *Six Years in the Canadian North-West* (Toronto, 1882).

---

## Bavarian Folk Ways In Langenburg\*

**O**F the German groups which settled in the vicinity of Langenburg, Saskatchewan, the one from Landshut in Lower Bavaria is the most interesting to the student of national customs and folk ways. Endowed with a distinctive and picturesque cultural background, this settlement was sufficiently large and homogeneous to encourage its members to retain most of their characteristic customs for a number of years after they came to Canada in 1889. Landshut school district No. 4914, established in 1890, takes its name from the old home of these pioneers.

These people were devout Catholics and much of their social life centered around the church. When the church bell arrived in Langenburg it was received by a delegation from the parish, headed by the priest, who conducted an impressive ceremony. The bell was followed by a procession when it was transported from the station to the church, a distance of about six miles. If a severe storm came up, the church bell was tolled in the belief that this would disperse the clouds. The bell was also tolled in case of fire or other danger. These customs were kept up until about 1915. When the Bishop visited the parish he was met at the station by a delegation which included about a dozen girls under twelve years of age, who were attired in white and wore wreaths on their heads. On one occasion the Bishop travelled about 20 miles in a decorated sulky and was escorted by four boys on horseback, two on either side of the vehicle.

The women's Sunday clothes and finery were so substantial that they were often handed down from generation to generation. Typical female attire consisted of black head cloths embroidered with floral designs which were tied at the back of the head. Skirts, reaching to the ankles, were worn over two or three petticoats. If, while walking or driving, the women were overtaken by a shower of rain, they would pull the skirts over their heads, their several petticoats meeting all the requirements of modesty. The costume was enlivened by embroidered shoulder scarfs, brightly colored aprons, beautiful rosaries, gold earrings and large broaches.

The dress of the men was perhaps even more picturesque. They were attired in narrow breeches of soft leather, which were buttoned at the sides, short jackets and velvet vests embroidered with floral designs. These vests were decorated with two rows of buttons made of silver coins. Heavy watch chains with silver hangers from which were suspended wild boars' tusks, eagle claws, elks' teeth and other ornaments, were in fashion. The men wore high boots, the tops of which were folded at the ankles like the bellows of an accordion, which gave greater flexibility and enabled the tops to be raised or lowered as desired. A round felt hat, adorned with a feather lent a sprightly effect to the whole attire. This distinctive dress of the men was frequently seen in the Landshut district as late as 1910, and many of the older women wore their national costumes until their death.

\* The writer is indebted to Mr. William Zerr and Mrs. August Mitschke, both of Langenburg, for most of the data in this article.

When the date of a wedding had been fixed, the invitations were given verbally by a relative or close friend of the bridal couple. He drove from farm to farm with a horse and conveyance gaily decorated with flowers in summer and with ribbons in winter. Upon arriving at a home, this emissary, who carried a cane adorned with flowers or ribbons as his badge of office, extended the invitation in the form of a comic rhyme. The wedding celebration sometimes lasted three days. In summer there was dancing on the green to the music of a fiddle and accordion. Both old and young took part in the dancing. Beer was served from a keg or barrel. During the "bride's dance" each male guest danced with the bride and gave a present of money which was placed on a plate held by a friend of the bride.

Dumplings of various kinds were a favorite dish among the Bavarians. "Kuechel" was another national delicacy. It was a sort of doughnut, only instead of a hole, the centre was kneaded very thin. It is said that in the olden days the dough of the "kuechel" was fashioned on the knee of the baker, but this practice had long since been discontinued.

Girls were not considered eligible for marriage until they were proficient cooks and young men were admonished to choose brides who were fond of cats and flowers and who kept their windows well polished.

GILBERT JOHNSON

---

## DOCUMENTS OF WESTERN HISTORY

## Prices and Wages in 1890

The following tables of prices and wages in the Regina area in the year 1890 are reproduced from the *Annual Report of the Minister of Agriculture for the Calendar Year 1890* (Ottawa, 1891). Tables of this type were prepared by district immigration agents in various Canadian centers, immigration being at that time a responsibility of the Department of Agriculture. The reader may compare these figures with the present day, but it is also important to understand their relationship to those prevailing at the time in other parts of Canada. Western Canadian prices and wages were on the whole higher than in the eastern part of the country, and appear to have reached their peak in British Columbia. Comparing Regina with Kingston, Ontario, we find that in Kingston bacon was offered at 10c to 14c per lb., eggs at 14c to 25c per doz., corn meal at \$2.00 to \$2.50 per cwt., and potatoes at 40c to 50c per bu. Cotton shirting at Kingston sold at 6c to 10c per yd., men's rubber overshoes at 60c to \$1.00, and flannel shirts at 50c to \$1.00. Flour was the same price in both places. Wages, on the other hand, were in all cases lower in the Kingston area: for example farm laborers received \$1.00 to \$1.30 per day, bricklayers \$2.50 to \$2.75, carpenters \$1.50 to \$2.25, general laborers \$1.00 to \$1.40, and female farm servants \$5.00 to \$8.00 per month with board. In general, it would appear that wage rates on the prairies at that time more than offset the higher prices of most commodities.

—The Editor

REGINA AGENCY DISTRICT  
Average Rate of Wages in 1890

EMPLOYMENT	WAGES	
	From	To
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Farm labourers, per day, without board.....	1.75	2.00
Farm labourers, per week and board.....	5.00	7.50
Female farm servants, with board.....	8.00	10.00
Masons, per day, without board.....	3.50	4.50
Bricklayers, per day, without board.....	3.50	4.50
Carpenters, per day, without board.....	2.00	3.00
Lumbermen, not required.....		
Shipwrights, not required.....		
Smiths, not required.....		
Wheelwrights, not required.....	2.00	3.00
Gardeners, with board.....	20.00	30.00
Gardeners, without board.....	35.00	45.00
Female cooks.....	15.00	30.00
Laundresses.....	10.00	15.00
Female domestics.....	8.00	15.00
General labourers, per day, without board.....	1.50	2.00
Miners.....		
Mill hands.....		
Engine drivers.....		
Saddlers, per month.....	60.00	
Bootmakers, per month.....	60.00	
Tailors, per month.....	60.00	

J. T. STEMSHORN

Dominion Government Immigration Agent

REGINA, N.W.T., 31st December, 1890.



