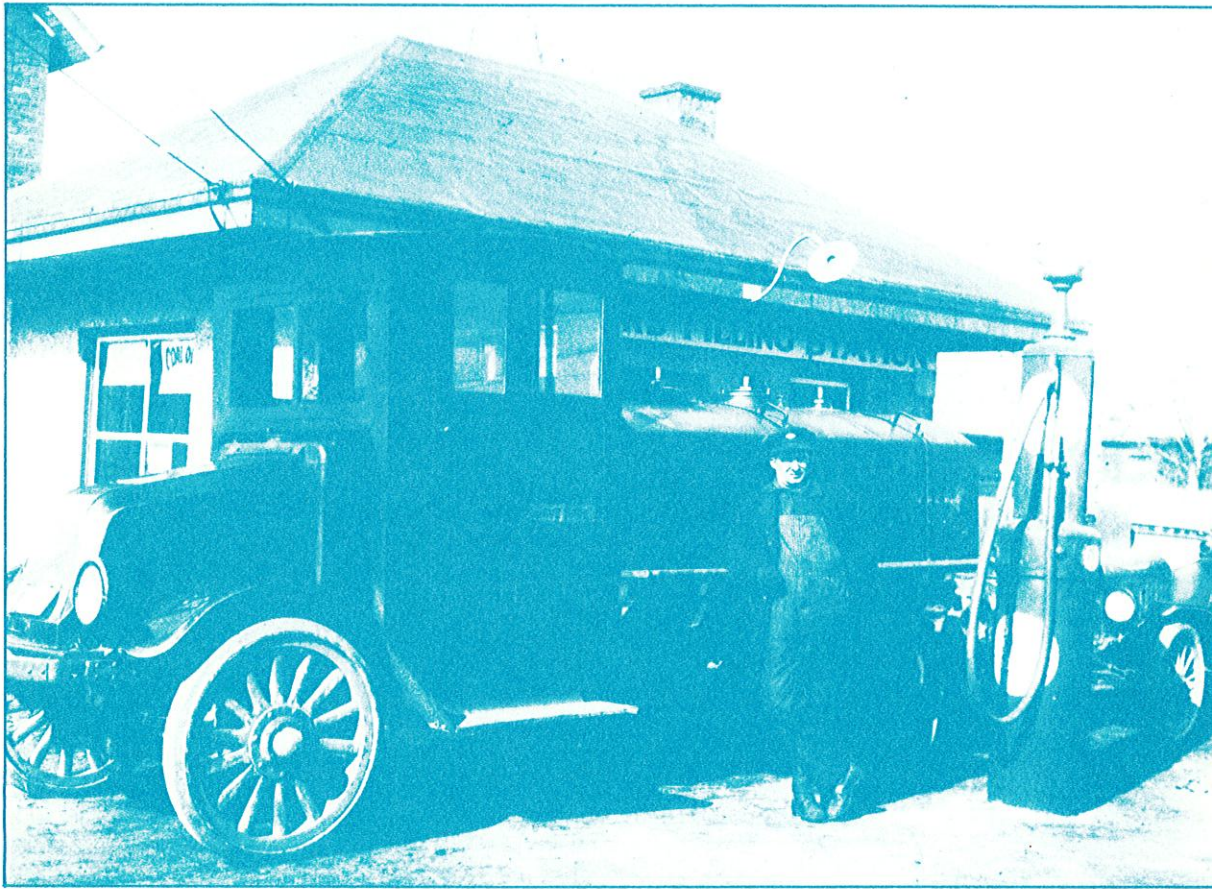


# Saskatchewan History

Volume XXXVII No. 1  
Winter 1984  
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**“I Can See a Car in That Crop”:** Motorization in Saskatchewan, 1906-1934.

**Kelsey’s Journal of 1691 Reconsidered.**

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*University of Alberta Archives*

## **Lewis Herbert Thomas, 1917-1983**

It is with regret that we have to note the death of one who contributed so much to the early development of this magazine and of the Saskatchewan Archives. Dr. Thomas was Provincial Archivist from 1948 to 1957 and was editor of *Saskatchewan History* from 1949 to 1958.

Born in Saskatoon on April 13, 1917 he lived for a time in Nova Scotia, but after the death of his parents returned to Saskatoon to live with an aunt. He was educated in Saskatoon graduating from the University of Saskatchewan with a B.A.

with high honors in history and economics in 1939 and an M.A. in history in 1941. He completed his Ph.D. in 1953 at the University of Minnesota. His doctoral thesis, *The Struggle for Responsible Government in the North-West Territories 1870-1897*, was published in 1956 and re-printed in 1978.

