

# SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

Vol. XIII No. 1

Winter 1960



★ **Pioneer Church Life  
In Saskatchewan**  
by Christine MacDonald

★ **Nainabush  
Stories**  
by Muriel Clipsham

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Cover by Mary Lou Florian; see inside back cover for descriptive note.



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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.

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## Pioneer Church Life In Saskatchewan

THE importance of their religious heritage to many of the early settlers in the Saskatchewan area is evident from the Saskatchewan Archives questionnaire on pioneer churches. This is one of the series of questionnaires which the Archives circulated a few years ago to early settlers of the province. We must bear in mind that a large proportion of the three hundred who filled in the questionnaire were people who themselves or whose parents had been closely connected with pioneer church activity. It is of some significance, however, that in speaking of the time which elapsed between the arrival of the first settlers in their districts and the first church services held there, approximately sixty-five percent reported that services, of a kind at least, had begun within a year and most of the remainder indicated that religious activity had started within five years.

To a number of districts came groups of people of common ethnic and religious backgrounds, accompanied by their priests, clergymen, or lay preachers. Mr. Louis Demay reports that the first settlers in the St. Brieux district journeyed from France with their missionary priest who became as well their postmaster and immigration agent.<sup>1</sup> In the Leofeld and Annaheim districts, which belonged to St. Peter's Colony with headquarters at Muenster, Benedictine fathers arrived with the settlers.<sup>2</sup> The Mennonite colonies around Drake and Rosthern were served from the beginning by homesteader clergymen.<sup>3</sup> Many of the members of the Primitive Methodist Colony at Pheasant Forks, settled in 1882-3, had been local preachers in England and by adopting the old Methodist circuit plan these men were able to provide services to the whole colony.<sup>4</sup>

However, it was not just in colonies such as these that newly-arrived settlers showed their interest and concern in carrying on the religious activity they had been accustomed to in their former homes. Methodist services, for instance, were held almost immediately after settlement began in the Eastview district near Pasqua in 1891, reports Mr. Thos. E. Allcock,<sup>5</sup> and in the Meadow Bank district, according to Mr. Wm. A. Harrison.<sup>6</sup> In the Northlands district<sup>7</sup> Presbyterian services began with settlement and one month after arrival of the first people in the Paynton area.<sup>8</sup> Mrs. James Bews notes that her husband, a Presbyterian minister who came as a homesteader with those who first took up land around what is now Tyvan, held services in his own home and in the homes of others.<sup>9</sup> Mass was celebrated almost immediately after the first Roman Catholic settlers came to Vossen<sup>10</sup> and to Kenaston.<sup>11</sup>

NOTE: Places and dates used in the footnotes indicate the pioneer address and date of arrival in Saskatchewan of the person whose questionnaire is referred to.

<sup>1</sup>Mr. Louis Demay, St. Brieux. 1906.

<sup>2</sup>Miss Clara Hermle, Leofeld. 1903; Mr. Arnold Dauk, Annaheim, 1904.

<sup>3</sup>Mr. Hugo O. Bartel, Drake. 1906; Mr. J. L. Zacharias, Rosthern, 1894.

<sup>4</sup>Mr. Sydney Chipperfield, Chickney. 1883; Mrs. Edith Stilborne, Pheasant Forks, 1883.

<sup>5</sup>Mr. T. E. Allcock, Eastview. 1891.

<sup>6</sup>Mr. W. A. Harrison, Meadow Bank. 1906.

<sup>7</sup>Mr. Wm. J. Scott, Milestone. 1906.

<sup>8</sup>Mrs. Wm. Taylor, Paynton. 1903.

<sup>9</sup>Mrs. James Bews, Holbeck. 1906.

<sup>10</sup>Mrs. J. L. Smith, Vossen. 1905.

<sup>11</sup>Mrs. S. D. Manning, Kenaston. 1907.

Services were held in a great variety of places before churches were built. One hardly needs to mention the use of schoolhouses as this occurred at some time in the history of almost every country congregation for periods varying from a few months to many years, as in a district near Togo where people met in the school from 1906 to 1952.<sup>12</sup> Summer services in the school are still a part of life in some prairie farming communities. Only one questionnaire indicates that the trustees would not allow church services in the school and here, in time, a community hall was built on the understanding that it could be used for services by any denomination in return for contributions to its upkeep.<sup>13</sup>

In the earliest days of settlement, homes were very widely used, if we can generalize safely on the results of the questionnaire. Many reported that the first services in their region, or the first of their own denomination, were held in houses of homesteaders or ranchers, often their own or their parents'. This practice was not confined to the very early years. Mr. A. G. Carter says that Protestants in his district (midway between Wadena and Elfros) met in the Milligan home from about 1915 to 1928.<sup>14</sup> Many of the houses were of a truly pioneer variety—sod and log. Mrs. Peter McLellan reports that the first Presbyterian services in the Clare community near Arcola were held in her father's home, at that time a one-room log hut into which fifteen people could squeeze. If more than fifteen attended, they had to stand outside at the open door.<sup>15</sup> At Paynton, writes Mrs. William Taylor, "In 1903 services were organized and held at our home, a log house 17 x 19 with two rooms. Democrat seats, boxes, boards and four chairs comprised the seating. Even the cookstove, well black-leaded, cold and covered with newspaper, seated four back to back. We children often sat on it. About sixteen to twenty was the usual number although sometimes thirty."<sup>16</sup> In several districts where people customarily met for church in a school or even in a small church building, with the onset of winter the congregation moved to houses either because of heating difficulties or to save some of the members from too long a journey in cold weather.

With services in homes there were bound to be distractions. Mr. W. S. Rattray remembers "when I attended church and a flock of pigeons were in the attic of the house and they were NOT quiet."<sup>17</sup> "In Moosomin," writes Mr. Victor C. McCurdy, "I attended church in April 1883 in the home of Mr. Struthers, an American fur trader. During the service Mrs. Struthers climbed up a ladder to reach a pan of bread and put it in the stove oven."<sup>18</sup>

Homes and schools were by no means the only meeting places for communities lacking church buildings. Services were held under trees, in tents, granaries, lumberyard offices, in or above stores, hotel parlours or dining rooms, Orange or Oddfellows Halls, town halls, railway station waiting rooms, and even in stables.

<sup>12</sup>Mr. Sidney S. May, Togo. 1913.

<sup>13</sup>Mr. Wm. A. Harrison, Meadow Bank. 1906.

<sup>14</sup>Mr. A. G. Carter, Wadena. 1908.

<sup>15</sup>Mrs. Peter McLellan, Clare. 1883.

<sup>16</sup>Mrs. Wm. Taylor, Paynton. 1903.

<sup>17</sup>Mr. W. S. Rattray, Preeceville. 1887.

<sup>18</sup>Mr. Victor C. McCurdy, Moosomin. 1883.

An interesting progression was described by Mrs. T. C. Johns.<sup>19</sup> The first service in the Zelma area, she writes, was held in the dining tent of a railway camp in 1908, the second in a house to which the minister brought a hand organ. In the village, church was first held in a butcher shop. The congregation then proceeded for services to the living quarters of the flour mill, the owners of which rejoiced in the luxury of an organ. Attendance increased, necessitating a move, along with the organ, to the livery barn loft where services were held until fall when the loft was filled with feed. Thereafter, from 1907 to 1909 when the church was built, a box car provided accomodation for the congregation. Another barn turns up in the questionnaire sent in by Mrs. Thomas Goldsmith.<sup>20</sup> Their first services, led by a minister from Whitewood eight miles away, occurred in a barn owned by a real estate company. Here the horses were "put up" underneath while the congregation sat in the loft. Mrs. Goldsmith recalls that it was very cold in winter but, she says, "Attendance was good." A rather startling location was the setting for the first Presbyterian services in Wiseton—the pool room.<sup>21</sup> That the owner and operator of the poolroom was Roman Catholic is an indication of the good feeling which must have existed there between people of different faiths.

In a newly settled area, Sunday school, taught either in a home or at the school, was often the first form of religious activity. In general, Sunday school or catechism classes were either continued or begun following the organization of church services and in several cases where services were held during the summer months only, Sunday school was carried on the year round. Almost all of the questionnaires stated that religious training for children was provided in the community during the summer months at least for several years, if it did not continue indefinitely. Several reported that the first Sunday school was held in their own home, with their father or mother as teacher, or indicated that they themselves had taught or had taken some responsibility for the Sunday School in their district or town. Classes in homes were usually attended by all the neighboring children regardless of differences in parental denominations, and in several towns, even after church groups of two or more denominations were established, the children were sent to a union Sunday school. In Yorkton, said Mrs. W. S. de Balinhard, who belonged to an Anglican family, she first attended Sunday school in her mother's home, then went to a union Sunday school which was organized in 1893 with a prominent Methodist as superintendent.<sup>22</sup> A union Sunday school was started in Moosomin before 1883, according to Mrs. Marion Anderson.<sup>23</sup>

A rather intriguing figure emerges from the questionnaire sent in by Mrs. Joel Anderson who deals with the Willowbrook area.<sup>24</sup> "Before any church was built or services held in homestead days," she writes, "Mr. W. R. Sutherland travelled around driving a team or a buggy and took the gospel to the homesteaders' children. He drove from homestead to homestead where there were

<sup>19</sup>Mrs. T. C. Johns, Zelma. 1902.

<sup>20</sup>Mrs. Thomas Goldsmith, Whitewood. 1884.

<sup>21</sup>Mr. Arthur Wilson, Wiseton. 1904.

<sup>22</sup>Mrs. W. S. de Balinhard, Yorkton. 1883.

<sup>23</sup>Mrs. Marion Anderson, Moosomin. 1883.

<sup>24</sup>Mrs. Joel Anderson, Willowbrook. 1902.

children, taught them a lesson, and gave them the Sunday school quarterlies. He had me study the lessons every Sunday then told me to write down the story of the lesson from memory. . . . People used to call him Sunday School Sutherland. He used to stay overnight wherever he happened to be by evening. He came along one day when my father was digging potatoes and I was picking them up. He just sat in the buggy by the potatoe patch and asked me questions on the previous lessons. I remember how pleased and surprised my father seemed because I could answer the questions." "Sunday School" Sutherland appears also in Mr. W. S. Rattray's questionnaire who refers to him holding services at Saltcoats until the Anglican church was built about 1899. Mr. Rattray remarks, "Mr. Sutherland would have service in any house and the people were glad to have him any time."<sup>25</sup>

That the children of Saskatchewan pioneers were not always paragons of good behavior at Sunday school is demonstrated by a story told by Mr. Charles Davis who lived in what is now the Meota area. The Sunday school teacher at Parkdale school, around 1912 was always accompanied by her husband. The rest had better appear in Mr. Davis's own words. "She did the teaching. He simply drove to and fro and slept soundly during the lessons. I remember on one occasion the elder children tied his laces together, then stuck a pin in his rear."<sup>26</sup> One can imagine that instruction came to an explosive end that day!

The hardships of pioneer life were often shared with the settler by priest, minister, and student missionary. Many were homesteaders or farmers as well, combining missionary labors with work on the land. St. Elizabeth Mission, near Gravelbourg, for example, was established around 1910 when Father Wilhelm took a homestead and built a small house and chapel from which he also served Grismerville, Gooding, and St. Boswells.<sup>27</sup> A few added even a third occupation, that of schoolteacher, as did the Methodist minister in the early years of settlement in the Norquay area who homesteaded and taught school in the Arabella district and held services at Mellmore school,<sup>28</sup> and the Rev. C. B. Kerr, a Presbyterian minister who was the first teacher at Hutton school near Redvers.<sup>29</sup> Others no doubt had a similar experience to that of Father Sinnett who looked after the Roman Catholics in the LeRoy-McGuire area. According to Mrs. John C. Knaus, Father Sinnett lived at first in a shack through the cracks of which rain leaked in summer and snow blew in winter.<sup>30</sup>

Long drives are still the order of the day for clergymen or student ministers with country appointments, but whereas they now travel by automobile, in those days they went their rounds by horse and buggy, on horseback, and sometimes on foot. Almost everyone with a village or country charge was responsible for at least two other appointments. Mrs. J. R. Aikenhead's story of the student minister at Melfort who held services at six appointments, three each Sunday, is by no

<sup>25</sup>Mr. W. S. Rattray, Saltcoats. 1887.

<sup>26</sup>Mr. Charles Davis, North Battleford. 1905.

<sup>27</sup>Mrs. L. J. Gross, St. Boswells. 1910.

<sup>28</sup>Mrs. A. B. Bjerke, Pelly. 1910.

<sup>29</sup>Rev. C. B. Kerr, Redvers. 1903.