## REGINA AGENCY DISTRICT

List of Retail Prices of the Ordinary Articles of Food and Raiment required by the Working Classes in 1890

PROVISIONS	PRICES		CLOTHING, etc.	PRICES	
	From	To		From	To
	\$ cts.	\$ cts.		\$ cts.	\$ cts.
Bacon, per lb.....	0.14		Coats, under, tweed....	4.00	10.00
Bread, best white.....	0.08		Coats, over, tweed....	8.00	25.00
Bread, brown.....			Trousers, tweed.....	2.00	5.00
Butter, salt, per lb.....	0.20		Vests, tweed.....	1.00	3.00
Butter, fresh, per lb.....	0.25		Shirts, flannel.....	1.00	3.00
Beef, per lb.....	0.12½		Shirts, cotton.....	1.00	2.00
Beer, per qt., not sold....			Shirts, under, "wove"	0.50	2.00
Candles.....	0.25		Drawers, woollen,		
Cheese, per lb.....	0.15		"wove".....	0.50	1.00
Coffee, per lb.....	0.35		Hats, felt.....	1.00	5.00
Corn meal, per 100 lbs....	4.00		Socks, worsted.....	0.25	0.50
Eggs, per doz.....	0.30		Socks, cotton.....	0.10	0.25
Flour, per brl.,			Blankets.....	3.00	7.50
1st quality.....	5.00		Rugs.....	1.00	3.00
Flour, per brl.,			Flannel.....	0.40	0.60
2nd quality.....	4.00		Cotton shirting.....	0.15	0.25
Flour, buckwheat,			Sheeting.....	0.25	0.45
per 100 lbs.....			Canadian cloth.....	0.75	1.00
Fish, dry or green,			Shoes, men's.....	1.50	5.00
cod, per cwt.....	8.00		Shoes, women's.....	0.75	2.00
Firewood, per cord.....	3.50		Boots, men's.....	1.50	5.00
Ham, per lb.....	0.17		Boots, women's.....	0.75	2.00
Ham, shoulders, per lb....	0.12		India rubber over-		
Herrings, per barrel.....	8.50		shoes, men's.....	1.00	2.00
Mustard, per lb.....	0.35		India rubber over-		
Mutton, per lb.....	0.15		shoes, women's.....	1.50	2.00
Milk, per quart.....	0.06				
Oatmeal, per 100 lbs.....	3.50				
Pepper, per lb.....	0.35				
Pork, per lb.....	0.15				
Potatoes, per bushel.....	0.75				
Rice, per lb.....	0.07				
Soap, yellow, per lb.....	0.07				
Sugar, brown, per lb.....	0.08½				
Salt, per lb.....	0.01½				
Tea, black, per lb.....	0.35				
Tea, green, per lb.....	0.35				
Tobacco, per lb.....	0.65				
Veal.....	0.15				

J. T. STEMSHORN,

Dominion Government Immigration Agent.

REGINA, N.W.T., 31st December, 1890.

RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES—By Ray Coates

## To The Golden West, 1903: Part 1

THE opening years of this century saw the biggest flow of immigration to Canada that the West has experienced. Colonial regiments sent to the Boer War made young Britain empire conscious. The New South Wales Lancers, with their rakish sombreros with the saucy cockade, the South African and New Zealand regiments, with the sides of their hats turned up (later adopted by the Yeomanry and City Imperial Volunteers) and the Stetsons of the Strathcona Horse from Canada, all cavalry regiments, these hats and puttees fascinated the young men and girls, too, when the wearers strutted on the streets of Britain. We had been nurtured on a diet of Ballantyne's books on the North West; we read every book on Canada the lending libraries had; we secured emigration literature and poured over it by the hour; lectures and moving pictures on the West we revelled in. Our small savings accounts were examined and checked against the cost of passage and purchase of an outfit. In our innocence we imagined Canadians wore a sort of shooting costume, jodhpurs with long riding boots, a belt which carried a holstered revolver and a knife to dress deer (we were rather vague on this process). We compromised on the boots by buying strap leather puttees which we thought rather fetching. We were advised to bring warm clothes along so we discarded collars and got flannel shirts with soft collars (a western touch). We carried a certain amount of excess baggage such as dumbbells, physical culture courses, boxing gloves and other treasures which at least made up weight. Packed in a wooden trunk, we wondered how this would be transported when we reached our destination—perhaps we would require pack horses or travois, this we left to the future.

We had found that a group of British farmers had visited Canada and had met farmers who wanted to hire young Englishmen. One of these we contacted who would provide you with the address of a farmer who offered a job, if you would purchase a steamship and rail ticket through him. This we proceeded to do and were furnished with the address of a man in Southern Manitoba (secretly we thought this wouldn't be wild enough) whose letter said, "Send me a couple of greenhorns by your first contingent." We were led to believe we would be paid \$5.00 a month while we learned the art of farming. It all chanced in whose hands one happened to fall—some put in a whole year at this wage. Winters one worked for his board, after harrowing and pitching hay and harvesting. Even after taking into account the usual awkwardness, Mr. Farmer didn't lose much.

There was a certain type of Englishman whose parents paid a fee of £100 for their sons to learn farming. Often these were put to work cleaning pig pens that had been guiltless of any cleaning process since the fall before. However, we had our jobs in view and got our tickets to board the S. S. Corinthian leaving Liverpool March 12, 1903.

On leaving the home station we met two other young fellows on the same errand, so we joined forces. At Liverpool, our next stop, was a boarding house

for intending young emigrants, where we stayed overnight—our last night in England. We visited a music hall and this spree was the last we would have for many a day. There we met more young fellows bound for the West. We all went together and next day third class passengers were taken aboard.

The ship was lying out in the stream at low tide. We watched the stevedores transferring boxes to be taken to the ship—a burly dock worker would shoulder a box, carry it up the plank and down it would crash into anything that happened to be in the way. When the tide rose the ship came in to the dock and first and second class passengers were taken aboard.

At sailing hour, the siren blew, the ship started to leave and we watched the gradually widening strip of water that separated us from England. A pang of homesickness shot through me as I realized we were leaving everything that had meant home to us before.