Dr. Thomas was appointed Research Assistant in the Department of History, University of Saskatchewan, in 1944. With the passage of the Archives Act in 1945, he was appointed Executive Assistant to the Provincial Archivist, Dr. G. W. Simpson. In 1948 on Dr. Simpson's resignation, he became Provincial Archivist, a position he filled with distinction until he resigned in 1957 to accept an appointment as a professor of history at Regina College, later the University of Saskatchewan Regina Campus. In 1964 he moved to Edmonton to accept an appointment in history with the University of Alberta. There he served as Chairman of the History Department from 1965 to 1968. He also served as Alberta's representative on the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and as a member of the Historical Society of Alberta.

Dr. Thomas, who had been in poor health for some time, retired in 1982 and returned to Saskatchewan to live in Regina where he died on November 22, 1983. He is survived by his wife Margaret, son Robert and daughter Jean.

During his service with the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Dr. Thomas was closely involved from its founding with the production of *Saskatchewan History*. He served on the editorial committee and then in the Autumn of 1949 he became Acting Editor in Chief. He was appointed Editor in 1951, a post that he retained until the Winter edition of 1958.

Author of a number of books and many articles, Dr. Thomas's considerable contributions to the teaching and writing of western history are well known. He received many honors during his career. He was guest of honor at a dinner marking the 35th anniversary of the Saskatchewan Archives Board that was held on June 3, 1979. A book, *The Developing West: Essays on Canadian History in Honor of Lewis H. Thomas*, which is reviewed elsewhere in this issue, was published last year. The book, containing articles by colleagues and former students, is a testament of his contributions to history. Among other honors received by Dr. Thomas was an honorary degree from the University of Regina in 1972, and honorary life membership in the Canadian Historical Association in 1979 and in the Association of Canadian Archivists in 1982. Shortly before his death, he attended ceremonies in Ottawa where he was made a member of the Order of Canada.

The contributions Dr. Thomas made to the preservation of historical records and to the scholarly study and writing of Western Canadian history will be a lasting memorial to his life and work.

# “I CAN SEE A CAR IN THAT CROP”: MOTORIZATION IN SASKATCHEWAN 1906-1934\*

*G. T. Bloomfield*

In 1911 a Winnipeg writer described the automobile in a spirit of adventure when it was possible to “. . . drive royally, with trumpet notes heralding our glorious dust to liberty and the wide world.”<sup>1</sup> The motor vehicle was already an accepted part of cities: “If it were to disappear from the streets now we should miss those noiseless wheels, and the throbbing of its engine and the tooting of the horn. It has given a new thrill to life, . . . it has quickened the pace and the pulse.”<sup>2</sup> Two decades later the report from a presidential commission examining contemporary changes in American life commented on the automobile: “It is probable that no innovation of such far reaching importance had ever before been disseminated with such rapidity. Its influences ramified throughout the whole of the culture, and the very modes of thought and language have undergone transformation in consequence.”<sup>3</sup>

While the historical significance of the motor vehicle has been clearly recognized internationally and nationally there are as yet comparatively few studies of the evolution and impact of the automobile in Canada especially at the provincial and local levels.<sup>4</sup> Saskatchewan was one of the leading provinces in the early large-scale adoption of motor vehicles and developed high levels of ownership especially in rural areas.<sup>5</sup> This paper outlines and explores some of the features of the first phase of motorization in Saskatchewan, when all the elements of ownership and the service infrastructure were established. Development in this period created the foundations for a second phase of mass motorization which began after World War II.

Official recognition of the automobile in Saskatchewan began in 1906 with the first registration of motor vehicles under the new provincial legislation.<sup>6</sup> As in many other parts of Canada the responsibility for maintaining a register of motor vehicle owners, drivers and chauffeurs was given to the Provincial Secretary's Department. This new function was added to the existing duties of issuing licences for marriages, auctioneers, pedlars, company incorporations, theatres, moving picture exhibitors and dance halls. The issue of annual motor licences grew quickly and within a decade was the largest single function of the Department. By 1919 receipts from motor registrations provided 60 percent of the revenue of the organization. As the numbers of motor vehicles expanded other government agencies took on responsibility for administering parts of the growing body of legislative control and rapidly increasing expenditure on this new mode of personal transportation.<sup>7</sup>

Table 1

Saskatchewan: Number of Motor Vehicles  
Registered 1906-1934

Year <sup>a</sup>	Total	Passenger cars	Trucks	Livery <sup>b</sup>	Motor cycles <sup>c</sup>
1906	22				
1907	55				
1908	74				
1909	147				
1910	531				
1911	1,304				
1912	2,268				
1913	4,659				
1914	8,027				
1915	10,225				
1916	15,680				
1917	33,505				
1918	55,010				
1919	56,402				
1920	60,325				424
1921	60,845				339
1922	60,352				296
1923	64,242	60,931	2,086	1,225	207
1924	69,708	64,666	3,780	1,262	187
1925	77,812	71,205	5,560	1,047	184
1926	95,806	86,105	8,688	1,013	161
1927	104,909	92,640	11,346 <sup>d</sup>	923	179
1928	119,682	102,812	16,002 <sup>d</sup>	868	174
1929	128,099	108,630	18,671	798	218
1930	126,918	108,161	18,106	651	275
1931	107,565	91,276	15,829	570	306
1932	91,079	75,277	15,318	484	272
1933	84,634	69,540	14,884	210	347
1934	91,434	74,050	17,050	331	358