<sup>30</sup>Mrs. John C. Knaus, McGuire. 1906.

means unusual.<sup>31</sup> Many of the student ministers in what is now the Arcola area, says Mrs. Peter McLellan, "walked as much as twenty miles on Sunday leaving [Sunday] morning or after Sunday service for as many as three or four services in the day. They might get a drive at times."<sup>32</sup> For the first ten Sundays in his field, Mr. Wm. J. Scott, a Presbyterian student missionary-homesteader in the Elbow country around 1908-09, walked thirty miles. When he acquired a broncho his labors were no easier as he had to take on another preaching point.<sup>33</sup> Mrs. James Bews reports that when she and her husband, Rev. James Bews, were homesteading halfway between Glidden and Eatonia around 1911-1912, his territory extended from south of Kindersley to the South Saskatchewan River and from what is now Madison to the Alberta boundary.

What was involved in keeping up with such a program is described in a story told by Mr. George Shepherd. "In the spring of 1910," he writes, "I worked for Jim Bott who was farming about ten miles N.E. of Craik. . . . What I principally remember is the long drives that the minister made to cover his charges on Sunday. The minister was Ben Bott, the brother of the man I was working for. As I recollect Ben Bott preached the morning service in Craik and at the end of the service he had a horse and buggy waiting and jumped in and drove out to the Rosehill district. He would be due for Sunday dinner at Jim Bott's and we would be watching for him coming. As soon as he drove into the farmyard I would take his horse to the barn while Mrs. Bott would have the meal all ready for us. The afternoon service over, the minister would hitch up his horse and buggy and drive about nine miles to Girvin. He would get supper there and then conduct the evening service for the Girvin people. After that he would drive back to Craik—a total of around thirty miles of driving."<sup>34</sup>

Roads and means of transportation being what they were, getting to and from church was very often a highly uncomfortable procedure for both minister and congregation. One elderly lay preacher early in the century used to drive to service at Lorlie school in the Pheasant Forks district with an umbrella fastened to the front of his cutter as a protection from the bitter winds in winter.<sup>35</sup> Mr. Richard B. Lloyd, who farmed in the Indianola district near Aneroid remembers a Baptist minister, Mr. W. H. Walker, also a homesteader, who took over the services in the school from 1912 until the village of Aneroid was put on the map in 1914. "I recall that the life of the pioneer minister was not exactly a bed of roses," he writes. "On Sunday Mr. Walker would hitch a team to a stone-boat and drive six miles to church. He was very faithful, and many days we have watched his coming on the stone-boat, with it pounding the horses' heels on each down slope, skidding sideways, landing the reverend gentleman in a snowdrift with his books flying in various directions. I think St. Peter must have reserved a special corner for Rev. Walker."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup>Mrs. J. R. Aikenhead, Melfort. 1900.

<sup>32</sup>Mrs. Peter McLellan, Clare. 1883.

<sup>33</sup>Rev. Wm. J. Scott, Milestone. 1906.

<sup>34</sup>Mr. George Shepherd, Stalwart. 1908.

<sup>35</sup>Mrs. H. J. Kenyon, Pheasant Forks. 1895.

<sup>36</sup>Mr. Richard B. Lloyd, Notre Dame d'Auvergne. 1909.

Sparsity of settlement meant long treks to church for many people and lengthy trips for the clergy when visiting parishioners. Mr. Jacob Smith recalls twelve mile walks across the prairie<sup>37</sup> and Mr. Anton Riederer, drives of twenty-seven miles to Mass.<sup>38</sup> Others drove up to eight or ten miles by stone-boat, wagon, buckboard, buggy, democrat, sleigh, or cutter, with oxen and horses providing



“Going to Church in the West.” North Battleford area, 1912

the motive power. The priest from Kuroki, in making his monthly visits to Roman Catholics in St. Front from 1912-1919, for a considerable period was met at Clair and driven by wagon twenty-five miles to his destination.<sup>39</sup> The Norwegian Lutherans in the Neewin district near Norquay were initially looked after by clergy from Winnipeg who travelled by train to Kamsack and from there were taken by

horses to the homes of the families they wished to visit.<sup>40</sup>

The contribution of laymen to religious life in the early days is worthy of note. Mention has already been made of the Primitive Methodist Colony at Pheasant Forks where services were conducted for many years by Methodist and Congregational lay preachers. It was not at all unusual for a homesteader or farmer in a newly settled locality not yet served by clergy of any Protestant denomination to undertake services on his own initiative, as did the father of Miss Gladys Saloway the first Sunday after their arrival,<sup>41</sup> or, his interest in church matters being known, to do so at the request of his neighbors, as did the father of Mr. D. H. Maginnes in the Ermine district.<sup>42</sup> At Wild Rose, which in summer was supplied with student ministers, a lay minister carried on church meetings and Sunday school through the winter.<sup>43</sup> In very few questionnaires is there any indication of local feeling against laymen officiating. In one place, it is reported, they were stigmatized as being “holier than thou” but this was an unusual attitude.

Mr. Charles Davis has an amusing reference to performances of one very lively and enthusiastic layman whose ministrations he at one time enjoyed. “Mr. B . . . would roar like an enraged bull, pawing the floor with his feet, thumping the Bible till the church seemed to tremble and creak in protest. Nobody ever fell into a nod when Billy B . . . was acting clergyman. No, Sir!”<sup>44</sup>

<sup>37</sup>Mr. Jacob Smith, Vossen. 1905.

<sup>38</sup>Mr. Anton Riederer, Star City. 1901.

<sup>39</sup>Mr. Louis Le Strat, St. Front. 1912.

<sup>40</sup>Mr. Ole M. Anderson, Neewin. 1903.

<sup>41</sup>Miss Gladys Saloway, Halcyonia. 1903.

<sup>42</sup>Mr. D. H. Maginnes, MacKinnon (later Ermine). 1906.

<sup>43</sup>Mrs. Fannie S. Dunlop, Wild Rose. 1902.

<sup>44</sup>Mr. Charles Davis, North Battleford. 1905.



Money was a scarce commodity to most pioneer country folk. As might be expected many congregations in the larger towns and in a few of the smaller, especially those connected with the major Protestant denominations, adopted fairly early a plan of systematic giving such as weekly envelopes, and in numerous cases became self-supporting within a relatively brief period. But almost all Protestant church groups in the country and in villages were largely dependent for their finances (as many still are to a degree) on outside help—grants from church headquarters such as the Home Mission Boards of the Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, or the Anglican Synod—or on missionary societies such as the Church Missionary Society of the Anglican Church. These grants were supplemented by local contributions which might consist only of small collections taken at the Sunday services plus what the Ladies' Aid or similar women's organizations could raise. Attempts by some country congregations to use envelopes were unsuccessful because the ability to give depended too much on the harvest. Consequently in general the main canvass for funds took place in the fall after the crops were in.

The most unusual and perhaps most interesting method of raising church funds revealed by the questionnaires was adopted at the Anglican mission at Cumberland in the early years of the century. Mr. Norman Irving, who came to Cumberland in 1904, reports that extra money was raised by the collection at Easter of furs which were traded for cash at Hudson's Bay Company and Revillon Frères Compagnie stores.

Different patterns of church giving emerge from the questionnaires sent in by members of the Roman Catholic Church, and of the Mennonite and Swedish Baptist Churches. Membership fees were paid yearly by Mennonites at Rosthern<sup>45</sup> and monthly (after 1916) by Swedish Baptists at Earl Grey.<sup>46</sup> Generally the basis of support for the Roman Catholic Church was a specified sum per quarter section, usually \$10, or a percentage of salary or earnings. In addition, of course, as in almost all the churches, collections were received at services, either regularly or for special purposes.

Women played their part in helping to support the churches. The means by which they made their contribution were very much the same as now—chiefly bazaars and affairs at which food was the main attraction. In the questionnaires box socials, pie socials and bean socials are mentioned fairly often. Oyster suppers were at one time featured by the Presbyterian ladies in Moosomin<sup>47</sup> and Drinkwater,<sup>48</sup> while the Baptist ladies of Halcyonia sold strawberries and cream at ball games.<sup>49</sup> At Carlea national loyalties were sometimes catered to. Mrs. Jean Hill mentions March 17 Irish stew suppers and January 25 haggis suppers. The delectable dish to which all people of Scots ancestry are supposed to pay homage was made by Mrs. Hill.<sup>50</sup> That autumn institution, the fowl supper, appeared on

<sup>45</sup>Mr. J. L. Zacharias, Rosthern. 1894.

<sup>46</sup>Mr. E. E. Lundell, Earl Grey. 1906.

<sup>47</sup>Mrs. Marion Anderson, Moosomin. 1883.

<sup>48</sup>Mrs. Edna K. Adams, Drinkwater. 1907.

<sup>49</sup>Miss Gladys Saloway, Halcyonia. 1903.

<sup>50</sup>Mrs. Jean Hill, Carlea. 1911.

the scene quite early in our history, but with some differences in menu and methods of serving, and especially in price. "Help yourself" was the usual style, and 25c the price. Salads, except the humble potato salad, were few or non-existent, the emphasis being on home-grown vegetables, pies and cake. In general the assortment of food was smaller, although not the quantity. The suppers at Cumberland could hardly qualify as "fowl suppers" since the bill-of-fare consisted of bannock, lard or bacon, and tea,<sup>51</sup> but no doubt the enjoyment and good-feeling associated with such affairs were there, nor could the suppers at Grenfell, which for many years were called "tea meetings," at which the *pièce de résistance* was cured ham, but they were in the tradition.<sup>52</sup> A few of the people who answered the questionnaire look back with some nostalgia and a trace of bitterness to the suppers of former days. "In earlier days," writes one, "Farmers [supplied] their own food and ate normally. Today the customers are town guys who haven't had any dinner. It used to be help yourself and break even. Now [it is] dished out to show a profit." And another comments that they were "more sociable then. . . . In early days no one ate a whole pie."

Some less universally accepted money making activities point up varying attitudes among the different denominations. Card parties, dances and raffles of donated articles, farm produce or animals were quite acceptable to Anglicans and Roman Catholics, but not to Methodists and Presbyterians, who nevertheless did not frown on auctions of such donations.

Three other methods may be mentioned. Mr. L. V. Kelly tells of plays and concerts held in Rocanville.<sup>53</sup> The financial difficulties of the church brought out some latent and outstanding talent, he says, some of the actors participating being ex-members of the legitimate stage. In 1903, to help with the building of Bethel Methodist Church in the Grenfell-Broadview area, the Ladies' Aid adopted the "talent money" system, giving to each member 10c at Easter with the expectation it would be returned with increase at Thanksgiving.<sup>54</sup> But the most practical idea was that of the Anglican ladies of Shaunavon during the homesteading era. They made money by patching the bachelors' overalls, mending their socks and shirts and cutting their hair, services which must have been highly appreciated.<sup>55</sup>

The importance of a church building to give "visible expression of the existence of a local congregation"<sup>56</sup> was early recognized by the Canadian church leaders. Makeshift meeting places could not satisfy for long. The Presbyterian and Methodist Churches established building funds to make available, through their Mission Boards, long-term loans to new congregations, while the Anglican Church evolved a scheme to provide their new western parishes with churches at the least

<sup>51</sup>Mr. Robert Irving, Cumberland. 1904.

<sup>52</sup>Mr. John Laidlaw, Grenfell. 1882.

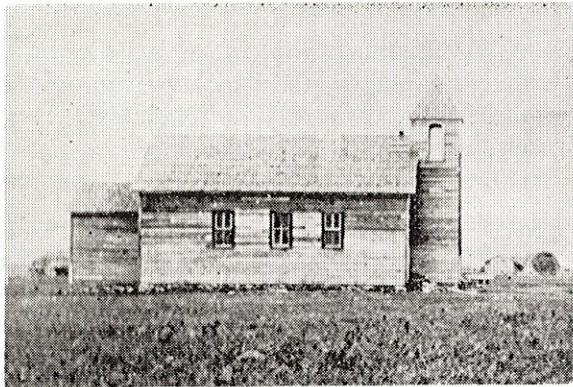
<sup>53</sup>Mr. L. V. Kelly, Rocanville. 1909.

<sup>54</sup>Mr. Thos. J. Brownridge, Oakshela. 1889.

<sup>55</sup>Mr. Robert Roycroft, Strasbourg. 1905.

<sup>56</sup>C. A. Dawson and Eva R. Younge, *Pioneering in the Prairie Provinces* (Toronto, Macmillan Co., 1940), p. 233.

possible cost to the local people. Plans were developed for very simple structures which became facetiously known as "Canterbury cathedrals,"<sup>57</sup> the specifications being so explicit, even to the number of shingles and the amount of shingle nails required, that they could be followed by any local carpenter. Hauling and construction work was to be done by voluntary labor and the cost of materials borne by mission societies in



St. Mary's Chapel, in a Russian-German colony south of Balgonie, Assa., about 1903.