The passengers were billeted in different parts of the ship; first class in the upper cabins, second class next by choice and third, or steerage, the rougher parts. We were in the stern in what had been cattle decks and we were restricted to our own section. The first class could go anywhere in second and third and could look us over. Later we went down into the bottom of the ship and walked its length, meeting some stowaways who had been captured and put to work. One of these told us he had a length of rope and intended to swim ashore at Halifax. Here were depths of adventure we had overlooked. In our quarters, cabins similar to threshing cabooses were built around the sides, quartering about a dozen men each. Each bunk had some rusty looking life preservers and a mattress and a blanket for bedding. Down the centre of the long room was a large table with benches where we had our meals. Our first meal was a memorable one of pigsfeet. I have always been partial to jellied pigsfeet, but these appeared hoofs and all, clearly showing their Berkshire ancestry—and salt, ugh! ! Soon murmurs of disapproval began to be heard, followed by a swelling chorus of “We want no trotters.” The steward listened for awhile and evidently deciding we were not chanting grace, removed the pigsfeet and replaced them with bread and marmalade. Steerage meals were apt to be entertaining—on one day ship pie was featured, with which one could carry on quite a game of “what’s this?” It was evident it was composed of the left overs from the upper crust’s tables; hence one could get a taste of chicken and speculate if another bite was a piece of sausage. On another day a pudding was served—a sort of plum duff swimming in sauce. It was nice and sticky and sweet, but even with my limited knowledge of the culinary art I could scarcely believe a piece of rope was included in the original recipe. The meals were quite generous, tinned meats, jams and marmalade, etc. About 9 p.m. cheese and ship’s biscuits were served. These biscuits were about six inches in diameter and one inch thick and hard as cement. We would take these to our bunk and chew away at them at our leisure. Next morning we woke to find we were passing along the north of Ireland. What a lovely view, the green fields divided by hedges and stone walls lay along the hillside, a truly memorable picture of Ireland.

We took on mail at Londonderry and soon were headed for the Atlantic. That evening pangs of homesickness were in evidence; the bolder spirits started a sing

song, marching round the deck. From now on one found fewer able to turn up at meals; this uneasiness made sudden dashes to the rail in order, an inward desire to turn inside out. If the ship went down just then we didn't care at all. Two things struck me, the fascination of watching the ship's wake, the water churned up by the turbines, which stretched away into the distance, and again at most times one could not see any gulls about, but as soon as a steward emptied a pail of swill over the side, out of nowhere came a flock of gulls to pick up the scraps. The prairie has something in common with the ocean. At night here, one can see farm house lights shining in the distance, and at sea, passing steamers have the same effect. We experienced storms and saw mountainous waves—what puny things we were at such times! We saw icebergs and floes off Newfoundland and eventually the cry went up "Land Ho!" Yes, there was Canada. A pilot boat came out and, although to us the sea appeared calm, the little boat was pitching and tossing a lot. Inspectors came on board and we were examined for vaccination, etc. After we got a clean bill we went farther in. Here shore boats met us selling matches, apples, etc. Here the "English blokes" got their first taste of the "blooming Canadians." Our smokers were about out of English matches, similar to the ones in use now. The Canadian variety was sulphur matches, a bunch of matches with one end solid. The correct procedure is to break one off and strike it and hold it until it burns up some. Our blokes struck it and immediately applied it to their pipes, etc. Oh boy! the would-be smoker got a good mouthful of sulphur and more sputtering over those "blooming Canadians". Once was enough at this game.

We got ashore and went through the customs sheds, where we hunted up our boxes and got an official to put a mark on them. He didn't think we were apt to be carrying diamonds or other contraband and the examinations were just perfunctory. We strolled about Halifax and were impressed by the size of the locomotives and the roar of the sirens, and we were alarmed to see a train calmly cross the street ahead of us with no fence or guard.

In due course we boarded a train for Montreal, packed in like sardines, and went through Nova Scotia, a piece of Maine and New Brunswick, arriving in Montreal in the early morning. Needing something to eat, we examined the Chinese restaurants, which advertised "Chop Suey." This, we were convinced, was probably boiled dog. Somehow we passed through this stage and boarded an emigrant train for the West. The seats were as hard as those one finds in parks, but from time to time as the train stopped, we would forage around and get boards and hay to lay on the seats so we could lie down. The natives along the railway lines must have looked on the passengers as a bunch of bandits. The depredations of some of the harvest excursionists were astonishing. At several stores where we went to buy bread and cheese, we noticed Winchester rifles were strongly in evidence.

We passed through old Ontario, which reminded us something of England. We went through rocks and evergreens along the north shore of Lake Superior and North Ontario. At long last we broke through the bush, which gave way to scattered clumps, and there before us was the prairie. Proof of it was a covey of prairie chickens. Stations showed cream cans, machinery, etc. Here was Mani-

toba; passing large farmsteads with the odd silo, we came into Winnipeg. Riding on the train had bothered us more than the boat. Our feet had swollen; I guess we were afraid to take our boots off.

Arriving at the C.P.R. depot, we were buttonholed by a couple of scouts for a local hotel. We were somewhat dubious of these fellows; however we decided to go with them, whereupon they offered to carry our "grips." This, it seemed, was Canadian for handbags, but, no chance, we didn't take chances with anyone bolting off with our luggage. They ignored us and we put the night in at their hotel.

We had reached the threshold of the West, but I still lacked a revolver. I had a belt knife, but clearly the omission of a revolver must be rectified before venturing among any hostile Indians. Strolling down Main Street, we saw a display of firearms in "Kingston Smiths." In we went to inquire about revolvers. The grinning clerk reached under the counter and hauled out the most fearsome weapon I have ever seen. He grasped this young cannon by the handle and swung it round in a circle, saying, "This would knock a man down." The price was \$32.00. I had \$6.00. Maybe I had better take a chance in the wild west till something turned up.

The next day we boarded our train to continue our journey. Arriving at a junction where we were to change trains, I was struck by the free and easy way of the Canadians. Two of the boys with us were out of money. They had their tickets but were otherwise out of money. They told their story to the hotel proprietor who boarded and fed them—a kindly act. Our group was breaking up. We had lost two fellows in Winnipeg where they had met the man they were to work for, but our original friends were still with us. While we were travelling west they met a man on the train, whom, it seemed, knew the farmer they were to work for. His name apparently was Lamb. Eagerly they inquired about him. "Yes," he cryptically remarked, "I know him, but you will find him more of a ram than a lamb." Our limited knowledge of animal husbandry did not allow us to grasp the fine point. Soon after, these two got off. I never heard of them again. Perhaps they returned to Portsmouth with the outbreak of war.