Notes:

a Calendar Years from 1919. Fiscal years, ending March 31, previously.

b Includes mostly taxis but also cars for hire.

c Not included in the total

d 'Public vehicles' (buses) and Public Freight (licensed carriers) included from 1928.

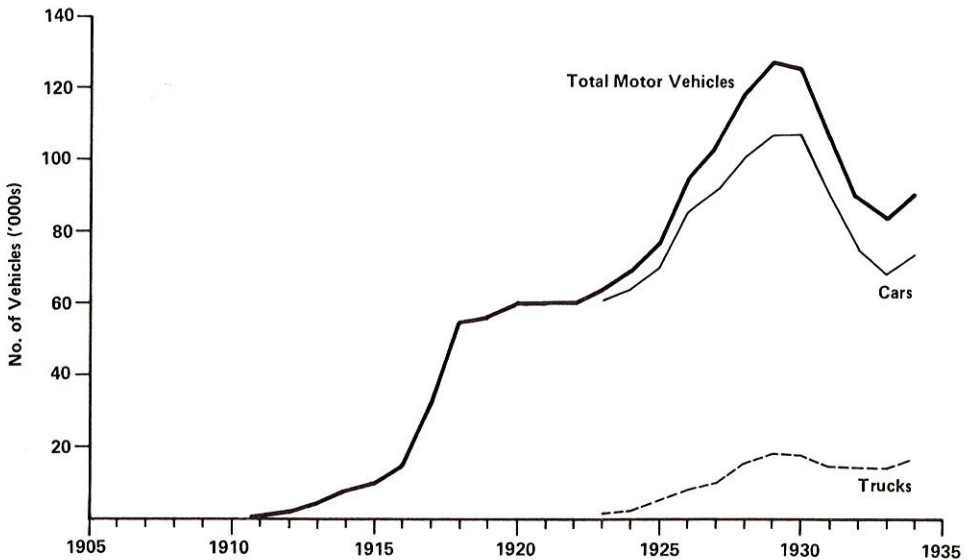
Sources:

Compiled from Annual Reports of Provincial Secretary's and Highways Departments; cross-checked with later Dominion Bureau of Statistics retrospective totals of 1937.

Numbers of motor vehicles grew slowly in the first four years of licensing (Table 1). Vehicles were not wholly reliable, especially in places distant from service garages, initial purchase costs were high and most residents of the province had higher priorities at that stage of settlement. From 1910 annual registrations began to increase more rapidly. *Gas Power Age* regarded 1911 as the critical year of 'take-off' for automobile sales in Western Canada: "The farming community are now realizing what a great advantage and pleasure the motor vehicle affords and every new convert is another wheel to the expansion of the automobile industry."<sup>8</sup> Between 1913 and 1918 the number of vehicles grew ten-fold. While a time of international crisis, the period during World War I was one of extraordinarily rapid transformation in motor vehicle ownership and usage. Another phase of rapid growth began in 1923; total numbers were doubled by 1929 and trucks increased at a very substantial rate. Motorcycles throughout the period were of very limited significance. The effect of the depression was shown in the rapid decline of numbers of vehicles registered (Figure 1). The 1929 total was not surpassed until 1941, and for passenger cars, the 1929 figure was not exceeded until 1948.

How and why did vehicle numbers rise so quickly? Not everyone subscribed to the idea that: "the heir to the throne of success is the man who owns and uses a good automobile."<sup>9</sup> But large numbers of households already owned some form of personal transportation or aspired to such status. Extensive promotion by merchants, garages, implement dealers, magazines, trade exhibitions and automobile clubs had prepared the way for ready acceptance of vehicles. Schools for gasoline engine owners and mechanics run by the large gas tractor companies and even local groups such as the Moose Jaw Automobile School provided instruction in