England. Several of the questionnaires bear witness to the working out of this system. Those reporting on the building of Anglican churches during the years 1905 and 1907 at Ashley, Lashburn, Meskanaw, and Newnham district (near LeRoy)<sup>58</sup> all refer to the use of a pattern supplied by Bishop Lloyd or Synod or Diocese, while the descriptions and dates given for nine other Anglican churches clearly identify them as belonging to the same plan. Money for the building of the Anglican church in Marshall, according to Mr. Wm. Hodgson, was collected in the Fartown district of Huddersfield, England, three of the families homesteading near Marshall having come from that district.<sup>59</sup> Not all the building funds came from England however. At Ashley, each family contributed \$25 towards the \$250 which the plan estimated for materials. The Lashburn church was built with money donated by a remittance man who had been left a fortune and who also donated a rectory and a hospital. The first Anglican church in the Meota district was built of lumber obtained by working at Gordon's Mill, Birch Lake, eighteen miles away, the men donating four and one-half percent of their earnings for extras.<sup>60</sup>

The building of churches by voluntary labor under the direction of a local carpenter or someone with building experience was not confined to the Anglicans but was common to all the denominations represented in the questionnaires. For Beaver Creek Norwegian Lutheran Church near Gronlid home materials and resources were used as far as possible—local men hauled the logs, seats were home-made, and a local carpenter built the chancel furnishings.<sup>61</sup> The Roman Catholic church serving the LeRoy-McGuire area was also a log building, built in 1907 by volunteer labor, with donations for lumber for roof, floor, windows and pews, the altar being made by the priest, Father Sinnett, and the pews by church members.<sup>62</sup> In 1888 at Wishart, a Presbyterian church was built of field

<sup>57</sup>L. N. Tucker, *Western Canada* (London, Musson Book Co., 1908), p. 124.

<sup>58</sup>Mrs. J. W. B. Archibald, Ashley. 1912; Mr. J. C. Wilson, Lashburn. 1904; Mr. F. J. Bigg, Meskanaw. 1893; Mr. Wm. B. Spicer, Watson. 1905.

<sup>59</sup>Mr. Wm. Hodgson, Marshall. 1905.

<sup>60</sup>Mr. Chas. Davis, North Battleford. 1905.

<sup>61</sup>Mrs. S. J. McFarlane, Star City. 1908.

<sup>62</sup>Mrs. Andrew Doyle, Muenster. 1906; Mrs John C. Knaus, McGuire. 1906.

stone by local members under the supervision of a hired stone mason.<sup>63</sup> The stone for this church, says Mrs. Hugh Cossar, was hauled from the surrounding district, the lime from Gordon's Reserve. A "moonlight lathing bee" was long remembered here, the men putting on lath while the women puttied windows by lantern light.

A few of the very early church buildings owed their erection to energetic clergymen. Mr. A. L. Dixon, who came to Maple Creek in 1883, reports that the Methodist church, a frame building which seated about one hundred, was built largely by the minister, the money being provided by local subscriptions with help from the Mission Board. And at Fort Qu'Appelle, writes Mr. Wm. Kennedy, the Presbyterian church, built of field stone in 1884, was both designed and mostly built by the minister, Alexander Robson, who had originally been a stone mason.<sup>64</sup>

Evidence of the interest taken by Anglican individuals and congregations in England in their western Canadian counterparts was shown not only in their contributions towards the building of churches but also in the many gifts or donations towards the furnishings of churches. These might include furniture, books, altar vessels or vestments, as at Abernethy's Christ Church (built in 1885 and still used), where the furniture and linens came from England,<sup>65</sup> or the Anglican church in Ermine, built in 1913 under the supervision of a Welsh clergyman and designed like his church at home.<sup>66</sup> Here the altar furnishings and communion service were donated by his friends in England and Wales.

Some members of churches of other denominations also reported donations from outside their district. For instance, vestments for the St. Brieux Roman Catholic church came from France,<sup>67</sup> and the platform furniture for the Methodist churches at Eaton<sup>68</sup> and Semans<sup>69</sup> was donated by the T. Eaton Co. However, judging from the questionnaires, such gifts were comparatively infrequent.

A majority of the churches erected by the settlers around the turn of the century which figure in the questionnaires were frame structures but during that period and earlier log churches were not uncommon. Examples may be drawn from all the main denominations. The Presbyterians at Clare, near the present town of Arcola, built two, the first in 1885 which was burned by prairie fire the following year, and the second in 1895 which was used until the railway came through in 1900.<sup>70</sup> At Wallace, the Presbyterian church, built in 1893 of poplar logs hewn inside and out, was used until about 1911.<sup>71</sup> Roman Catholic churches at Annaheim (1903),<sup>72</sup> St. Brieux (1904),<sup>73</sup> and Vossen (1905),<sup>74</sup> were all of log, the logs for the Vossen church being hauled from the bush by oxen. Other log

<sup>63</sup>Mrs. Hugh Cossar, Wishart. 1892.

<sup>64</sup>Mr. Wm. Kennedy, Fort Qu'Appelle. 1889.

<sup>65</sup>Miss Harriet M. Stueck, Abernethy. 1886.

<sup>66</sup>Mr. D. H. Maginnes, Ermine. 1906.

<sup>67</sup>Mr. Louis Demay, St. Brieux. 1906.

<sup>68</sup>Mrs. James Bews, Holbeck. 1906.

<sup>69</sup>Mr. J. A. MacMurchy, Semans. 1905.

<sup>70</sup>Mrs. Peter McLellan, Clare. 1883.

<sup>71</sup>Mr. F. O. Langstaff, Wallace. 1892.

<sup>72</sup>Mr. Arnold Dauk, Annaheim. 1904.

<sup>73</sup>Mr. Louis Demay, St. Brieux. 1906.

<sup>74</sup>Mr. J. L. Smith, Vossen. 1905.

churches were the Anglican churches at Kutawa (1892),<sup>75</sup> and Winthrope (1909 or 1910),<sup>76</sup> Lakeside Methodist Church at Sheho (1906)<sup>77</sup> and the first Methodist church at Red Deer Hill (1884),<sup>78</sup> which was distinguished also by a thatched roof, and the Lutheran and Swedish Mission churches at Ohlen (1896),<sup>79</sup> all the lumber for the roof of one of these having been ripped by hand and the joists hewn by hand.

An unusual structure for this country was the Lutheran church built in 1893 at Edenwold.<sup>80</sup> With adobe walls, the only material bought was lumber for the roof. This church's first clergyman, a man from Germany, had earlier built an adobe house on his homestead with the help of members of his congregation. A small sod Presbyterian church, seating twenty-five, once used at Tullisville might also be mentioned.

As one would expect, the furnishings in numerous pioneer churches were at first makeshift or home-made. The planks and backless benches which were described by several as the earliest seating accommodation in churches of their communities must have added considerably to the discomforts of pioneer life. Let us hope sermons were not too long, as the refuge of slumber would certainly be denied congregations under those conditions! Several churches were furnished with pews and even an altar made by members of the congregation or by an individual who might be the local carpenter. Among those in this category we find the first Anglican church in the Meota district,<sup>81</sup> the Roman Catholic churches at St. Front,<sup>82</sup> Vossen,<sup>83</sup> and at Mazenod<sup>84</sup> where the pews were so well made they are still in use, the first Lutheran church at Edenwold<sup>85</sup> where all the furniture was made by the local carpenter, and the Methodist church at Waldeck<sup>86</sup> where, says Mrs. H. C. Calverley, the furniture was made by her grandfather.

Log or simple frame structures with makeshift or home-made furniture were not the only churches built in country districts or in the small villages during the early years. Some quite substantial churches still in use were built in the 1890's. The present Anglican church in Wapella, a stone building, dates from 1891.<sup>87</sup> Moffatt Presbyterian Church near Wolseley<sup>88</sup> and Forest Presbyterian Church in the Cottonwood district near Regina,<sup>89</sup> both built in 1892, and Kenlis Methodist Church<sup>90</sup> in the Blackwood district, built in 1897, are now used as United churches. Kenlis Church, says Miss Lottie Meek, a brick building, seated 150

<sup>75</sup>Mrs. Elena Mackay, Kutawa. 1899.

<sup>76</sup>Mrs. C. F. Sentance, Brombury. 1912.

<sup>77</sup>Mr. E. O. Johnson, Sheho. 1907.

<sup>78</sup>Mr. W. H. S. Gange, Red Deer Hill. 1894.

<sup>79</sup>Mr. Godfrey Persson, Ohlen. 1892.

<sup>80</sup>Mr. J. G. Mohl, Edenwold. 1908.

<sup>81</sup>Mr. Chas. Davis, North Battleford. 1905.

<sup>82</sup>Mr. Louis Le Strat, St. Front. 1912.

<sup>83</sup>Mr. J. L. Smith, Vossen. 1905.

<sup>84</sup>Mrs. H. J. Seemann, Mazenod. 1910.

<sup>85</sup>Mr. J. G. Mohl, Edenwold. 1908.

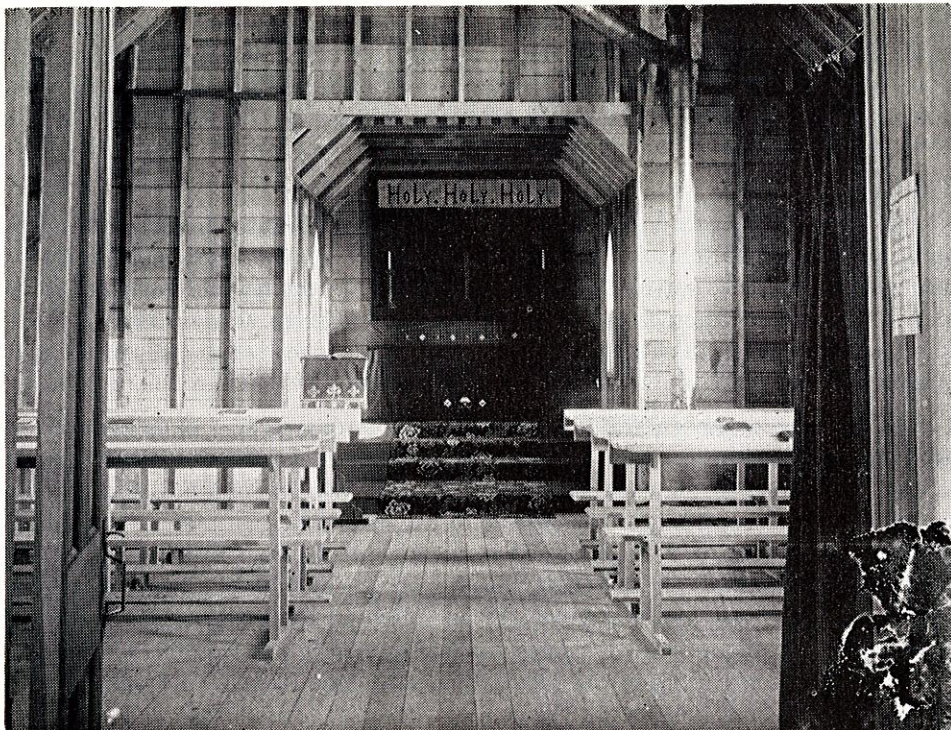
<sup>86</sup>Mrs. H. C. Calverley, Waldeck. 1905.

<sup>87</sup>Miss Charlotte Scoffham, Wapella. 1885.

<sup>88</sup>Mrs. E. H. Olmstead, Moffat. 1885.

<sup>89</sup>Mrs. J. Wilkie, Cottonwood. 1889.

<sup>90</sup>Miss Lottie Meek, Blackwood. 1884.



Interior of an Early Anglican Church.

people and was fully furnished from the beginning with pews and pulpit, cocoa matting in the aisles, and red carpet on the platform.

One of the most significant aspects of church life in the West was the degree of co-operation which existed among people of various Protestant denominations and the trend towards church union. Of this there is abundant evidence in the questionnaires. In earliest days, frontier conditions frequently made co-operation essential if any services were to be available at all. As suggested before, often the first religious activity in a newly-settled region consisted of Sunday school for the children taught by one of the parents in his or her own home, or gatherings in a home or school for informal services conducted by one of the homesteaders who might or might not be a clergyman as well. Generally, all the neighbors who had had church connections before coming West or who had any interest in a church would be there. As Mrs. W. S. de Balinhard of Yorkton put it, "We attended any service that came along."<sup>91</sup>

When a school was built and perhaps later a church, and a student missionary or clergyman belonging to one of the major Protestant denominations began to hold services, the same or a similar situation often prevailed since the first missionary or clergyman in the community would usually gain the support of all. Mr. C. Evans Sargent, for several years a student missionary for the Presbyterian church, describes the congregations at his five preaching points as including

<sup>91</sup>Mrs. W. S. de Balinhard, Yorkton. 1883.

"Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Baptists, Norwegian Lutherans, German Lutherans, Seventh Day Adventists, one Christian Scientist, two or three Roman Catholics, one Jew, one Marxian Socialist, and one Mormon," with "at times a fairly good attendance of the Round Church."<sup>92</sup> As the years passed, different forms of co-operation developed among people of various denominations. In some districts or villages covered by the questionnaires services were provided by one denomination alone for many years, as in Meskanaw,<sup>93</sup> and Newnham district near LeRoy,<sup>94</sup> where only Anglican services were available, or Longlaketon<sup>95</sup> where the Presbyterians held sway until Union in 1925, or Mellmore district near Norquay<sup>96</sup> where everyone attended the Methodist services. Sometimes a single church building would be used, alternately or at different times in the same day, by two or three congregations, as at Lockwood where the Methodists met in the early afternoon, followed by the Lutherans, and finishing off with the Presbyterians in the evening,<sup>97</sup> or in Sheho, Tuffnell and Foam Lake<sup>98</sup> where the Presbyterians and Methodists shared churches. Alternate services by different denominations in school houses were very common. In several places, these services were supported by the same group of people, financially as well as by attendance. This was the situation, for instance, at Paynton<sup>99</sup> and at Perth school near Rocanville,<sup>100</sup> where Presbyterians and Anglicans supported each other's efforts, in the Blackwood district (from 1889 to 1897)<sup>101</sup> and in Melfort<sup>102</sup> (until churches were built) where Presbyterians and Methodists co-operated, and at one of the schools in the Senlac district,<sup>103</sup> where Methodists and Anglicans helped each other as late as 1917 and after. Sometimes there was co-operation between different denominations in the building of a church. At Lashburn, says Mr. W. T. McMurdo, Presbyterians held services in a church built by general subscription but sponsored by the Baptists.<sup>104</sup> Mrs. George Wilson reports that in Rocanville the Methodists helped build the Presbyterian church in 1900, both using it for a time until the Methodist church was built with some assistance from the Presbyterians, and finally, when the Anglican church was erected in 1911, many of the other churches contributed towards it.<sup>105</sup> The use of a church by another denomination until they could build one of their own was not at all unusual. This was done in the early days of Maple Creek where the Presbyterians held services in the Methodist church until the construction of their own in 1894<sup>106</sup> and in the Moffat field near Wolseley where the Methodists used the Presbyterian church.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>92</sup>Mr. C. Evans Sargent, Gorefield. 1911.

<sup>93</sup>Mr. F. J. Bigg, Meskanaw. 1893.

<sup>94</sup>Mr. Wm. B. Spicer, Watson. 1905.

<sup>95</sup>Mr. Chas. B. McMillan, Longlaketon. 1886.

<sup>96</sup>Mrs. A. B. Bjerke, Pelly. 1910.

<sup>97</sup>Mr. Lewis A. Hummason, Lockwood. 1906.

<sup>98</sup>Mr. Elmer O. Johnson, Sheho. 1907.

<sup>99</sup>Mrs. Wm. Taylor, Paynton. 1903.

<sup>100</sup>Mr. L. V. Kelly, Rocanville. 1909.

<sup>101</sup>Miss Lottie Meek, Blackwood. 1884.

<sup>102</sup>Mrs. J. R. Aikenhead, Melfort. 1900.

<sup>103</sup>Mrs. Arthur Jones, Senlac. 1910.

<sup>104</sup>Mr. W. T. McMurdo, Lashburn. 1907.

<sup>105</sup>Mrs. George Wilson, Rocanville. 1899.

<sup>106</sup>Mr. A. D. Dixon, Maple Creek. 1883.

<sup>107</sup>Mrs. E. H. Olmstead, Wolseley. 1885.



Stone Church, and Rectory, at Fort Qu'Appelle, 1903.

The pressure towards co-operation and union was, of course, strongest among the Methodists and Presbyterians. Many pioneers felt there was no need to perpetuate denominational differences in a new country so that when in 1904 the leaders of the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Congregational churches began negotiations concerning a possible union, the movement in the West became intensified. The need for consolidating resources was felt at church headquarters as well as locally. Small and scattered populations and shortage of money meant that relatively few charges were self-supporting with the result that "non-intrusion policies" covering many mission fields were adopted and carried out by arrangements between Methodist and Presbyterian superintendents of missions in order to save mission funds. Reflection of this trend is evident in the questionnaires, although not always as specifically stated as it was by Mrs. D. A. Moorehouse who, in writing about Wallard, refers definitely to a union arrangement between Presbyterians and Methodists for services in the school beginning about 1912.<sup>108</sup>

In new villages and towns many Methodists and Presbyterians, finding it hard to determine any substantial differences and impossible to support services and minister of their own adequately or even at all, became convinced of the advantages to be gained by joining forces. As time went on, more and more union congregations were formed until by 1921 over one thousand union churches had been established in the prairie provinces.<sup>109</sup> It was not surprising therefore, with the example before them of union arrangements which worked, that when union

<sup>108</sup>Mrs. D. A. Moorehouse, Wallard, 1911.

<sup>109</sup>*Encyclopedia Canadiana* (Ottawa, Canadiana Co., 1958), v. 10, p. 181.



was finally voted upon, most Methodist, Presbyterian and Union congregations in the West gave it overwhelming support. Illustrations in the questionnaires of union churches formed before 1925 when the United Church came into being include those at Frobisher,<sup>110</sup> which in January 1909 became the second union church in Canada, Melville, established November 1908 being the first, Semans<sup>111</sup> where amalgamation took place in 1913, and Zelma,<sup>112</sup> organized in 1917.

Revival or mission services were a feature in the life of comparatively few communities represented in the questionnaires. Mention is made of yearly or five-yearly retreats or special missions, some lasting two or three days, in a number of Roman Catholic parishes, and no doubt they were held in other parishes as well. Travelling evangelists at one time or another held meetings for the Methodists in the Estevan district,<sup>113</sup> at Hawarden,<sup>114</sup> and in the Moosomin district<sup>115</sup> which was visited by the team of Crossley and Hunter about 1892. There were Free Methodist revival meetings lasting from one to two weeks in the winter at Mount Green.<sup>116</sup> At Chickney yearly summer camp meetings were important events as they brought together everyone from a large area around.<sup>117</sup> Mr. Sydney Chipperfield describes these gatherings as follows; "In the early days . . . about once each summer a camp meeting would be held. This would be in a nice bluff or clearing and people would attend with wagons and buggies and of course some came walking. About four or five local preachers would take part in



After mass at Willow Bunch Roman Catholic Church, about 1916.

- <sup>110</sup>Mr. J. B. Ewan, Alameda. 1894.  
<sup>111</sup>Mr. J. A. MacMurchy, Craven. 1905.  
<sup>112</sup>Mrs. T. C. Johns, Zelma. 1902.  
<sup>113</sup>Mr. H. G. Galloway, Estevan. 1892.  
<sup>114</sup>Mr. W. J. Boyle, Hawarden. 1909.  
<sup>115</sup>Mrs. Marion Anderson, Moosomin. 1883.  
<sup>116</sup>Mrs. Margaret Groshong, Mount Green. 1906.  
<sup>117</sup>Mr. Sidney Chipperfield, Chickney. 1883.

the service. A wagon would be drawn up and the speakers would use the wagon as a platform. The services used to start about half past ten and continue until about four to five o'clock."

Mr. E. C. Watson tells an entertaining story about some revival meetings in the Wishart district.<sup>118</sup> "One of the resident members of this district conducted revival meetings at times," he writes. "This man, so they and himself said, had been a very wild character and one of the bare-fisted fighters. He would visit a place or home, hold a little service, argue about the scriptures [and] also give some good points on boxing. [He] was a very strong man and weighed over 250 lbs. when not fat. He had a voice when he preached that shook the church and I remember babies all crying. I have seen this man referee a boxing match."

That the church was the centre for social life was the almost unanimous opinion of those who commented on this aspect of pioneer life. For homesteaders and farmers in the earliest days church services, whether held in houses, schools or church buildings, often provided the only community activity. Long and hard work, distances between dwellings, limited and slow means of transportation, and lack of money restricted energies and opportunities for activities outside the home. Sunday was the one day and church the one opportunity in the week to meet neighbors and friends. Here people could gather before and after the service to talk,—the women about clothes or recipes and no doubt the neighborhood gossip; the men while hitching up oxen or horses, about the past week's farm-work, animals and crops, or even to do a little business. Bachelors found church attendance good for more than their souls since, as Mr. Hodgson of Marshall says,<sup>119</sup> very often invitations for supper were forthcoming. There was also the possibility of meeting any unattached pretty girls in the district.

Visits after church might be accompanied by food, especially when services were held in homes. Proceedings often concluded with tea at Tyvan, Mrs. James Bews reports,<sup>120</sup> and with supper and singsong at Mellmore, according to Mrs. A. B. Bjerke.<sup>121</sup> And, says Mrs. J. J. Meredith, when services she attended in a Battleford district school were held in the morning the congregation would usually share lunch.<sup>122</sup> Mr. C. Evans Sargent tells of a Norwegian Lutheran family at one of his appointments who entertained the whole congregation, usually about twenty-five, to dinner or supper, depending on whether it was a morning or evening service.<sup>123</sup>

An added incentive for church attendance was provided for a time at Paynton<sup>124</sup> and Francis.<sup>125</sup> During the summers of 1903 to 1905 services were held in homes which were also the post-offices. "In 1903," Mr. Harvey H. Linnen writes, "mail for Francis district came by way of Indian Head forty miles away and it was generally understood that any homesteader going to Indian Head during the week days was supposed to bring all the mail for the local districts of Francis

<sup>118</sup>Mr. E. C. Watson, Wishart. 1903.

<sup>119</sup>Mr. Wm. Hodgson, Marshall. 1905.

<sup>120</sup>Mrs. James Bews, Holbeck. 1906.

<sup>121</sup>Mrs. A. B. Bjerke, Pelly. 1910.

<sup>122</sup>Mrs. J. J. Meredith, Battleford. 1907.

<sup>123</sup>Mr. C. Evans Sargent, Gorefield. 1911.

<sup>124</sup>Mrs. Wm. Taylor, Paynton. 1903.

<sup>125</sup>Mr. Harvey Linnen, Francis. 1903.

home with him, then on Sunday . . . to church service and distribute it [there]. In that way everybody for miles came to get their mail and attend service and to find out who was going to Indian Head the next week to take mail to post.”

As populations increased so did church activities. In many places women's organizations such as Ladies' Aids, Altar Societies, Women's Associations and the like were formed and associations for young people such as Epworth Leagues and Christian Endeavour Societies. Money-making activities such as the bazaars and suppers mentioned before brought people together and concerts which very often followed these affairs provided opportunities for the display of local talent. Songs, dialogues, recitations, sometimes short plays, violin or accordian solos, or a speaker who might be a minister from a neighbouring town supplied the entertainment. “The songs were mostly out of tune but everyone clapped regardless,” says one pioneer, but others think the local concerts of early days were of better calibre than now. Annual Christmas concerts began early in the century in the Presbyterian church near Wishart, says Mrs. Hugh Cossar who remembers the highlight at one, the first gramophone in the district. “It was an old fashioned model with an attachable horn and really caused quite a sensation.<sup>126</sup> Mr. Hugo Bartel of the Mennonite community at Drake also recalls a memorable Christmas program. “For a tree they decorated a small poplar tree and put on home-made candles. The weather was very cold but the house was so full they took out a window to get fresh air.”<sup>127</sup>

As purely social gatherings, church picnics seem to have been popular, although not universal. At Ermine<sup>128</sup> people were “too busy and scattered for picnics” and the Free Methodists at Mount Green didn't approve of them.<sup>129</sup> Unfortunate experiences early dampened initial enthusiasm at Bethel and Halcyonia. Picnics began for Bethel district Methodists in 1904 and continued until the 1908 gathering which was followed by sixty-two cases of typhoid fever.<sup>130</sup> Two attempts by the Baptists at Halcyonia, reports Miss Gladys Saloway, were “dismal failures,” rain bringing disaster to the first and measles to the second.<sup>131</sup> However, these unhappy occurrences were exceptional, judging from the questionnaires. In some areas yearly picnics or outdoor socials began very early in the history of settlement—at Pheasant Forks in 1883,<sup>132</sup> at Longlaketon in 1889,<sup>133</sup> and in 1886 for the Baptists at Edenwold.<sup>134</sup> Here, says Mrs. Richard Miles, the first picnic followed a Sunday morning church service, the food being spread in one long column in the schoolyard to avoid any grouping into separate cliques. At this and following picnics matters of importance to the congregation were usually decided.

Food, sports and entertainment at a number of these affairs show something of a contrast with present-day church picnics. To begin with, they were not merely for the children but included the whole family, and indeed some appear to

<sup>126</sup>Mrs. Hugh Cossar, Wishart. 1892.

<sup>127</sup>Mr. Hugo Bartel, Drake. 1906.

<sup>128</sup>Mr. D. H. Maginnes, Ermine. 1906.

<sup>129</sup>Mrs. W. R. Groshong, Mount Green. 1906.

<sup>130</sup>Mrs. Thos. Brownridge, Oakshela. 1889.

<sup>131</sup>Miss Gladys Saloway, Halcyonia. 1903.

<sup>132</sup>Mr. Sydney Chipperfield, Chickney. 1883.

<sup>133</sup>Mr. Chas. McMillan, Longlaketon. 1886.