We reached our destination about dark. As we got off the train, a fur clad giant grabbed us and bellowed, "Do you want work?" This was it in the raw. We told him we were looking for a Mr. .... It seemed this man was in town, but he could only carry one and our bags. However, we assured him we could walk, of which I did the most. Strangely, this simple fact determined which one of us he would keep.

On the way out we dropped into a valley, the sides of which were clothed in trees. From our reading, we thought they were birch and said so. He answered, "No, they are Poplars." Definitely they were different from the Lombardy Poplars we had seen in England and we were sure he must be wrong, but it turned out he was right.

At last, thousands of miles from our starting point, we reached his home. We were welcomed with a good supper and invited to turn the cream separator when

the milk came in. Our work in the west had begun. Incidentally, our bags were brought out by wagon, not by pack horse.

On getting up in the morning we found the Canadian boys made short work of dressing. They slid into their pants, looped their arms through their braces, shucked into their boots, and that was that. We had our boots to lace to the top, leggings to put on, a tie to adjust; consequently we were quite a bit behind. Nevertheless, we went down to the barn to watch the early work, after which, another session with the cream separator.

I was told to carry a bag of flour to the house. After getting it on my shoulder, I started down the slippery remains of a snow path. Slipping and staggering along, I finally collapsed near the door. This feat remained a standing joke while I was there.

Now, while I knew the different farm animals apart, the only piece of information I had gleaned in England was that horse collars were put on upside down and twisted around. However, my boss had only one of this type, so my knowledge was reduced to zero. As it was the end of winter, the horses they were using wore breeching attached to the regular harness. I was told to watch while the horses were harnessed. At the end of the day the Canadian said, "Now, Ray will unharness the team." Ye gods! the horse seemed covered with a maze of buckles and straps from head to tail. It seemed, at strategic points, certain buckles were undone and the puzzle was solved. The outfit was going to do some custom chopping. In the interim we were taken to the wood pile, given an axe each and told to split all we could. The Canadians gave us a demonstration. It looked easy. Now we had never seen an axe of this type, kindling wood in England comes in a neat little bundle like a small sheaf. How we massacred those blocks! What blocks we couldn't split, and they were plenty, were at least badly bruised. Later I heard of the Barr colonists trying to split wood when they were in Saskatoon. One took the precaution to stand in a wash tub. A Canadian watching him remarked, "Aren't you afraid of bashing the tub?" "Ow!" replied the Colonist, "I ain't going to 'it my bally toes."

Next day we had to help get a tank of water. I was aghast at the way the Canadians drove over everything in the road—poles, stones, it made no difference. I later applied the technique with dire results. At threshing time the tank man was filling barrels with a hose strung from tank to barrels. I was waiting to go in to the separator with a load of sheaves so I drove over the small impediment. This apparently, from the howl that went up, was not done in the best circles. The neighbours came, it seemed, to view the English blokes. A stock inquiry seemed, "I suppose you will go homesteading?" We were rather vague on this matter.

Being told to shovel grain into the grinder and chop away, we managed to provide some unwelcome diversion. During a lull in the operation, my friend took a notion to count his revolver bullets, accidentally dropping one in the grain. Search as we might, we could not find it. The young boss came round and we had to confess. A further search took place, but we were still unable to find it, so we decided to take a chance and run the stuff through. We waited for the

explosion but nothing happened so we decided to lay the revolver by for the time being.

Spring work started by cleaning grain and soon the teams started on the land. On all Manitoba farms there were steady horses that had grown wise to green Englishmen. I was given four of them and introduced to six sections of harrows. Manitoba farmers did not believe in wasting the work of an extra section of harrows, a greenhorn's legs were cheaper than a cart. I trudged after those harrows from seven in the morning till seven at night. At noon they gave their horses extra rest, but as soon as dinner was swallowed the boss got an uneasy look on his face and we were hustled out to bluestone wheat. After walking the harrows, I began to discard my regalia. Tie and coat came off, my fancy leggings and also my armaments. When walking in the loose dirt I used to gaze longingly at sloughs we worked around, longing for the cool water. Finally the temptation became too great. Discarding boots, socks and trousers, I waded out. Mud. What a mess! The further I went the worse it got. Oh, Canada! Another shock after the lush green fields of England.

I was disgusted with the drab Canadian grass. However, near the buildings a piece of prairie had been burnt off the fall before. In spring this came out in glorious green. On Sunday I walked across to see it. Oh, Canada! Instead of a soft green lawn it seemed more like walking on a harsh scrubbing brush. Anyway, it was green.

Seeding gave way to haying, then harvest with its interminable stooking. What gluttons for work these farmers were. Later, when threshing came along, I was sent out with a bundle team. I wanted to know the fine points of the game, so I asked the field pitchers to wise me up. "Sure," they said, "Just get down here and help us fire sheaves into the rack; they will go in loose and there won't be so many to unload." It sounded logical. Soon they said, with an eye on a rest for themselves, "You got enough on, go on in *and come back to us.*" In to the machine I went. Now those Manitoba farmers made their racks with an eye for economy. The sides were a sort of ladder arrangement, while the bottom consisted of about four boards spaced so a sheaf could not fall through. How I worked unloading those sheaves! The only sheaf I could see was the one at my feet and I seemed to be standing on one end of it. Tug and pull was the order. As I neared the bottom I would slip through the gaps between the boards. There and then I vowed if I ever had a rack of my own it would have a solid bottom. At meal times my efforts seemed to provide a topic of conversation. They all agreed I did the most work to accomplish the least.

(To Be Continued)

## The Newspaper Scrapbook

### REGINA MEN MAKE AUTOMOBILE TOUR THROUGH NORTH...

A PARTY of Regina men made an automobile trip to Saskatoon last week, returning to the city on Tuesday. The return trip was made in 15 hours at an average of about 17 miles per hour. After leaving Regina on June 10, 600 miles were covered. They had no mishaps, and the crops, they declare, are in excellent condition. While within 40 miles of Saskatoon, the crops would be benefited by rain, during the balance of the trip the crops were looking well and not suffering. In some localities farmers declared the prospects were never better. Among the party were Messrs. Alex. McLean, G. J. Miller and J. Pullman.

On the return trip a member of the party made a schedule of the places where calls were made, and the time of arriving and leaving. This will be invaluable to men anticipating an automobile trip through this section of the province. The trip was made by way of Lumsden, Davidson and Bladworth, and the roads were found to be in excellent condition. On return they stated that business in the northern city was quiet, there being very little work there.