Figure 1 SASKATCHEWAN: GROWTH OF MOTOR VEHICLE REGISTRATIONS



Source: Table 1

driving and maintenance and began to develop an increasing body of trained personnel.<sup>10</sup> As the automobile market expanded and mass production and marketing of standardized vehicles got underway prices began to fall. A Ford Model T touring car, for example, which retailed at \$1,025 in Moose Jaw in 1911 was reduced to \$800 in 1913, cost only \$590 in 1915 and sold for \$545 two years later.<sup>11</sup> If public interest had been aroused by promotion and by reliable and cheaper vehicles, the remaining ingredient for large-scale purchase was income. While the precise relationships between farm production, revenue and profitability are still being explored, people at the time tended to perceive their potential income in terms of good harvests.<sup>12</sup> The wheat prospects in the Spring of 1915 which led Mr. McNaughton, a Milden minister, to forecast: "I can see a car in that crop" were reflected in a substantial increase in automobile registrations.<sup>13</sup> The complex linkages between wheat prices, farm incomes and the cycles of automobile buying began during this period. Once the process had begun the demonstration effect of motor vehicle ownership was a strong influence in the next cycle of boom.

On a comparative basis, Saskatchewan's level of motor vehicle ownership always had a high ranking among the Canadian provinces. In absolute numbers of vehicles Saskatchewan had the second highest number registered (after Ontario) from 1915 to 1923 when the province was overtaken by Quebec. When measured as a ratio (motor vehicles per thousand population), Saskatchewan always ranked well above the Canadian average until the province was devastated by the depression. The following statistics illustrate the ranking:

**Ratio of motor vehicles per 1,000 population<sup>14</sup>**

	Canada	Saskatchewan	Rank
1914	8.9	16.3	3
1924	73.3	92.3	2
1929	114.4	139.3	2
1933	108.3	92.1	5

For the earliest period of introduction of the automobile it is possible to show the location of vehicles and owners.<sup>15</sup> The geographical patterns shown in Figure 2 illustrate the rapid growth and diffusion of the automobile between 1907 and 1911. The 75 motor vehicles registered in 1907 were located in 18 places. Regina and Moose Jaw, with 19 and 12 vehicles respectively were the largest centres, followed by Indian Head, Rosthern and Saskatoon with eight vehicles each. By 1911 there were 821 vehicles in 136 places. Regina, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon were the largest centres (Table 2). In the smaller centres there were considerable and unexpected variations in numbers of vehicles in relation to the town's population size. Maple Creek and Rouleau, both places with a population of less than 1,000 at the 1911 census, had 24 vehicles registered, thus giving very high ratios of vehicles to population. Prince Albert, North Battleford, Estevan and Melville had, in contrast, low numbers of automobiles in relation to their population. Such variations were not unusual at the time and reflected differences in local economic and urban development.

Details of the location of vehicles were not published after 1911 so that it is impossible to identify geographical patterns with any precision. Summary details for eight major cities were published annually from 1923 and these are presented in Table 2.<sup>16</sup> One trend evident from the statistics is the declining dominance of the larger centres. Their proportion of all provincial registrations dropped from 58.7 percent in 1907, to 46.2 percent in 1911 and to 16.8 percent in 1924. Although