<sup>134</sup>Mrs. Richard Miles, Edenwold. 1886.

have been planned mainly for the pleasure of the adults. Horse racing was a feature at Brightholm,<sup>135</sup> Wild Rose,<sup>136</sup> and St. Brieux<sup>137</sup> where ox and cigar-smoking races as well provided variations, and at one village which should perhaps remain nameless to avoid a possible community feud, much beer, according to one reporter, added to the general excitement aroused by the races.

The national origin of some participants was reflected at Brightholm district picnics where tossing the caber added to the pleasure of the Scots, while cricket kept Englishmen happy at Paynton<sup>138</sup> and Wild Rose. Baseball, bathing, horse shoes, and the usual foot races were of course common then as now. A number of church picnics concluded with a dance in the evening, as at Winthorpe where the first Anglican church picnic in 1912 was attended by all within a ten mile radius. Each woman brought a picnic basket, says Mrs. C. F. Sentance, and cooked food and lemonade were sold from a booth. In the evening the left-over food was taken to a farmhouse where the day closed with dancing and more refreshments.<sup>139</sup>

A few interesting variations in food consumed at early picnics emerge from the questionnaires. Rabbit, prairie chicken, and wild ducks were on the menu at the first picnic held for members of the Roman Catholic church at St. Front in 1922.<sup>140</sup> At their first picnic in 1911 the Beaver Creek Norwegian Lutherans of Gronlid fared well on moose meat sandwiches, homegrown vegetables, pies from locally picked berries and home-made ice cream.<sup>141</sup> Mrs. Wm. Taylor has fond remembrances of twelve raspberry pies with cream which must have made the mouths water of Paynton picnickers in 1909.

Among the pioneers who answered the questionnaire are many who sometimes look back with a feeling of regret for the days that are gone. Overlooking the difficulties and discomforts of frontier life, they recall the good fellowship of early days, the comparative absence of divisions because of denomination or material possessions. They see with concern the decline in country districts of a sense of neighborhood and the gradual disappearance of the country congregation. Automobiles and better roads which have brought town, city, and weekend resort closer they regard as not unmixed blessings since church and social life can no longer find their centre in the immediate district. Mr. E. E. Lundell says, "It seems that the automobiles of today and the hardtop roads make neighbors farther away from each other. . . . I'll never forget the aroma coming from the prairies and wolf willows as we came walking to the school house services, and when I say we, I mean whole families." And, writes Mr. C. Evans Sargent, "In the pioneer days we were all like little boats tossing on the prairie ocean of dry land, taking a chance on success or failure in an unpredictable adventure. It was a simpler, more sincere and more neighborly life in the church as in other ways. Those early mission congregations seemed to me nearer the spirit of true worship than any I ever attended."

CHRISTINE MACDONALD

<sup>135</sup>Mr. Jas. Barrie, Brightholm. 1906.

<sup>136</sup>Mrs. Fannie S. Dunlop, Wild Rose. 1902.

<sup>137</sup>Mr. Louis Demay, St. Brieux. 1906.

<sup>138</sup>Mrs. Wm. Taylor, Paynton. 1903.

<sup>139</sup>Mrs. C. F. Sentance, Brombury. 1912.

<sup>140</sup>Mr. Louis Le Strat, St. Front. 1912.

<sup>141</sup>Mrs. S. J. McFarlane, Gronlid. 1908.

## Nainabush Stories

By MURIEL CLIPSHAM, from stories collected by Dorothy Francis

**E**ACH Indian nation has had its folk hero, as have the other peoples of the world. The Micmacs had Glooskap; the Blackfeet Napiu; the Crees had Weesackka-chak, and the Ojibwas had Nainabush. Many similar legends are told of each of these heroes. Some stories try to explain the inexplicable in nature, others are just told for the story. In these Nainabush is often the butt of the jokes.

Nainabush was the first man on earth. He was an imaginary being who possessed wonderful powers. He had all the virtues and all the failings of mankind. He could be wise or simple, brave or cowardly, creator, conqueror, rover, deceiver.

Amelia Paget refers to Nay-nee-boo-shoo or Nay-na-push in her book *People of the Plains*. Diamond Jenness spells it "Nenibush" in his collection of Indian tales *The Corn Goddess*. The spelling used here is that suggested by Mrs. Joe Francis, an enfranchised Indian now living in Regina, who wrote these stories as they were told to her in Ojibwa on the reserve. She translated into English and wrote rapidly in her scribbler with such remarkable choice of words that only a very few have been changed.

Nainabush stories have been told for generations in skin tepees and canvas tents. They are still told and retold in the cabins and houses of Indians on reserves or in town. Thus they are not just tales from the past, they are still recounted and listened to and laughed over. Like all unrecorded tales, one of the charms of Indian stories is the fact that they are never told twice in the same way, and it is to be hoped that by collecting Nainabush stories we do not standardize them.

There are certain formalities to observe when telling a Nainabush story. The raconteur must be given a pipeful of tobacco. Most important of all the stories must be told in late fall and winter; never in spring and summer when the snow is all gone. So interesting are these tales that lizards crawl under the tent flaps to listen. They will stay all summer, try as you will to be rid of them.

Early in May last year Mrs. Francis was visiting on her home reserve in Manitoba, and had promised to bring back some Nainabush tales. Her old stepfather, a fine story-teller, refused to tell any so late in the year. Her brother-in-law said, "I only know one but I'm not superstitious,—I'll tell it." And he did.

That night a blizzard blew up and next morning there were four inches of snow on the ground. "There," said the old man, "that is what you can expect when Nainabush is angry with you."

"Maybe he is right," and Mrs. Francis laughed as she told me. And perhaps he is. Nainabush has been on these prairies a lot longer than we have.

So let us tell a few Nainabush stories now that the nights are long and little brother lizard long ago crawled away to find a winter's hiding place.

### HOW THE WEASEL GOT HIS BEAUTIFUL COAT

Nainabush was on one of his usual journeys in search of adventure. As he walked along he came face to face with Windigo. This giant was greatly feared as he ate human flesh.

"Ah, ha," he said when he spied Nainabush, "look what I have here! It's Nainabush. He will make the best meal of my life."

"No! No!" pleaded Nainabush. "Please, Windigo, don't eat me."

But Windigo answered, "This is the biggest event in history, I am about to put an end to Nainabush. First you must collect sticks of wood and bring them here. I shall make a fire and stretch you out so you will brown evenly on both sides."

Windigo lay back lazily and dozed in the sun. Poor Nainabush started sadly out to get the sticks. Soon he met a weasel. Now the weasel at that time was an ugly black animal.

Nainabush said to him, "Little brother, could you help me? Windigo is planning to eat me. I am gathering these sticks for him to stretch me out and roast me."

The weasel said, "What can anyone as small as I am do against a giant?"

Nainabush told him, "Windigo is basking in the sun, asleep with his mouth wide open. You could run into his mouth, down his throat and gnaw his heart off. If you can accomplish all this I shall make you the envy of all animals you shall be so beautiful."

The weasel agreed to try and they crept to where Windigo was napping. The weasel did as they had planned. He slid into the open mouth, down the throat and gnawed off the heart. Soon Windigo was dead.

Nainabush was so happy he picked up the little weasel and stroked him gently from head to tail. As he did so the weasel's fur turned pure white except the tip of the tail which remained black. He stroked him the second time and the fur turned a beautiful golden brown.

Nainabush kept his promise. "Since you saved my life, this shall be your reward. You will be admired by everyone. Your coat shall be white in winter and golden brown in summer." That is why to this day the weasel has his beautiful coat.

### NAINABUSH AND THE CHICKADEES

One day as Nainabush was travelling he heard noise and laughter ahead of him. Curious, as usual, he followed the sound and came upon a big flock of chickadees.

"Nainabush is here," they cried.

"What is all the merriment?" he asked. "May I join in your fun?" "Watch us and you will see," said the chickadees. Each one lay down on his little back.

Each took his eyes out and threw them up in the air. The eyes immediately landed back in their sockets. This was so much fun for the chickadees they did it again and again.

Of course, Nainabush wished to do the same. "Not yet," said the chickadees, "watch awhile longer and when you leave you may try it, but only once."

Nainabush was curious. He left immediately and did not go far. He lay on his back and threw his eyes up in the air and they landed back in their place. He found it most amusing and tried it a second time in spite of the warning.

Alas! His eyes fell on the branch of a tree. He could not find them. He groped about but to no avail. His blindness was more than he could bear and he cried out. The chickadees heard him. They said, "Nainabush is in trouble, let us go and find him."

Immediately they saw what had happened. "We will find your eyes," they said. This was an easy task for them and they returned his eyes to him. Always after that Nainabush had trouble with his eyes and so have many Indians ever since.

#### NAINABUSH WITH THE WOLF PACK

Nainabush was walking about one day when he met a wolf pack. They were his friends and crowded around pleased to see him.

"Look," they said to one another, "our brother, Nainabush, has come."

"My brother," said Nainabush, "I am glad to see you. I would be very happy if I could live with you awhile and learn to hunt with your cunning. Is that possible?"

"Come and live with us," they said. "We will give you one of the best hunters in the pack to be your cousin and teacher. You will learn to be a cunning hunter."

"I need your legs for speed and your nose for the power of scent. But," said Nainabush, "I wish to keep my own body."

So his legs and head became those of a wolf and he ran with the pack all day, learning their ways. Night fell, they came to a snow bank.

"Look, my brother," said his teacher, "you circle round and round in one place and make a lair for yourself out of the wind. There you can be snug and warm."

They soon were lying down for the night, each in his own hollow in the snow. Before long Nainabush became very cold as he had no fur to keep his body warm. The leader of the pack saw him shivering.

"We must keep our brother warm," he said. "Come close to him." Each wolf crowded in near Nainabush and covered him with his bushy tail.

Nainabush slept comfortably all through the night.

That is how Indians learned how wolves live and hunt. But, alas, never again could Nainabush travel all winter naked except for his leather loin cloth. From that time on he had to cover himself with fur to keep out winter cold. And so must all Indians to this day.

#### NAINABUSH AND THE PARTRIDGES

Nainabush wanted a wife. He knew of a beautiful princess, the daughter of a powerful chief. She was the wife he would marry. Her father tested all the young men who came by making them jump a wide ravine in the mountains. So far all had been afraid to try but Nainabush was sure he could do it. As he walked along he came to a nest of baby partridges. He asked, "Who do you say you are?"

They answered giving their Ojibwa name, "We are called 'The ones who startle you'. Our mother is away hunting food."

Nainabush laughed scornfully, "You tiny people could not scare anyone," and he tossed dung on them leaving them in a sorry state.

Soon Nainabush came to the home of the beautiful princess. He prepared to test his strength by jumping across the ravine.

In the meantime Mother Partridge arrived back at her nest. She was angry when she saw the dirt on her babies. "Who did this?" she asked.

"Nainabush passed by and he did it."

Immediately she set out to follow him. She found him just as he was standing on the edge of the ravine sizing up the distance to the other side. He leaned forward to jump and she fluttered in front of him. Startled, he lost his footing and fell down the mountain side. He prayed that he would land on something soft. He fell into muskeg and slowly climbed out. Nainabush was very angry at Mother Partridge and cursed her and her children.

Ever since they have black and brown markings on their faces and they do not fly smoothly as other birds do but flutter noisily.

#### NAINABUSH TRIES TO GET A MEAL

Nainabush was thirsty and hungry so he was glad to find a clear little mountain creek. As he lay down to drink from it he saw some beautiful red berries in the water. Eagerly he reached out to grab them but he could not find them. He felt around but decided they were so deep he could not reach them. He must dive in after them. Really, the water was very shallow and he hit his head on the stones at the bottom and knocked himself out. He rolled over on his back.

When he came to and opened his eyes there were the berries above him. All this time he had been trying to grab the reflections of cranberries. He was still hungry after eating the berries so he again set out. He was happy to find a flock of ducks sitting along the shore. He stepped back before they saw him. "I must think of a scheme to outwit them," he said to himself. Quickly he formed a bag of some kind and slung it on his back. He walked up to the ducks.



"Here comes Nainabush," they cried and started for the water.

"Wait, my brothers," he called to them. "See what I have in my bag."

They drew near, curious to see what he had.

"I have a bag of songs," he told them.

"What kind of songs?" they asked.

"Come and see," Nainabush answered. "Form a circle around me and I shall sing them for you. These are 'Close Your Eyes' songs. You must keep your eyes tightly shut as I sing." So the ducks all closed their eyes and he started to sing. But as he sang he was busy wringing the necks of the ducks one after another.

A diver was with the ducks and he was very suspicious of Nainabush. He opened his eyes just in time to see Nainabush reach for him. The diver ran with Nainabush close behind him. Just as he reached the water Nainabush kicked him between the legs putting his legs out of joint. He dived in time to save himself. That is why the diver has had bow legs ever since and blood-shot eyes for opening them when he was not supposed to.