The table is as follows:

<i>Town</i>	<i>Speed'r record</i>	<i>Arr.</i>	<i>Lv.</i>
Saskatoon.....	7937		8.00
Dundurn.....	7963	9.45	10.20
Hanley.....	7984	11.20	11.20
Kenaston.....	8000	12.25	12.25
Bladworth.....	8015	1.15	1.45
Davidson.....	8028	2.25	2.25
Craik.....	8051	3.45	4.40
Chamberlain.....	8083	6.10	6.10
Findlater.....	8083 [sic]	7.00	7.00
Bethune.....	8096	7.45	8.00
Disley.....	9006	8.35	8.35
Lumsden.....	9115	9.05	9.35
Regina.....	9140	11.00	

— *The Leader* (Regina), June 18, 1914.

MELFORT MURMERS . . . Our settlement has been visited with a great calamity. For the last ten days raging fires have been closing us in on all sides of us; nearly all the hay is swept and the swamps also.

On the 24th inst. a sudden and violent gust of wind drove it directly on Mr. Granger's place, the families barely escaped with their clothes and bedding. House, stable and household effects were completely destroyed.

Mr. John Turner loses his house and stable; Mr. Mansell his stable.



On the 29th a detachment of police arrived under Inspector Strickland and has been vigorous by working at the fires, which in many cases are impossible to put out.

Our summer has been the dryest ever known and Melfort Creek has stopped running, the first time in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.

Mr. Gunn, one of our fire guardians, used every means to keep the fire under, but subdue it in one place and it immediately breaks out in another and he took neither rest or sleep and his reward was losing 50 tons of hay. It seems a different system will have to be adopted to prevent a repetition of the fires.

Under the old system the ridges were burnt as soon as dry in the spring: then when the swamps dried out they were fired, so in the fall there was no old grass. Latterly however fires have been kept down in the spring and there was a great accumulation of old bottom, which caused the ground to burn and the results have been disastrous to Melfort settlement.

—*The Saskatchewan Times* (Prince Albert), September 4, 1894.

---

With a little introductory business, including speeches from the leaders of the bench and bar, the Supreme Court of Saskatchewan opened its career at Regina yesterday morning. To borrow a remark by the Chief Justice, which gives point to the significance of the occasion, "We have completed the provincial autonomy with the assembling of this court." No longer is Saskatchewan dependent for the administration of the law upon a body with jurisdiction outside her borders; and it was to the evolution of this legal autonomy that Mr. Haultain, in an admirable speech, addressed himself.

Besides Chief Justice Wetmore on the bench, were Justices J. H. Lamont, H. W. Newlands and T. C. Johnstone, Judge J. E. Prendergast having been detained at Prince Albert. The lawyers present included: the Hon. F. W. G. Haultain, K.C., Frank Ford, K.C. (Deputy Attorney-General), Norman MacKenzie, K.C., D. J. Thom, F. F. Forbes, J. F. L. Embury, C. E. D. Wood, R. A. Carman, Alex Ross, G. H. Barr, R. Rimmer, W. B. Willoughby, Wm. Trant, W. M. Martin, W. S. Ball, J. A. Allan, J. A. Cross, H. V. Bigelow, W. B. Scott, T. E. McMorran, J. Casey, with C. H. Bell, registrar of the Supreme Court, Sheriff J. M. Duncan and the shorthand writer, T. Powell.

—*The Morning Leader* (Regina), October 9, 1907.

## Golden Jubilee News



WITH the approach of Saskatchewan's fiftieth anniversary, we are becoming increasingly conscious of our beginnings—not only in the stories of pioneer settlement, or the fur-trade sagas, or legends of the Red Man, but also back to the predawn of history. It is therefore appropriate that the Golden Jubilee Committee should sponsor an archaeological expedition jointly with the Departments of Natural and Mineral Resources, and the Saskatchewan Research Council.

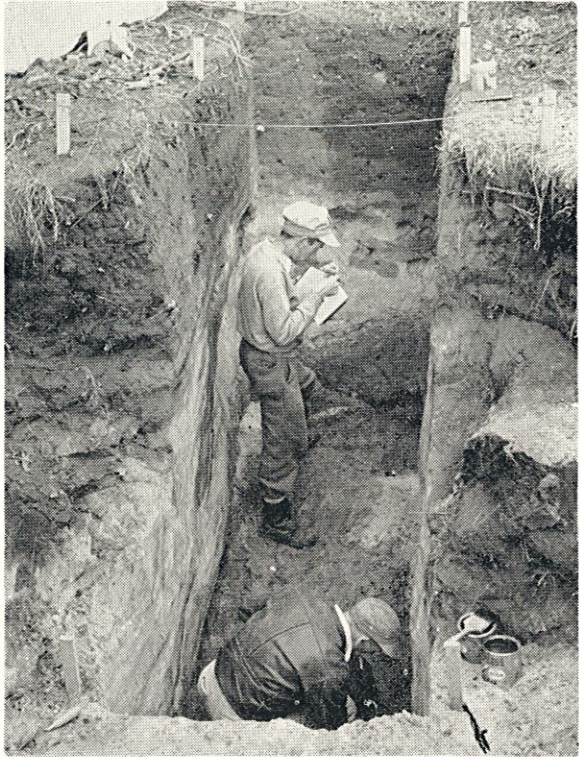
The story of the Mortlach or Besant 'midden' goes back to 1948 when Mr. M. McLean of Mortlach found arrow heads on a cow path. Interest in the site grew from the enthusiasm of local collectors like Kenneth

Jones and Allan Hudson, to professional exploration by Provincial Museum and Natural Resources officials. An archaeological 'dig' was set up in the area, and excavation carried out in the summers of 1951, '52 and '54 under the direction of Boyd Wettlaufer, a graduate in archaeology from the University of New Mexico. The work on the Mortlach site has now been completed and a full report of this phase of the project will be published next spring. A preview of the findings and their historical importance will be of interest to readers of *Saskatchewan History*.