Figure 2 LOCATION OF REGISTERED MOTOR VEHICLES

1907



1911

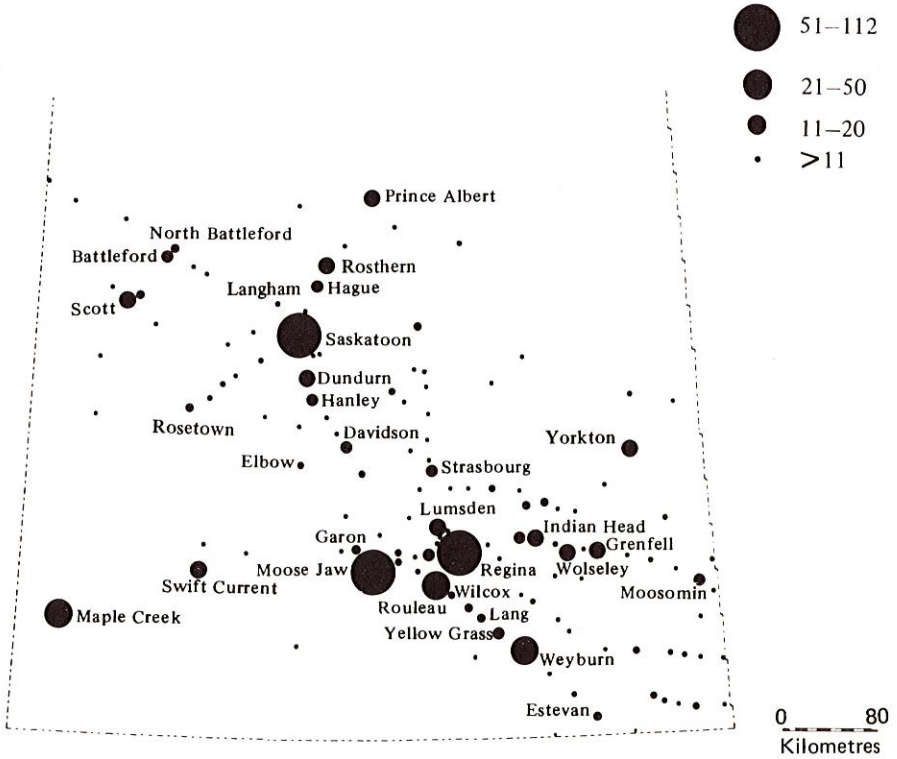


Table 2  
Location of Motor Vehicles for  
Selected Years

	1907 Total Vehicles	1911 Total Vehicles	1924			1929			1934		
			Total	Cars	CVs <sup>a</sup>	Total	Cars	CVs <sup>a</sup>	Total	Cars	CVs <sup>a</sup>
Regina	19	112	4,149	3,758	391	8,299	7,067	1,232	6,317	5,443	874
Saskatoon	8	84	3,178	2,940	238	6,499	5,649	850	4,569	3,944	625
Moose Jaw	12	91	1,980	1,772	208	3,094	2,684	410	1,885	1,622	263
Prince Albert	2	18	1,757	697	60	1,379	1,193	186	1,263	1,105	158
North Battleford	-	5	516	492	24	960	842	118	764	687	77
Swift Current	3	20	602	550	52	1,103	892	211	645	567	78
Yorkton	-	15	-	6	-	827	734	93	682	593	89
Weyburn	-	34	576	542	34	926	775	151	563	501	62
Sub-Total of cities	44	380	11,758	10,751	1,007	23,087	19,836	3,251	16,688	14,462	2,226
Remainder of Province <sup>c</sup>	31	441	57,950	55,177	2,773	105,121	89,701	15,420	74,415	59,588	14,827
TOTAL	75	821	69,708	65,928	3,780	128,208	109,537	18,671	91,103	74,050	17,053

Notes: a Commercial vehicles (trucks). Motor cycles and dealers' vehicles are excluded.

b Not available

c Includes all other towns and villages as well as the rural areas.

Sources: 1907-11 Provincial Secretary's Department, Annual Report; 1924 Department of Railways and Canals, Highways Branch Circular No. 6 (1925); 1929 and 1934 Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Preliminary Report on Motor Vehicle Registrations (Catalogue No. 53-204).

numbers of vehicles increased in the cities, the greatest growth took place in the smaller towns, villages and rural areas. For 1926 it is possible to estimate the proportion classified as 'remainder of the province' in the table.<sup>17</sup> In that year vehicles on farms were enumerated at 55,444 or 57.9 percent of the total vehicles registered. The seven cities listed in Table 2 accounted for 14,949 vehicles or 15.6 percent of the total. The small towns, villages and hamlets represented the remaining 26.5 percent. Saskatchewan in 1926, and later, had a high proportion of its total vehicles registered to farmers. In 1931 when a national comparison became possible, 45.8 percent of Saskatchewan's farms had an automobile, the second highest proportion in the country after Ontario where 60.3 percent of farms had automobiles.

Knowledge of the owners, their usage of motor vehicles and the effects of their usage on economic and social life is at best very sketchy. Indeed there is a great need for detailed local history research on this facet of the motor vehicle. Automobiles were initially adopted by two types of individuals — the comparatively wealthy and socially prominent people who enjoyed the recreational and sporting potential of the conspicuous new innovation; and the mechanical enthusiasts who were keen on the possibilities of the new machine. Walter E. Seaborn a barrister in Moose Jaw, who licensed vehicle #2 in 1906, perhaps represented the first type; William Duff, of Regina who registered a self-made vehicle in 1907 (#28) represents the second type of early enthusiast. Given the comparatively late beginning of registration of automobiles in Saskatchewan, there were other early adopters who were already well aware of the potential of the motor vehicle in other parts of the continent.<sup>18</sup> Doctors were among the earliest professional men to buy automobiles, and by 1911 there were at least 26 such owners, not only in Regina and the larger centres but also in the smaller places. Weyburn, for example, had three vehicles licensed to M.D.s at this time. Later adopters were more cost-conscious than the first wave of enthusiasts. Motoring magazines published articles and notes on the operating costs of vehicles. One survey made by a Winnipeg hardware firm showed a 27 percent saving in delivery costs by using a two-ton truck in place of three wagons.<sup>19</sup> The productivity of a reliable motor vehicle could be very substantial in delivery work.