#### NAINABUSH AND THE MOUNTAIN GOAT

As Nainabush walked along a mountain trail he met a goat. He said, "Hello, my brother, I am glad to see you."

"I'm glad to see you, too," said the mountain goat.

"Did you know there is a big celebration on the other side of the mountain," asked Nainabush.

"What kind of celebration?" asked the goat.

"They are having target practice using bows and arrows. Let us go and try it."

But the goat was suspicious. "I'm not going with you if you are going hunting."

"Oh, no," said Nainabush, "this is just play. Here, you take my bow and try it on me first."

So the goat tried to shoot Nainabush but he ran around in circles well out of the way and the arrows never came near him.

"Now it's my turn to practice," said Nainabush. "You run in a circle and I shall aim at you."

So the goat started out.

"Come a little closer," called Nainabush, "just a little closer."

He pulled back the arrow as far as he could and hit the poor goat in the heart and killed him instantly.

"Now," said Nainabush, "I have enough meat to last me a long time."

He skinned the animal, cut the meat into strips and hung them to dry over the fire. He put some meat to roast in the fire and rendered the fat in bark baskets. Just as he was ready to eat he heard a great creaking of the tree above him.

"I must grease the joint," he thought, so he climbed up with some fat. He slipped and his arm was caught firmly in the notch. He was powerless. Try as he would he could not get free. A fox and her little ones crept up to the fire and ate his meat. They jumped up and pulled down the smoked strips and ate those too. As the last piece was gulped down a gust of wind came and bent the branch and freed his arm, but he had no meat now. He was hungrier than ever. He noticed a few brains clinging to the skull of the goat. He put his finger in and tried to scrape them out but could not quite reach them. Nainabush put it back on the ground and prayed to the great spirit that he might become a snake. Instantly he was a small snake and he slid inside the skull easily. He ate the bits of flesh. He was so eager to get every morsel he quite forgot he could only remain a snake a short time. Suddenly he became a man again, his head lodged tightly inside the skull. What a predicament to be in! Try as he would he could not get it off and he could not see where he was going.

Nainabush stumbled against an ash tree. "Who are you my brother, will you help me?" he asked. But the tree did not reply. He went on. He bumped into a maple near the bank of a river and knocked himself over the edge and into the stream. He climbed out and as he did so he knocked his head on a rock. The skull broke and at last Nainabush was free to go on his travels.

DOCUMENTS OF WESTERN HISTORY

## Minutes of the North-West Council 1873-74

From 1870 until 1876 the local government for the North-West Territories was located at Winnipeg. After this vast area, stretching west from Manitoba to the Rockies, became part of Canada in 1870, the Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba was appointed Lieutenant-Governor for the Territories as well. A Council to assist him in Territorial affairs was appointed late in 1872 and met for the first time on March 8, 1873, at Winnipeg (Fort Garry). The powers of the Lieutenant-Governor and Council were closely circumscribed by the federal government, and in the main their activities were confined to making recommendations and suggestions for action by the senior government. The speech of the Lieutenant Governor, Alexander Morris, to Council members at their first meeting, and other excerpts from the minutes of Council sessions presented below, give an indication of the problems facing the administrations of the day.

*The Editor*

Government House, Fort Garry  
March 8, 1873.

**A**t a meeting of the Council of the North West Territories held at Government House, Fort Garry, on the eighth day of March 1873, the following members of the Council were present: Honble. [Messrs.] Girard, D. A. Smith, H. J. Clarke, Paschal Breland, Boyd, Dubuc, Bannatyne, Fraser.

His Excellency the Governor General's Commission having been read by the Secretary, His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor addressed the Council as follows:

Honorable Gentlemen of the Council of the North West.

I have much pleasure in calling you around me to assist me in the administration of the affairs of the North West Territories. The duties which devolve upon you are of a highly important character. A country of vast extent which is possessed of abundant resources is entrusted to your keeping, a country which though at present, but sparsely settled, is destined, I believe, to become the home of thousands of persons, by means of whose industry and energy that which is now almost a wilderness will be quickly transformed into a fruitful land where civilization and the arts of peace will flourish. It is for us to labor, to the utmost of our power, in order to bring about as speedily as possible, the settlement of the North West Territories and the development of their resources, and, at the same time, to adopt such measures as may be necessary to insure the maintenance of peace and order, and the welfare and happiness of all classes of Her Majesty's subjects resident in the Territories.

The scope and nature of your authority are set forth in the Act of the Dominion Parliament whereby the formation of this Council is authorized, and in the order of the Governor General in Council, copies of which will be laid before you. Among other matters which should claim your immediate attention, will be the taking means for ascertaining in what portions of the N.W. Territories settlements have been formed, and suggesting to the Dominion Govt. the propriety of surveying and dealing with the lands in those districts. It will also be advisable to ascertain the numbers of the various native tribes, with the localities in which they reside,

Monday September 8<sup>th</sup> 1873.

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Council met at Government House, Fort Garry  
at 2. p. m.

Present Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mess<sup>rs</sup> Gerard, Smith, Clarke,  
Breland, Schultz, Debus, Barnatyne, Fraser,  
and Warrilton -

The Minutes of last meeting were read and approv-  
-ed.

The Committee instructed at last meeting to report  
as to the necessity of a Treaty being negotiated with  
the Indians next year &c. reported through their  
Chairman Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mr Smith, having reported on all  
questions referred to them.

The Committee instructed at last meeting to report  
as to the enforcement of the Laws in the North West  
Territory, reported, through their Chairman, Hon<sup>ble</sup>  
Mr Gerard, and asked and obtained leave to  
sit again.

Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mess<sup>rs</sup> Gerard, Smith, Clarke, Schultz, and  
Debus appointed a committee, to prepare Rules of  
Procedure for the legislation of the Council, and  
submit the same to Council at its next session.

Moved by Hon<sup>ble</sup> Donald A. Smith,

Seconded by Hon<sup>ble</sup> Mr Schultz, and

Resolved,

That the Council of the North West are of opinion,  
that in view of the rapid increase of settlement  
in the North West Territories, and the present dis-  
turbed condition of the Indians and their anxiety  
as to the future, it is imperatively necessary that  
a Treaty should be concluded with the bands  
of Indians living between the western boundary  
of that portion of the Territory in which  
the Indian title has already been extinguish-  
-ed, and Fort Carlton or thereabouts -

and to suggest measures for concluding satisfactory treaties with them. Means must be devised for the proper administration of justice, the prevention of trade in intoxicating liquors, and the vigorous assertion of the law in all cases of crime and disorder.

I will also take your council as to the most appropriate locality in which the band of Sioux now resident in Manitoba should be placed for permanent residence.

I now invite you to enter upon the duties of your office, well assured, as I am, of your sincere desire to assist me loyally and faithfully in the administration of the affairs of the North West, and in the development of that mighty region whose future, I believe, to be so full of promise.

(Sgd) A.M., L.G.

It was then moved by the Honble. M. A. Girard, Seconded by the Honble. H. J. Clarke, and Resolved: That His Excellency's address be entered in the minutes of Council and that time be given to Council to prepare an address in reply.

\* \* \* \* \*

Monday September 8th 1873.

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Moved by Honble. Donald A. Smith, Seconded by Honble. Mr. Schultz, and Resolved: That the Council of the North West are of opinion, that in view of the rapid increase of settlement in the North West Territories, and the present disturbed condition of the Indians and their anxiety as to the future, it is imperatively necessary that a Treaty should be concluded with the bands of Indians living between the Western boundary of that portion of the Territory in which the Indian title has already been extinguished, and Fort Carlton or thereabouts. The Council are of opinion that to defer the negotiation of a Treaty of this nature beyond the earliest time possible in the year 1874 would be attended with unfortunate results.

The Council are also of opinion that the payments to be made to the Indians under the provisions of this Treaty should be in the shape of annuities terminable in twenty five years.

The Council recommend that such Treaty shall provide that if parties not entitled to participate in the annuities to be paid to any particular tribe are allowed to do so, then a *pro rata* sum shall be deducted from the next annual payment to be made to the tribe by whom this improper payment was permitted to be made.

In the opinion of Council, it would be preferable if the payments made to the Indians were made in goods rather than in money; the Council having reason to know, from the experience of the past, that the Indians will greatly profit by obtaining all their goods through the Government Agent, instead of purchasing them from traders with their annuities.

In the settlement of the Reserves and the payments of annuities, a person of mixed blood electing to be called an "Indian" and participating in the benefits of the Treaty as such, shall not be entitled to the same privileges enjoyed by other settlers.

That it is, in the opinion of the Council, necessary that the Treaty should provide for the establishment of schools for the education of the Indians, for the purchase of agricultural implements, cattle, and also for teaching the Indians the proper mode of cultivating the soil.

\* \* \* \* \*

Moved by the Honble. Mr. Breland, Seconded by Honble. Mr. Hamilton, and Resolved: That while the Council view with satisfaction the action of the Dominion Government in maintaining the existing military force now in Manitoba, and in organizing a body of Mounted Police for service in the North West and Manitoba, they are strongly of opinion that a still larger military force will be found immediately necessary, to provide for the maintenance of order, the enforcement of the Customs, and Civil and Criminal Laws, as well as for the sake of the moral effect which the presence of such a force would have in supporting the civil authorities in the execution of laws.

The Council are led to this conclusion from the knowledge they possess that persons professing to be American citizens have established themselves in force within the Territory, and have also proceeded to perpetrate gross outrages upon the native population as well as upon Her Majesty's subjects generally, including murders of a most aggravated kind, for which, during the present condition of the Territory, and the absence of all Law and Order there, no redress can be obtained.

The Council are also aware that murders have been committed in various parts of the Territory by Indians and Half Breeds which have been allowed to go unpunished, because there were no means at hand to enforce the law. Such a condition of affairs, if allowed to continue, will effectually prevent the settlement of the country.

In reference to this matter, the Council of the North West desire to direct the attention of the Dominion Government, to the fact that Westward of Manitoba, the district of country known as "The Fertile Belt" extends for upwards of twelve hundred (1200) miles, and that, at the present time, there is no means of communication with this region except by the ordinary cart or waggon.

The time occupied in travelling from Fort Garry to Fort Edmonton, is not, under ordinary circumstances less than one month, thus showing the impossibility of meeting any emergency promptly, without the aid of a resident force.

It must also be remembered that lying northward of and beyond "The Fertile Belt" is a vast district, far more difficult of access at present, the only means of communication with the greater portion of it being by water. Taking all these facts into consideration, the Council of the North West are decidedly of opinion that the military force maintained in Manitoba and the North West Territories,

exclusive of the Mounted Police, should consist of not less than (500) five hundred men.

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Moved by Honble. Mr. Hamilton, Seconded by Honble. Mr. Clarke, and Resolved: That the Council view with satisfaction the provisions of the Dominion Act "to make further provision as to duties of Customs in Manitoba and the North West Territories," for the prohibition of the importation of spirits into the North West. They desire to point out, however, that according to the provisions of that Act, spirits or strong waters etc. in the North West Territories can be seized and confiscated by constables or officers of the law only, and in view of the absence of such officers and of the disastrous results likely to ensue from the sale of liquor to the Indians, they desire to suggest that the Act be amended in accordance with the Act passed by the North West Council at their last session, and shall give authority to any person to confiscate, spill on the ground, and destroy, any liquor etc. brought into the Territories in contravention of the law.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thursday September 11th 1873.

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The Lieutenant Governor also stated that although it was a matter not strictly within their province, he wished to consult them on another subject and to profit by the knowledge of Indian character and Indian habits which many members of the Council possessed. He explained that the Saulteaux Indians had promised to meet His Honour at the North West Angle, but had since changed their minds and wanted him to meet them at another point. Was it the opinion of Council that he ought to do so? The Council strongly advised His Honour not to change the place of meeting as they considered it would be most unwise to do so, an opinion in which the Lieutenant Governor concurred.

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Proposed by Honble. Mr. Hamilton, Seconded by Honble. Dr. Schultz, and Resolved: That the Council of the North West Territories have pleasure in recognizing the services performed by the Revd. Mr. McKay of Stanley Mission in printing, translating and publishing in the Cree language the "Masters and Servants Act" of Manitoba, the provisions of which are now extended to the North West Territories.

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Thursday March 12th 1874.

Council met at 2 p.m. Present—Honble. Messrs. Girard, Breland, Dubuc, Bannatyne, Fraser, Hamilton, Brown, McKay and Kennedy. His Honour the Lieutenant Governor presiding.

The Committee on Postal Communications made their Report which was adopted.

The following Resolution of Council, based thereon, was passed.

In reply to a telegram from the Post Office Dep't. expressing a wish that the N.W. Council should express their views as to the extent and probable cost of

Postal service desired in the N.W. Territories and also as to the best practicable mode of providing for the performance of the same, Council have the honour to report, for the information of His Excellency the Governor General in Council,

1st. That they regard the establishment of Postal communication in the N.W. Territories as of vital importance, not only because it is highly desirable that regular information should, from time to time, be received as to the progress of events in the North West, but also because the establishment of such Postal communication would do much to encourage immigration and hasten on the settlement of the North West.