From excavations varying from shallow to more than nine feet deep and scattered along the valley of Thunder or Sandy Creek for almost a mile, artifacts, bone material and soil deposits have told a fascinating story. To get the story painstaking scientific methods were employed. A preliminary contour survey of the area was made by A. I. Bereskin, controller of surveys for the Saskatchewan government. In excavating, a square was first staked out and a string outlining the area strung from post to post. The surface was cleared of grass, using sharp knives and a whisk-broom. The surface contours were then drawn in a notebook. The location and direction of the project was noted. Knives, whisk-broom and trowels were used in the actual excavation. As an artifact was located it was measured from three sides—two posts and a perpendicular, so that its exact position in relation to its environment is known. This data is of great importance to the archaeologist in relating an artifact to a time level. Failure to understand this fact is one of the reasons why amateur diggers destroy much valuable evidence. All artifacts and bone material taken out in this way were then carefully stored and documented.

Eleven clearly defined levels have been found in the projects. Some of them were rich in cultural material. Some may represent a return of the same peoples at different seasons. The lower levels are of special interest because each sand deposit is firmly stratified between layers of clay, thus ensuring that material in one deposit has not sifted through or become mixed with material in another. There are few sites in North America with levels so clearly defined, and probably none showing as many levels within the same time period.

The cultural material found ranged from the pottery and tools of a late prehistoric people who made pemmican and had skin clothing and teepees, to the projectile points, primitive scrapers, flaking, bone, and fireplace ash of a stone-age people. Some of the pottery was bordered with a checker-board pattern; some had a smoothed and rubbed surface. Varied shapes and types of arrowheads and projectile points tell their own story of development. Speartips found in one of the lower levels, for example, show finer workmanship than later specimens, perhaps because the more primitive hunter depended simply on his weapon. A bison bone from an ancient kill measures one third larger than bones of the modern buffalo.



Terry Walker and Albert Swanston sketch a profile of the wall of the main excavation.

Even this brief highlighting of the Mortlach findings gives some implication of the extent of the calendar Mr. Wettlaufer will be able to draw up in his detailed report.

Field work is only one part of such a project. Analysis and dating of material by experts and correlating the discoveries with known data goes on long after the tents come down. Mr. Wettlaufer's fall schedule includes visits to major archaeological centres in North America to gather all available information having a bearing on the Mortlach story. Bones from the 'dig' have been sent to Dr. B. Schultz of the Nebraska State Museum, who is a recognized authority on the subject. Samples of soils are being analyzed in the soils laboratory of the University of Saskatchewan. Specimens of pottery have been sent to Anne Arbor, Michigan, where an electronic brain has been put to the unique task of synthesis of pottery remains.

Perhaps one of the most interesting methods of dating to Saskatchewan readers is the Carbon 14 technique. The first Carbon 14 laboratory in Canada was set up at the University of Saskatchewan in 1952 under Dr. J. W. T. Spinks and Dr. K. J. McCallum, both of the chemistry department. It is interesting, too, that the first dating, after a year of perfecting the process, was given to samples from the Mortlach 'midden'. Carbon 14 is another story, but briefly it makes use of the knowledge that all living things contain a constant amount of a radio-active substance Carbon 14, and that when a plant or animal dies the



Bone and artifact material as it was found at the 3400 year level of the Mortlach excavations.

C 14 disintegrates at a steady ratio. Thus the residue of C 14 in an object is a fairly accurate gauge of its age. Dr. McCallum's carbon count of material taken from the tenth level of the Mortlach excavations gave an age of about 3400 years, which places the finds in about the 14th century B.C. In the east the Phoenician alphabet had just been invented; perhaps Agamemnon was beginning the siege of Troy; and sometime later Moses would lead the Israelites out of Egypt. When completed, the Mortlach story may tell us that people on these plains were close to discovering the use of bow and arrow, because the unnotched spear point found at the 3400 year level comes somewhere between the early projectile point and the classical arrowhead of the notched type.

The Mortlach site has been declared a protected area by the government of Saskatchewan, and will be marked this year as an historic site. In other ways, too, the archaeological project ties in with Saskatchewan's anniversary plans. Mr. Wettlaufer's work has contributed valuable information to the writing of Saskatchewan's history. A series of half-hour radio dramatizations of Saskatchewan history will be heard on school broadcast programs this year, beginning with the Mortlach story and ending with stories of Saskatchewan today. Perhaps this article seems like a by-way in our reports on jubilee news, but it is one of the projects that will be of permanent value to the people of Saskatchewan—and indeed to the world.

*The Saskatchewan Golden Jubilee Committee, P.O. Box 1955, Regina.*

## Book Reviews

LES SECRETAIRES DE RIEL. By *Donatien Frémont*. Montreal: Chantecler Press, 1953. Pp. 205. \$1.75.

**M**. FREMONT, a distinguished journalist of French-speaking Canada, approaches one of Canada's incredible Canadians from a fresh and interesting viewpoint.

Riel had three official private secretaries, Louis Schmidt during the Red River disturbances, and Henry Jackson and Philippe Garnot successively during the Saskatchewan rebellion. Each of the three (a French-speaking Métis, a bilingual Ontarian and a French-speaking Canadian of Quebec) represents a special type, but a type familiar enough in the mixed community of the old Canadian North-West.

Louis Schmidt, a Métis brought up on Lake Athabaska, educated by the Church and preparing for the priesthood in the East when his health forced him to discontinue his studies and return to Winnipeg, found himself in the awkward position of a person of reasonably good education and indifferent physique in a country and society where health and vigour counted for much and education for very little. He adapted himself well, on the whole, but the formation of the provisional government under his old schoolfellow, Louis Riel, gave him an unexpected and welcome opportunity for public service.

After Riel's flight he remained in the new province of Manitoba and served in its first legislature. Later he joined the Métis movement to the South Saskatchewan, was one of those who helped to bring about Riel's return, and gladly welcomed his old friend and chief. Schmidt, however, was no fanatic, and the position of civil servant (in the land Office at Prince Albert) had done much to calm him. During the rebellion he remained at Prince Albert and retained his position. After all was over the man who stated that no fair-minded person could question the execution of Scott, announced in an eastern paper that no reasonable person could blame the government for having executed Riel, views which show what an admirable private secretary and civil servant he must have been.

Henry Jackson, too, was a kind of *déclassé* but a very different kind. Having studied with much distinction at the University of Toronto he too had returned to a community where there was no great demand for intellectuals. As secretary of the Settlers' Union, however, he devoted himself to protesting the grievances of settlers, French and English, white and Métis. For Riel he conceived a genuine hero worship, and Riel apparently returned his affection. Jackson's powerful influence over Riel was generally exercised in favour of violent courses. A serious mental breakdown only accentuated his fanatical loyalty.