Business firms were major users of motor vehicles. Possibly half the registered owners in 1911 were engaged in business, with the vehicle serving some economic role during the week and providing for recreation at the weekend. Land and realty companies used motor vehicles to take prospective buyers to view the properties.<sup>20</sup> The Luse Land and Development Company, a St. Paul, Minnesota firm with a local base at Scott, had 12 Reo cars in 1911, the largest fleet of automobiles in the province. Implement dealers were also significant users. International Harvester used its own make of Auto-Buggy at its Regina and Saskatoon branches. The J.I. Case Threshing Machine Co., Tudhope, Anderson & Co. and the American-Abel Engine and Thresher Co. all owned motor vehicles in 1911. The implement firms were probably among the earliest businesses to equip their field representatives with automobiles. Indeed the role of the farm implement manufacturers in promoting a motor-power era should not be overlooked. Many of the companies were producing gasoline-engined tractor/traction engines, several were manufacturers or agents for automobiles and most organized winter training sessions for operators.<sup>21</sup> Trade exhibitions usually included displays of motor vehicles, a feature which prepared the way for widespread farm adoption of automobiles.<sup>22</sup>

After 1911, the motor vehicle was substituted for many of the horsedrawn



Saskatchewan Archives Board SBI/54.

THE CATTLE IN THE  
MOUNTAIN RANGE

vehicles used in urban areas; for coal and general freight delivery, for municipal purposes such as fire and police departments. As the urban middle class adopted motor vehicles, weekend pleasure driving created new patterns of life and business. In rural areas the automobile was widely accepted as a replacement for the horse-drawn buggy, but rather more slowly for the wagon. Haulage from farm to railhead by truck did not occur in a significant way until the late 1920s, when more powerful trucks and tractors became available, thus allowing the horse team to be replaced.<sup>23</sup>

Motor vehicle regulation by the province was liberal. The early speed limits of 10 miles per hour within cities and 20 mph outside, which were specified in the 1906 Act, were modified in 1912 to a speed "reasonable and proper in the circumstances."<sup>24</sup> Outsiders commented favourably on the administration of justice in Saskatchewan motoring cases, which, unlike those in Winnipeg, were apparently free from discrimination and unwarranted persecution.<sup>25</sup> License fees were \$10.00 on initial registration and \$3.00 for annual renewal until 1915 when the annual fee was raised to \$15.00. Legislators placed few barriers to motor vehicle ownership and usage until the late 1920s when gasoline taxes were imposed to help in paying for the cost of new road improvements. Problems brought by competition of motor vehicles to railways and urban street railways resulted in the Public Vehicles Act 1928 which allowed the government to regulate trucks and buses through the issue of licenses for specific routes and types of vehicles.<sup>26</sup>

Motor clubs were very important in the promotion of early use and adoption through the organization of displays, races, road tests, and summer motorcades for poor children's picnics. Clubs were also active in demanding fair legislation for motorists and promoted the Good Roads Movement.<sup>27</sup> Regina organized a motor

Table 4

The automotive sector in Saskatchewan's retailing structure 1930

	No. of stores	Percent of total stores	Value of sales \$ million	Percent of total sales
Motor vehicle dealers	421	3.9	18.7	9.9
Filling stations	391	3.6	4.0	2.1
Garages	534	4.9	3.9	2.1
Other establishments	<u>36</u>	<u>0.3</u>	<u>0.4</u>	<u>0.3</u>
Total automotive sector	1,382	12.7	27.0	14.4

Source: Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of Merchandising and Service Establishments, vol. X, Census of Canada 1931.