2nd. Council are of opinion that, to commence with, the service should consist of eight trips per annum each way.

3rd. The route should be from Fort Garry in the Province of Manitoba, to Fort Edmonton in the North West Territories by way of the following centres of settlement and existing population, viz. Fort Ellice, Qu'Appelle [sic], Fort Carlton, Fort Pitt, and Victoria Settlement.

4th. The time occupied in the journey would probably be about 39 days. See Appendix A.

5th. The question of cost is one in relation to which it is difficult to arrive, at once, at a correct conclusion, but it is probable that the service could be performed for \$10,000 per annum or about that sum. The receipts, would, no doubt, at first be comparatively insignificant, but would, in all probability, increase with great rapidity, while the advantages derived from the service, in other ways, would, as before said, be very considerable.

6th. The Council recommend that Tenders should, without delay, be asked for, for the performance of the mail service required.

Appendix A.	Days	Miles
Fort Garry to Fort Ellice	10	220
Fort Ellice to Qu'Appelle	5	110
Qu'Appelle to Carlton	10	220
Carlton to Fort Pitt	6	167
Fort Pitt to Victoria	5½	122
Victoria to Edmonton	2½	71
	—	—
	39	910
	—	—

#### Appendix B.

Probable cost of mail service referred to in Appendix A.

39 days at \$16 per day—\$624 per trip.

16 trips per annum. i.e. Eight trips each way. \$9,984 per annum, or say in round numbers, \$10,000.

In summer the service, each way, would be performed by 2 men and 4 horses. In winter 2 men with dog sleds would be required.

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## The Newspaper Scrapbook

### ARE GOPHERS GOOD TO EAT

THE Emmons County, N. Dakota, Record says: "We know three or four settlers in this country who—primarily through lack of meat, secondarily in the interests of science—have devoured gophers. With one accord these settlers assert that they never tasted better flesh; that it is tender and sweet, and superior to the squirrels of the woods. What we want to get at is this; If the gopher can be made a regular article of diet its numbers would decrease rapidly. Not only would country people slaughter thousands, but sportsmen from the city would also join the crusade. Somebody must do the pioneer work—somebody must prove to their fellow settlers by object lessons that gopher is good to eat." Long before Dakota was settled and when the abundance or scarcity of these rodents scarcely excited a remark, they were eaten as a dainty bit, not from necessity. Later, in the years of their greatest plentifulness and when larger game and provision generally were scarce, they have been largely drawn on as a food supply. The Indians are especially fond of them. When fat they are of a very sweet and delicate flavor. But if they come to be eaten generally, our legislators at Regina need not bring them under the operations of the Game Ordinance.

—*Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford)  
Wednesday, Nov. 12, 1890.

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### ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

The trails throughout the district are generally good, permitting full loads to be taken to market. Within the settlements surrounding the town the worst creeks have been bridged and the steepest hills graded and made easier of ascent. Improvements are made on the highways every year as the necessity for them arises through the extension of settlement, the money to carry them on being given by the Territorial Assembly out of the Dominion grant for roads and bridges. A magnificent bridge is being built across the Battle River by the Dominion Government, and will be completed this summer. In the meantime access to the town is had over a temporary bridge, so called because it is taken down every spring and rebuilt when the ice runs out; the structure not being strong enough to resist the pressure of the ice. The new bridge will be a permanent one, and crossing the river with one span will leave room for the ice to pass out unchecked. A movement is on foot to establish a ferry on the North Saskatchewan. This will accommodate the settlers on the north side of the river, and a great many on the south (or town) side who are interested in hay lands and cattle ranches there. At present the only means of communication is by small boats in summer and on the ice in winter.

—*Saskatchewan Herald* (Battleford)  
April 23, 1890.

## Book Reviews

IN QUEST OF THE NORTH WEST PASSAGE. By *Leslie H. Neatby*. Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958. Pp. 194. \$3.75.

OF all the exciting stories about the men who searched for the North West Passage and eventually discovered it, that of Sir John Franklin has always attracted the widest interest. This is not because of the brilliance of Franklin's achievements, but because of the pathetic nature of his failure. The emotional response to Lady Franklin's faith in her husband and her continued efforts to find him long after hope for his survival had passed, has preserved Franklin's name in Canadian memories when the solid work of his first two expeditions has been forgotten.

Not that this book is simply a retelling of the Franklin story. On the contrary Dr. Neatby tells the story of three centuries of Arctic exploration from the days of Frobisher's gold rush to those of the carefully planned search for Franklin. And he has told it very well. Dr. Neatby writes with skill. His reader will follow him and the intrepid men about whom he writes with pleasure as well as profit.

Nevertheless the figure of Franklin seems to dominate the book. Possibly this is because, after a few years of intense activity in the seventeenth century, the search for the North West Passage was largely concentrated in a single generation in the first half of the nineteenth. Franklin is larger than Hudson simply because he is nearer to us in time. Perhaps, too, it is because Dr. Neatby's sympathies have been drawn out by the tragedy of the Franklin story. Dr. Neatby looks upon Franklin as a hero; and because he does so he feels compelled to defend his hero against those critics like Stefansson who have argued that Franklin, by his failure to adapt his ways to those of the country and the climate, helped to bring his own fate upon himself.

To defend one's hero is natural and commendable. But in so doing the author of this book has tended to neglect the real, if less dramatic, achievements of other travellers and explorers in the same place and of the same time. One may not like Thomas Simpson—his was a personality more likely to repel than to attract—but he and Dease were able to chart the northern coasts as effectively as Franklin without the drama of those dreadful days at Fort Enterprise. And is it really fair to lay the blame for Franklin's fate upon Ross's failure to discover that King William land was, in fact, an island and not part of the continental mainland? Victoria Strait is not closed every season, as we now know, and in any event Franklin was well enough versed in exploration to realize that the maps of the day were neither complete nor accurate, especially when portions of them were drawn in dotted lines. Most serious of all, in this reviewer's opinion, is the short shrift given to Sir John Rae. For some reason *Rae's Arctic Correspondence, 1844-1855*, published by the Hudson's Bay Record Society in 1953, does not appear in the bibliography, although it was Rae who provided the first definite knowledge of the fate of the Franklin expedition (had he but visited Chantrey Inlet, he might even have found written records destroyed by the time M'Clintock reached King

William Island) and revealed to the world the darkest aspects of its dreadful end. But Rae was not in the high tradition of the gentlemen explorers. He was looked upon as a man who went "native," because he lived in the north as the Eskimo lived. This was something no self-respecting Royal Navy officer could do. And so Rae, using only the food and fuel provided by the country, was able to survive, where Franklin and Crozier, with their naval uniforms, their gold braid, their swords and their silver plate, starved helplessly. Here was a lesson which took a long time in learning. Captain R. F. Scott, R.N., had not really learned it as late as 1911-12.

A small point, but one which must be mentioned, concerns the maps. In a book of travel and exploration good maps and plenty of them are essential. Such line maps as are to be found in Dr. Neatby's book are adequate, but there are not enough of them. Readers unfamiliar with Canadian geography (and they will be the bulk of the readers of this book) will look in vain for such places as Cape Turnagain, Cape Barrow, Cape Walker, Detention Harbour, Montreal Island, Wollaston Land, or even Victoria Strait. They will also look in vain for an index. At the same time they will feast their eyes upon the attractive interior format of the book. The dust cover is particularly pleasing; this is the work of an artist, rather than an illustrator.

Despite its shortcomings—and they are, after all, only a matter of opinion—this is a good book. It is an enjoyable book. It is a timely book. It is a book which in these days of expanding interest in the north and uncertainty as to how far northern Canada really belongs to the people of this country, should be widely read.

GEORGE F. G. STANLEY

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A PROPHET IN POLITICS. A BIOGRAPHY OF J. S. WOODSWORTH. By *Kenneth McNaught*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1959. Pp. vi, 339. \$5.95.

A new biography of J. S. Woodsworth invites comparison with his daughter Grace MacInnis's *J. S. Woodsworth: a Man to Remember* (1953). The two titles suggest the relative emphasis of the two writers; whereas Mrs. MacInnis wrote a warmly personal book about the man whom many of us remember with affection, Professor McNaught is mainly concerned with the political teacher and leader whose career was a triumphant success "by any standard other than that of expediency." In three pages Woodsworth is at college, in sixteen he is an ordained minister, in twenty-five he is preaching the social gospel which, fifteen years later, was to be an important element in Woodsworth's home-grown variety of democratic socialism. The MacInnis and McNaught biographies are not competitive but complementary.

One of the important merits of Professor McNaught's book is that he shows the emergence of the C.C.F. in the early nineteen thirties to have been not simply or mainly a prairie farmers' revolt touched off by economic disaster, but a growth of socialist thought that has been fermenting for decades. Behind the founding

meetings of 1932 and 1933 in Calgary and Regina lay the ideas of socially-conscious clergymen in the era of Canada's Robber Barons, of the Non-Partisan League and Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, of British Fabianism and an urban labour movement. These ideas had come to the test of action as early as 1919 in the Winnipeg General Strike (of which Professor McNaught gives a first-rate account); and in Parliament from 1922 on Woodsworth made a constant application of socialist principles to Canadian problems.

Professor McNaught errs only in suggesting that Canadian socialism is mainly the product of radical intellectuals and trade union leaders. C.C.F. doctrine, he says (p. 53), stems from "urban socialist thought which has imposed itself upon a reluctant agrarian movement with limited economic aims." He has lived too long in Winnipeg! He does not know the socialist ideology of Saskatchewan farm leaders.

Another merit of this biography is the clear demonstration that Woodsworth's pacifism was a logical outgrowth of his socialism. Too many even of Woodsworth's friends have tried to shrug off his uncompromising opposition to war as impractical idealism or naive religious passivism. Professor McNaught rightly does not tolerate such nonsense. Woodsworth's objection to war was of the same rational and pragmatic order as his opposition to capitalism; in fact, to him war was just the greatest of the many social evils produced by capitalism.

There are some slips in this book. For example, Mannheim is the German city Woodsworth visited (p. 18), and Carievale is the community in Saskatchewan where he was pastor in 1900-1 (p. 20). Nor was M. J. Coldwell either a member of the Regina Public School Board (p. 276) or a high school principal (p. 283); he was dismissed in 1935 from his job as principal of a Regina elementary school. These, however, are small blemishes in a book which admirably succeeds in its intention to tell "a story of moral courage unsurpassed in Canadian history."

CARLYLE KING

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THEY ROSE FROM THE DUST. By *Fred Wilkes*. Saskatoon: The Modern Press, 1958. Pp. 249, maps, illus. \$4.10.

IN his preface and in chapter XVI the Reverend Fred Wilkes describes the purpose of this book and the methods of compiling the information contained therein. The book grew from the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the communities to the north and north-west of Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan. Although much of the text was written by the Reverend Mr. Wilkes or edited by him, he gives credit to the very active committee members who gathered data on pioneering in the area.

At the outset the author gives in a general and readable manner the background of the area, with special reference to the influence of the early missionaries before the mass settlement. There follows a chapter on the surveys of western Canada carried out in the nineteenth century by Captain Palliser, Professor Hind and

Sandford Fleming, plus a description of the settlements around Moose Jaw in the 1880's. These chapters provide the entré to the story of the settlements north and north-west of Moose Jaw. However, the succeeding three chapters also deal with background material: the prairie trails existing at the turn of the century and their historical importance, the early government of the North-West, the establishment and work of the North West Mounted Police, railway construction, and the early problems of growing and marketing wheat on the prairies. Approximately one-quarter of the book is thus given to background material.

With the account of the influx of homesteaders and settlers to the area in 1902 and 1903 the story gains momentum and interest. There is evidence of the difficulty that all writers of local history face in fusing the contributions of numerous researchers into a coherent story. The reviewer felt that the story of each of the villages could have been made more readable by dealing with all phases of the development of a village in consecutive pages instead of having them scattered throughout four chapters. There are examples of fine writing in these chapters, bringing refreshing glimpses of pioneer experiences. Chapters X and XI on the organization of schools and churches make inspirational reading. The chapter following on social life is well written, providing the authentic atmosphere of the recreational side of rural life which relieved the harshness of pioneering. There are two contrasting chapters dealing with the drought and depression of the 1930's and the scientific attempts at better farming practices under the direction of Departments of Agriculture, and a final chapter which describes the changes in farming practices. An excellent appendix contains lists of first settlers and the locations of their homesteads, honor rolls from two world wars, lists of clergy, a bibliography and a map showing homestead locations in nine townships near Moose Jaw.

*They Rose from the Dust* is a worthy addition to the slowly increasing volume of local histories pertaining to Saskatchewan. Compiled and written in spare hours, the book possesses the weaknesses which can only be overcome when the writer is free to devote all his time to the effort. Unfortunately, the majority of local histories can only be written under similar circumstances. Until writers can be given time and financial independence, our local histories will continue to be less than first class publications. For earnestness of effort and integrity in research, the Reverend Fred Wilkes and his associates deserve high praise.