Philippe Garnot, a boarding house keeper at Batoche, a busybody, idle and unstable, was drafted when Jackson's mental disability became acute. Garnot, a rebel in spite of himself, did his best to keep friends on both sides and was perhaps reasonably outraged when sent to serve time at Stony Mountain on the

evidence of prisoners for whose lives he had successfully interceded. In heart and head he was chronically unstable.

M. Frémont pieces together his fragmentary material on the secretaries and their work with a loose narrative of events. He does not concern himself much with chronology or with historical causation or with criticism of sources. He gives a brief list of sources at the end of the book, but his only comment on his material is the remark that although Schmidt's narrative may not be entirely reliable he plans to draw on it freely and without apology. For the beginner his narrative would be confusing, while those familiar with Professor Stanley's work would wish for more precise documentation and more careful weighing of evidence.

Having said so much it is necessary to add that this fresh, and informal treatment of a rather hackneyed subject is charmingly written, with lightness and ease. The very numerous quotations lend an air of immediacy to the story without breaking the flow of the author's style. There are many interesting details, especially of the bizarre incidents on the Saskatchewan during the period of Riel's increasing irresponsibility. If the book makes no important contribution to our knowledge or understanding of these "times of trouble" it does give a vivid impression of the impact of Riel's disordered genius on a heterogeneous society of Métis both French and English speaking, of English-speaking settlers and of missionaries, with the imponderable factor of the Indian always in the background.

HILDA NEATBY

JUD BATTELL'S STORY OF THE EARLY DAYS OF THE WEST. By *Evangeline Chapman*. n.p., Bowes Publications, n.d. Pp. 32, port. 75c.  
Distributed by Mrs. E. Chapman, 1053 Clifton Avenue, Moose Jaw.

HISTORY OF ODESSA. By *Frank Gerein*. Regina; Western Printers, 1954. Pp. 68., illus. \$1.50 single copy, \$1.00 three or more.  
Distributed by Rev. Frank Gerein, Odessa, Sask.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY OF FARTOWN S.D., No. 1856 WITH REMINISCENCES 1903-1948. By *Arthur Elson*. Lashburn; Comet Publications, 1953. Pp. 63, illus. \$1.00.  
Distributed by W. R. S. Noyes, Secretary Fartown S.D., Marshall, Sask.

WITH jubilee celebrations occurring throughout Saskatchewan there has developed an awareness that history has been made. There is, too, a growing consciousness that those who made the history are fast disappearing and that, unless something is done, much invaluable information will be lost. This sense of urgency has produced a gratifying number of local histories and reminiscences recording the origins of early communities and describing personal adventures and living conditions.

Jud Battell's *Story of the Early Days of the West*, by Evangeline Chapman, which gives an account of Battell's experiences from 1882 to 1886 provides vivid glimpses of the bleak life in a pioneer community. The story begins on March 29, 1882 when Battell, a boy of fifteen, set out from Cobourg in a party comprising

four Battell brothers, three brothers-in-law, and a cousin to homestead on the present townsite of Moose Jaw. After a laborious journey, made more difficult by snow storms and spring floods, the men arrived to find the coveted land already claimed. Bitterly disappointed, they took up land adjoining the townsite, pitched tents, built a sod shack and planted their first crop. In the next four years Battell farmed, operated the first butcher shop in Moose Jaw, hauled supplies for the army during the Riel Rebellion, then later for a lumber camp in Alberta, and with his brother ran the first steam threshing outfit in the district. Life, though rugged, was not wholly without pleasure. Battell revelled in the sports days held in Moose Jaw on May 24th and in Regina on July 1st. Boasting of his athletic prowess, he says, "Even after I was married I was the champion, for years." Describing their sing songs, dances and plays he says, "We knew how to amuse ourselves and make our own entertainment." Whether he is describing a primitive coal mine or a Christmas ball, hauling feed with a yoke of oxen at forty below or winning a high jump, his experiences are recreated for us in colorful panorama.

The *History of Odessa 1901-1954* was written "to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Odessa and the 40th anniversary of the Holy Family Parish, Odessa," by Rev. Frank Gerein, present pastor. Unlike Jud Battell's rather disjointed, anecdotal narrative, Father Gerein's history presents an orderly chronological account. He first describes the origin of the settlers, then enumerates the first families to arrive and gives a brief account of their struggles to become established "on the bald and boundless prairies where biting, wind-driven snows in winter, the intense heat and searing winds in summer and terrifying prairie fires in autumn contrasted so sharply with the placid climate of their European native lands." He outlines their problems during World War I when their Germanic origin made them suspect, their subsequent prosperity, their disastrous economic collapse during the depression, and their proud achievements during World War II and the postwar boom. His account of the growth of his parish is more detailed, providing a terse but comprehensive picture of its development from a mission with masses said occasionally in a private home to a flourishing parish with a new \$100,000 church.

The third local history, *Origin and History of the Fartown S. D. No. 1856 with Reminiscences 1903-1948*, is written by Arthur Elson "one of the prime movers in the formation of the school district, the first chairman, trustee for three years and then secretary-treasurer for the subsequent 39 years." It is the history of a school district which was established by a group of Barr colonists, the first of whom came to the district in 1903, some overland from Saskatoon and others by scow from Edmonton. A highlight of the history is the trip from Edmonton to Hewitt's Landing, embodying the numerous hazards of river transportation encountered by the poorly equipped pioneers. One chapter deals with that terrifying spectacle, the prairie fire—a threat to the early settler whose magnitude is almost forgotten now. The history includes also an account of social and church activities and concludes with some miscellaneous anecdotes.

TO FIND THE DAILY BREAD. *By Gerhard Andrew Fast and Jacob Fast.* Saskatoon: The Western Producer, 1954. Pp. 48. \$1.00. Distributed by Miss Gladys C. Fast, 1020 Albert Ave., Saskatoon.

**P**ART I of this simple yet stirring story of a journey and that journey's end in Saskatchewan, is told by Gerhard Andrew Fast—who, as a Mennonite, sought a home where he could live according to that sect's tenet of "no violence" (which meant specifically in his case, no military service for Prussia or Russia). Part II is continued by his son Jacob. Jacob was born in Asia near Bukhara and was brought by his parents across Russia and western Europe to the United States where the family lived for nineteen years in Nebraska. Finally, the father took up a homestead near Rosthern. Jacob's part of the story, written as he recalled it during 1950-53, is laid within a triangle drawn from Saskatoon to Prince Albert, to Battleford. Or as he puts it exactly, "Tp. 41 — R. 12 W. 3 . . . in particular . . . the years beginning 1903 . . . the area composed of Fielding, Maymont, Radisson, and Richard."