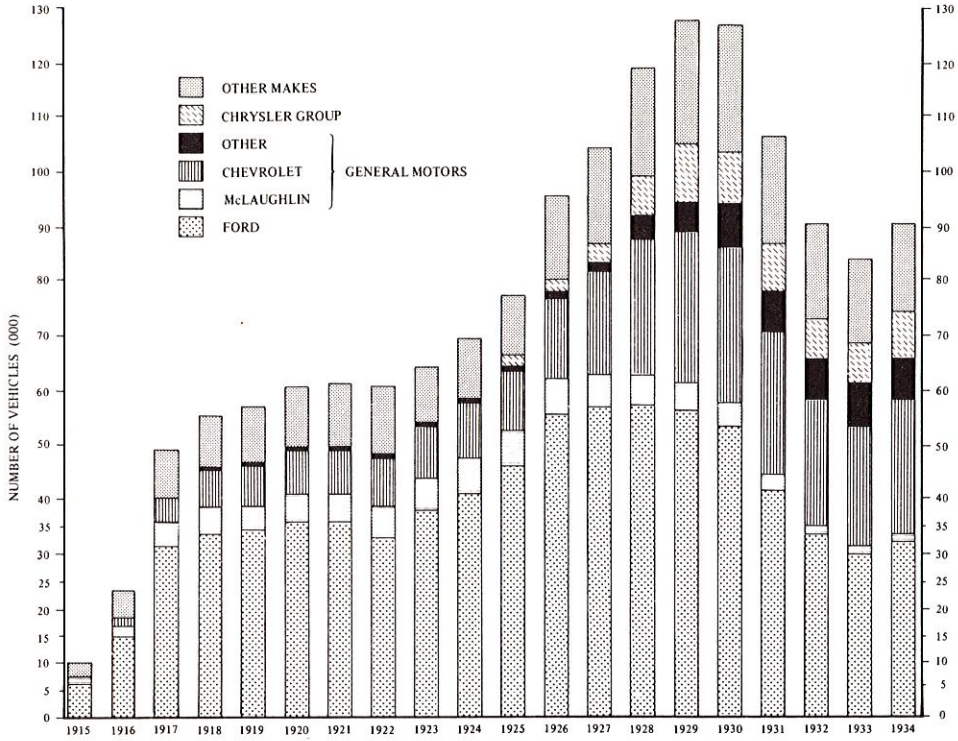


Figure 3 SASKATCHEWAN: MAJOR MAKES OF MOTOR VEHICLES 1915-1934

club in 1910, Moose Jaw and Saskatoon formed clubs in the following year and Prince Albert in 1912. By 1913 the Saskatoon club was developing a club house with tennis courts and golf links for its members.<sup>28</sup> A provincial league was formed in 1914 and reorganized in 1917.<sup>29</sup> The major emphasis of the provincial group was a campaign for good roads, including the promotion of an interprovincial highway from Winnipeg to Calgary. Local interests which were determined to see taxes devoted to local improvements tended to weaken the role of the provincial body.<sup>30</sup> Motor clubs marked highways and in the 1920s issued route maps, initiated accommodation guides and plans for auto camps, details which were essential components for longer distance motorized tourism.

Generalizations about motor usage in this period are limited by the paucity of research and surviving materials. The period of initial largescale adoption up to 1914 is more readily covered than later when the motor vehicle became so commonplace.<sup>31</sup> Business users found new productivity from adoption of automobiles. Isolation of farms were reduced through greater accessibility by farmers, directly through their own vehicles and indirectly through improvements in rural mail delivery.<sup>32</sup> Cottage resorts were developed on a larger scale by city dwellers. Cities had to contend with increased expenditure on road and bridge construction and for pressing demands for parking.<sup>33</sup> While obviously numerous and important, motor vehicles by 1930 were not yet indispensable as shown by the sharp decline in registration with the onset of the depression.

Many questions remain to be answered. What were the real changes in accessibility due to the automobile? What effects did motor vehicles have on the commerce of small rural service centres?<sup>34</sup> When did antifreeze come into use?<sup>35</sup> How was rural medical practice changed by the automobile?<sup>36</sup> Profound changes did take place in the 1920s but the details are now obscure.

The annual summaries of motor vehicle registrations from 1915 to 1934 are unusual in specifying all the makes of vehicle in operation. These lists are a kaleidoscope of the successes and failures of North American motor vehicle manufacturers in a critical period of mass production and mass marketing. The existence of many small obscure makes in Saskatchewan is a tribute to the energy and persistence of manufacturers and dealers in selling vehicles in a distant market.

The details exhibited in Figure 3 and Table 4 confirm the important role of Ford in putting the continent on wheels. Although the details are incomplete, the records for 1911 show that Ford was already the largest make in Saskatchewan and the company retained first position throughout the period. Ford cars were ubiquitous, "... to be seen at every bend in the prairie trail and rows of them, from twelve to twenty, lined up on the single street of a town of a few hundred people. ..."<sup>37</sup> The Model T Ford became part of rural and family folklore in all parts of Canada as well as the United States.<sup>38</sup> McLaughlin and later Chevrolet, both part of the General Motors empire, were the only other major challengers to the hegemony of Ford. By 1933 all the General Motors makes together were slightly ahead of the total numbers of Fords.

Among the large number of 'other makes' noted in Table 3, were a few representative vehicles from Canadian manufacturers.<sup>39</sup> In 1915 there were five makes from Ontario — Tudhope 25 registered, Galt 8, Clinton 2 and Chatham 1 as well as three McKay cars from Nova Scotia. Only the Gray-Dort, a car made in Chatham, ranked in the ten leading makes in any one period. Saskatchewan by 1920 was one of the principal markets for Gray-Dort which ceased production in 1923.<sup>40</sup>

The ranking of leading makes in Saskatchewan differed from the United States rankings, a reflection of regional variations in consumer preferences and the availability of some makes. Several U.S. makes, assembled in Canada, achieved greater prominence in Saskatchewan than across the border. The Briscoe, made in Brockville 1915-21, made tenth place in 1920 and 1924. Durant cars, assembled in Leaside, Toronto were very well represented in Saskatchewan. There were several new entrants in the 1920s — Chrysler formed in 1932 which took over Maxwell and later Dodge; Hudson, Nash and the General Motors subsidiary Pontiac, renamed from the Oakland. The Depression had a big effect on the numbers of proportions of makes as very old vehicles were finally scrapped and newer vehicles were left unlicensed until the economy improved. Virtually all Saskatchewan's vehicles came from North American sources. There were three British vehicles on the register in 1920, none in 1924, one in 1929 and 21 in 1934 (19 Austins, 1 Leyland and 1 Morris).