CLIVE TALLANT

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WITHOUT FEAR, FAVOUR OR AFFECTION. Thirty-five years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. By Vernon A. M. Kemp, C.B.E. Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1958. Pp. ix, 263. \$4.50.

VERNON KEMP's description of thirty-five years with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police is fascinating and humorous reading which links the old and the new in the life of the force. His experiences started in Prince Albert in the year 1910 when he was fifteen years of age and the force was known as the

Royal North West Mounted Police. They continued to the end of the second World War, August 1945, when Assistant Commissioner Kemp stepped down as Director of Criminal Investigation and bid good-bye to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. He had served the force well and in serving developed a deep affection for its law, its history and its officers and men. The title itself is well chosen. It is taken from the oath sworn by incoming members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and is dignified yet adds a certain drama to a book which was not intended to be sensational.

At the time of Kemp's enlistment the R.N.W.M.P. was responsible for the enforcement of law and order in the still young provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta, as well as in the Yukon and the North-West Territories. In those days a constable received .60c a day,—\$18.00 a month, and free board which consisted of meagre rations. Small wonder that most of these men who established the early reputation of the force were individualists. The author states, "The Mounted Policeman stood or fell by himself—and few fell."

In the early chapters the author describes the era of the saddle-horse patrol, the prairie trails and visits to the settlers, as well as many anecdotes of barrack life. He shows the disillusionment suffered by the Mounted Police during World War I when they were eager to be a front-line regiment, but on arrival in England their contingent was broken up and the volunteers sent as reinforcements to other units. At the end of the first World War the Winnipeg strike in 1919 "proved to be the biggest single factor" in the decision to expand the force into the organization as it is known today. The author tells of his experiences in the many capacities in which he served from 1920; in charge of the detachment at Herschel Island, Adjutant of the force under Major General MacBrien, and in charge of the Royal Tour of 1939. His comments on the threat of communism, control of the drug traffic and counterintelligence are salty and apt, and his story of Winston Churchill's impromptu speech after his "top secret" landing in Halifax warms the heart with memories of perilous days.

The book is written in autobiographical style, but only, as the author says, "to provide continuity to the narrative and as a vehicle for the production of those characters to whom the story belongs." To those who remember the men and officers of the early days the anecdotes and episodes used to present these individuals will bring back nostalgic memories, recalled by the mention of such names as Constantine, Pennefather, Perry, Starnes, La Nauze, and Caulkin. These names belong to the history of Saskatchewan as well as to that of the R.C.M.P. The author's style is pleasant and easy and he tells the story as it happened. It is to be regretted that this volume has not a complete index as its authentic details make it valuable for references purposes.

In conclusion, it may be of interest to people of Saskatchewan to know that Vernon Kemp was encouraged and prodded to write this book by Merrill Denison and his wife, Muriel, who was author of the "Susannah of the Mounties" series for children. Mrs. Denison was the daughter of Dr. D. J. Goggin who in 1893 was appointed Superintendent of Education for the North-West Territories and

Principal of the first Normal School at Regina. Muriel Goggin spent many happy hours of her childhood at the N.W.M.P. barracks, so it seems fitting that with her encouragement this volume was written.

LUCY RIMMER

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HISTORY OF THE DIOCESE OF QU'APPELLE. *Edited by Jean T. Embury.* Qu'Appelle: Jubilee Committee of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, 1959. Pp. 72, map, illus.\$1.00.

**T**HIS seventy-two page booklet, which was published in 1959 to mark the 75th anniversary of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle, outlines the development of the diocese from its establishment in 1884 to the present.

The volume contains several semi-independent sections, each of which is the work of one or more contributors. The central chapter, a comprehensive "History of the Diocese," serves to link the three earlier sections, which deal with leading ecclesiastical personalities, with the next three sections which describe the founding, the struggles and the achievements of diocesan "Institutions," "Associations," and Missions." In these chapters the accounts of early high hopes, of the setbacks of two world wars, drought and depression, and of recent post-war accomplishment, show Qu'Appelle Diocesan fortunes as a participating current in the rather intermittent stream of prairie development. Chapters on pro-cathedrals, the early histories of parishes celebrating their 75th anniversaries, and "Some Personalities" round out the historical text. There are, as well, two full pages and several part pages of photographs, some of which were taken in the early 1880's, together with a center-leaf map showing the location of some of the early churches and deaneries.

Two structural weaknesses in this *History*,—lack of continuity and considerable repetition,—stem from its plural authorship. This volume's usefulness is limited further by the complete absence of footnoting and the virtual non-existence of a bibliography. A paragraph headed "Church Publications of the Diocese of Qu'Appelle" only partly atones for the latter sin of omission.

While this booklet will interest members of the Anglican communion particularly, it presents a facet of the developing personality of Saskatchewan people and institutions which should attract also the attention of students of the province's history.

SHEILA SCOTT

## Notes and Correspondence

ACTIVITIES of the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society during 1959 included a folk song school held at Shaunavon in the spring; members from Regina, Shaunavon, Eastend and Marchwell toured Cannington Manor in August; and a two-day annual meeting was held at Saskatchewan House in September. Also, the Society organized, under the direction of Mrs. D. Cass-Beggs, a Regina folk song choir which has made a number of public appearances. A further notable achievement of the year was the publication of *Payepot and His People*, a collection of stories about the famous Indian chief, as told by his nephew Abel Watetch to Blodwen Davies. These stories previously were published serially in the *Western Producer*. The booklet is available from the Secretary, Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society, 1630 Cowan Crescent, Regina, for \$1.00.

The annual meeting, the second held by the Society since its establishment in 1957, re-elected Everett Baker of Shaunavon as president. Other officers elected were: vice president, Carl Pearen, Indian Head; secretary, Larry Eley, Regina; treasurer, Mrs. Winnifred Young, Regina. Committee chairmen are: folk song and music, Mrs. Barbara Cass-Beggs, Regina; folk tales, Professor Keith Sutherland, Saskatoon; Indian lore, Mrs. Muriel Clipsham, Regina; history and biography, Mrs. Anne MacMillan, Regina; tours and trails, Everett Baker, Shaunavon; editorial, Allan Turner, Regina; publicity, Mrs. Muriel Clements, Regina.

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The Saskatchewan Natural History Society also is to be congratulated on a new publication which appeared last August, *The Birds of the Saskatchewan River, Carlton to Cumberland*, by C. Stuart Houston and Maurice G. Street. Its 165 pages of "Species Account" is preceded by historical and biographical notes on the observations on bird life of explorers, residents, and study parties from the time of Samuel Hearne to the present, and is accompanied by useful maps of the area. This is the second publication of the Society, *A Guide to Saskatchewan Mammals* by W. H. Beck having appeared in 1958. *The Birds of the Saskatchewan River* is available for \$1.50, and the booklet on mammals for 50c, from the Saskatchewan Natural History Society, Saskatchewan Museum of Natural History, Regina.

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Hon. W. S. Lloyd, Minister of Education, and John H. Archer, Legislative Librarian and Provincial Archivist, will be Saskatchewan's representatives on the national committee to plan the celebration of the 1967 centennial of Confederation. Prime Minister Diefenbaker's proposal in October for the establishment of such a committee marked the initial step in preparation for Canada's one-hundredth birthday celebration.

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Miss Mary E. Donaldson, Provincial Librarian, had commented as follows on the article "Pioneer Reading" in the Autumn issue:



Mrs. Tullock wrote an interesting and very readable article on pioneer reading for the last issue of *Saskatchewan History*.

With the great detail which there must have been from the questionnaires, I was surprised that there was no mention of the books for recreational reading which were provided by the provincial government through travelling library boxes. This service was started in 1915 for the residents of isolated areas and small communities. Even today, many people in the province still depend on it despite the services available from the Public Information Library Division (formerly open shelf) and the great variety of books that would be in the community if it was part of a regional library.

We would appreciate, from your readers or others, comments on the books, the borrowers and the service prior to 1925. We would be very interested, too, in having comments on local libraries and other book resources in the province prior to that date.

Referring to the same article, Mr. W. C. Gibbard, now of Calgary, explains that the Grenfell Mechanics and Literary Institute, after its revival in 1907, continued its interest in a library, with a room supplied by the publisher of the *Grenfell Sun* and a musical concert presented to raise money. His father, the school principal, was librarian, and Mr. Gibbard himself, as a school boy, assisted in the circulation of books. Also, another reader has brought to our attention that the names and authors of two books mentioned were transposed; on page 98, Ian McLaren should be listed as author of *The Bonny Briar Bush*, and Crocket, *The Stickit Minister*.

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Readers will be interested to learn that Mrs. Graham Spry (Irene M. Spry), who described her search for Palliser's papers in the spring issue of *Saskatchewan History*, 1959, has also published an article on his travels. "Captain John Palliser and the exploration of Western Canada" appeared in *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. CXXV Part 2, June, 1959.

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Another recent publication will recall to some readers a much earlier article in *Saskatchewan History*. In the Spring, 1953 issue (Vol. VI, No. 2), Donald Greene in an article entitled "With Sinclair Lewis in Darkest Saskatchewan," gave the background of the trip which Sinclair Lewis and his brother made to northern Saskatchewan in 1924. It was this trip which formed the basis for Lewis's novel, *Mantrap*, which appeared two years later. The University of Minnesota Press now has published a portion of the journal kept by Sinclair Lewis' brother on the trip; *Treaty Trip, An abridgment of Dr. Claude Lewis's journal of an expedition made by himself and his brother, Sinclair Lewis, to northern Saskatchewan and Manitoba in 1924*, edited with an introduction by Donald Greene and George Knox. Dr. Lewis's journal started as a series of letters to his wife, and as a result is written in an informal and conversational style. Differences in temperament and outlook between the two brothers are revealed in their respective writings, and the recently published journal of Dr. Claude Lewis provides an interesting contrast to Sinclair Lewis's earlier account of the same experiences.

David R. Sarsfield, 2936 Rae Street, Regina, who has previously been mentioned in "Notes and Correspondence" as seeking knowledge of Canadian trading tokens, reports on items he has from different parts of the province. At both Moosomin and Alameda he found tokens "Good for 1 loaf of bread," one issued about 1910, and he also has tokens for amounts varying up to \$1.00 which were good for merchandise at general stores. One token which Mr. Sarsfield cannot date or identify was issued by Robt. Fea, Rokeby, Sask., and is, it states, "Good for 5c." If any reader can supply Mr. Sarsfield with information on the kind of store Mr. Fea had, and when it was in operation, it will help to clear up the mystery of this item.

Mr. Sarsfield will be glad to hear from anyone with trading tokens or information respecting them. He is interested as well in old Canadian coins and paper money or trading certificates.

The Saskatchewan Archives Board is pleased to announce the appointment of a new editorial advisory board for *Saskatchewan History*. The members of the advisory board will assist the editor by reporting material which might be suitable for publication and generally promote the welfare of the magazine.

The appointment of new advisory board members became effective the beginning of 1960, and the structure of *Saskatchewan History* management therefore is:

- Editor: Dr. Evelyn Eager, Assistant Provincial Archivist.  
 Business Manager: Mr. Douglas Bocking, Archival Assistant.  
 Ex officio member  
 of advisory board: Mr. John H. Archer, Legislative Librarian and Provincial Archivist.  
 Advisory board  
 members: Mr. Everett Baker, retired district representative for the Wheat Pool at Shaunavon, and president of the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society.  
 Mr. A. J. Friesen, Principal, Riverside Collegiate Institute, Prince Albert.  
 Professor Rupert Ramsay, Director of Extension Services, University of Saskatchewan.

### *Contributors*

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GEORGE F. G. STANLEY is Professor and Head of the Department of History, Royal Military College, Kingston, Ont.

CARLYLE KING is Professor and Head of the Department of English, University of Saskatchewan.

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SHEILA SCOTT is a member of the staff of the Economic Advisory and Planning Board of the Government of Saskatchewan.

### THE COVER

The cover design by Mary Lou Florian is of Indian petroglyphs, or rock carvings, on the large rock near Roche Percee in southeastern Saskatchewan, from which the town was named.

Because of its characteristic shape, with a large hole eroded through it, the rock became a well-known landmark from the time of the earliest explorers, and was called "La Roche Percee," or more commonly, the Pierced Rock. The Indians regarded the rock with superstitious awe and periodically left offerings to it during their spring and autumn treks through the area. On the walls and around the arches are hundreds of Indian carvings.

The origin of the carvings remains a mystery. They attracted widespread attention from early explorers and scientists, but with no knowledge available as to who was responsible for them. The Assiniboines occupied the area at least 150 years ago, and because of the gradual erosion of the rock it is considered very unlikely that the carvings could be older than that. The Assiniboines however disclaim any knowledge of them, and are convinced that they are not the work of their ancestors. Thus the mystery remains unsolved, with the carvings in the meantime continuing to erode.