His Aunt Goosen told young Gerhard, "You will travel very far in this world to find your daily bread, because your teeth have grown far apart." And the young Mennonite cobbler from East Prussia did travel "very far"—with the group of Mennonites he had joined in Russia, where he was married. They moved on to Asia, where Russia's law of compulsory service was not enforced—a caravan of 70 wagons drawn by 140 horses. They reached Tashkent hoping to settle there. Then the law again threatening them, they moved farther into Asia, until it was "the Lord of China" to whom they were to pay their taxes. But here the natives were "savage and perverse" and robbed and killed the brethren. They were afraid and "often prayed to the Lord that He might deliver them from that situation." Deliverance came in the form of an answer to letters of appeal to friends in North America.

"Come to us, we will help you."

And that is how at last a little group of families, including the Fast, reached Nebraska.

Gerhard died in his seventy-first year, having established himself and his sons on their own farms in Canada. He had rented in Nebraska, never been able to buy; the homesteading in Western Canada gave him the opportunity to make a cherished dream come true. Like his father's story, Jacob's reminiscences are those of a man setting down what he remembered after the lapse of years. Most outstanding to readers interested in pioneer life is his description of how to build sod houses. Supports, dimensions, compass point orientation, refinements that make a sod house an excellent dwelling—all are given. His father lived in his for fourteen years; Jacob built, in 1907, the last one in the community. There are also accounts of crossing the North Saskatchewan River before there were bridges; fighting prairie fires; the dangers of travel in snow; early beliefs about wheat smut.

At the end, this man whose father began his journeying because of a faith and continued it because of another faith—that he and his children must own



their land and make it give them their daily bread, and thus realize "the good life"—writes as a true pioneer:

"... so we should go back and end in the beginning, when hopes were high and arms were strong, when all were fired with the prospect of taking part in the opening up of a vast new land, with opportunities for great numbers of homes and experiences."

The *Fasts'* reminiscences are two among the many which have been written down in one form or another. If an index of each could be made and the subjects cross-indexed (e.g. the sod house technique here described) the result would provide an excellent basis of reference on pioneer customs and techniques as they existed in what is now Saskatchewan. This in turn might provide a framework for a social history of this area that, aside from adding to the total of present knowledge, might contribute much to the determining of today's methods of survival and progress.

DOROTHY KAMEN-KAYE.

---

A SOUVENIR OF REGINA, QUEEN CITY OF THE PLAINS. *Edited by May Neal.* Regina: Jaycees, Regina Chamber of Commerce, 1953. Pp. 132. \$1.00.

THE year 1953 was the fiftieth anniversary of Regina's incorporation as a city. No extensive public recognition of this event was undertaken in view of the near approach of the Golden Jubilee of the province. The occasion was marked, however, by the publication of a "souvenir booklet" of generous dimensions, edited by Mrs. May Neal, a well known Regina writer, who also contributed a number of articles to this work. The *Souvenir* does not purport to be a history of the city. It consists of a series of articles dealing with the development of various institutions and organizations—the R.C.M.P., branches of the municipal government, the Chamber of Commerce, several churches, military units, etc., interspersed with such items as a chronology of events in the city, a list of the mayors since 1884, and biographical sketches of a number of prominent citizens. There are also many excellent illustrations. The publication was financed in part by commercial advertisements, and a number of these contain brief sketches of the history of the particular business in the community—a kind of advertisement which should be encouraged in local history publications which require this type of sponsorship. The *Souvenir* contains much useful information, and for convenience of reference a table of contents should have been included.

LEWIS H. THOMAS.

## Notes and Correspondence

### SPECIAL SUBSCRIPTION RATE FOR SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

Members of local historical societies in Saskatchewan will be interested to learn that they can now secure a subscription to *Saskatchewan History* at a reduced rate. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has authorized a subscription rate of 60 cents per year for historical society members. Subscriptions must be forwarded through the secretary or treasurer of the society. The magazine will be mailed either to the member direct or to the secretary or treasurer for distribution, at the option of the society.

The society may wish to include a subscription to *Saskatchewan History* on these terms as part of the annual membership fee.

---

We have received a request from a student of the history of education for assistance in securing copies of public school readers used in the North-West Territories prior to 1905. Readers of *Saskatchewan History* who may know the whereabouts of these readers are invited to communicate with the Archives of Saskatchewan. The books may either be donated to the Archives or loaned for micro-filming.

---

### *Contributors*

PAUL F. SHARP is professor of history at Iowa State College, Ames, Iowa.

GILBERT JOHNSON is employed by the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool at Marchwell and has written numerous articles for the weekly press and for *Saskatchewan History*.

RAY COATES is a pioneer settler of the Birsay district.

HILDA NEATBY is associate professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan.

ELIZABETH HEIDT is a member of the staff of the Legislative Library, Regina.

DOROTHY KAMEN-KAYE, Regina, is a writer and student of anthropology.

JUST PUBLISHED

## **Directory of Saskatchewan Ministries, Members of The Legislative Assembly and Elections, 1905-1953**

---

*Prepared under the direction of the Provincial  
Archivist and published under the auspices of  
the Saskatchewan Archives Board.*

---

This unique reference work provides a convenient and authoritative historical record of the names of persons who have been associated with public affairs in Saskatchewan as members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Assembly, as permanent heads of the chief government departments, and as candidates in successive elections. The period covered is from the establishment of the province in 1905 to the end of 1953.

132 pages including 8 maps. Price **\$1.75**  
(Sask. Residents Add 5c Ed. and Hosp. Tax)

Order from

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES OFFICE,  
University of Saskatchewan  
Saskatoon, Sask.

## **Canadian Historical Association**

Historical Booklet Series

No. 1—THE UNDEFENDED BORDER: THE MYTH AND THE  
REALITY. By *Col. C. P. Stacey*. 18 pp.

No. 2—LOUIS RIEL: PATRIOT OR REBEL?  
By *G. F. G. Stanley*. 24 pp.

---

These excellent booklets embody the results of recent scholarly research on significant aspects of Canadian history. In Saskatchewan they may be obtained from The Saskatchewan Book Bureau, 1441 McIntyre St., Regina. Price 30 cents each. Kindly enclose remittance with your order.