Few of the tens of thousands of vehicles in use were actually produced in the province although there were some isolated attempts to make vehicles. The local efforts were of no commercial significance, but the existence of such attempts in a rural region illustrates the very wide interest in the motor vehicle and its manufacture. Apart from the self-made vehicle of William Duff in Regina about

Table 3  
The Ten Largest Makes Registered in Saskatchewan

	1915		1924		1934			
		Percent		Percent		Percent		
1. Ford	6,096	61.7	Ford	41,243	59.3	Ford	32,475	35.8
2. McLaughlin	1,048	10.6	Chevrolet	10,028	14.4	Chevrolet	24,184	26.6
3. Overland	360	5.7	McLaughlin	6,000	8.6	Chrysler <sup>d</sup>	4,951	5.4
4. Maxwell	215	2.2	Overland	3,185	4.6	Pontiac <sup>e</sup>	4,058	4.5
5. Studebaker	194	2.0	Gray Dort	2,397	3.4	Durant <sup>c</sup>	3,592	4.0
6. Chevrolet	185	1.9	Maxwell	1,605	2.3	Overland <sup>b</sup>	3,428	3.8
7. Reo	151	1.5	Dodge	1,227	1.8	Hudson <sup>b</sup>	3,358	3.7
8. Cadillac	124	1.2	Durant <sup>c</sup>	816	1.2	Dodge	2,341	2.6
9. Case	117	1.2	Studebaker	707	1.0	Buick	1,866	2.1
10. Hupmobile	114	1.1	Biscoe	321	0.5	McLaughlin	1,483	1.6
Other makes (94)	1,080	10.9	Other makes (99)	2,067	2.9	Other makes (87)	9,036	9.9
TOTAL	9,884	100.0	TOTAL	69,596	100.0	TOTAL	90,772	100.0

Notes:

- a Includes Willys, Willys-Knight.
- b Includes Essex
- c Includes Star and Rugby.

Source:

Compiled from tables in Annual Report, Provincial Secretary's Department, 1915-16, 1920-21, 1924-25, 1929-30, Annual Report, Highway's Department 1934-35.

The U.S. data is derived from R.L. Polk registration statistics for passenger cars summarized by H.E. Applegate in Journal, Society of Automotive Historians, 77, March-April 1982, p. 4.



Table 3 (Continued)

1920		1929		U.S.		U.S.	
	Percent		Percent		Percent		Percent
Ford	35,680	59.1	56,065	Ford	43.8	34.7	
Chevrolet	8,250	13.7	28,228	Chevrolet	22.0	15.5	
McLaughlin	4,870	8.1	5,738	Durant <sup>c</sup>	4.5	6.5	
Overland	3,004	5.0	5,256	Overland <sup>a</sup>	4.1	5.6	
Maxwell	2,177	3.6	4,965	Dodge	3.9	5.6	
Gray Dort	1,842	3.1	4,741	McLaughlin	3.7	5.1	
Dodge	1,021	1.7	4,649	Chrysler <sup>d</sup>	3.6	3.4	
Studebaker	652	1.1	4,137	Hudson <sup>b</sup>	3.2	3.2	
Saxon	580	1.0	2,878	Pontiac <sup>e</sup>	2.2	3.1	
Briscoe	327	0.5	1,586	Dodge	1.2	2.8	
Other makes (99)	1,922	3.1	9,856	Nash	7.8	14.5	
TOTAL	60,325	100.0	128,099	Other makes (102)	100.0	100.0	

Notes:

- d Includes Plymouth
- e Includes Oakland

1907, the first attempt to produce vehicles for sale was the Canadian Standard Auto and Tractor Co. Ltd. of Moose Jaw. This company was incorporated in October 1912 with an authorized capital of \$250,000 by Walter E. Seaborn (barrister), Joseph E. Battell (merchant) and R. Loney (promoter).<sup>41</sup> Technical guidance came from A. R. Walton, St. Louis, Missouri who had been involved with U.S. automobile manufacturing. Some machinery was apparently installed and a few vehicles were made with imported parts but by December 1913 the company was in process of liquidation. A second attempt in the city was made in 1916-17 when at least five Moose Jaw Standard cars were built from U.S. parts by a local group.<sup>42</sup> The Motor Vehicle Registration table for 1915 showed four Canadian Standard vehicles, three were left in 1921, and the last vehicle disappeared by 1932.

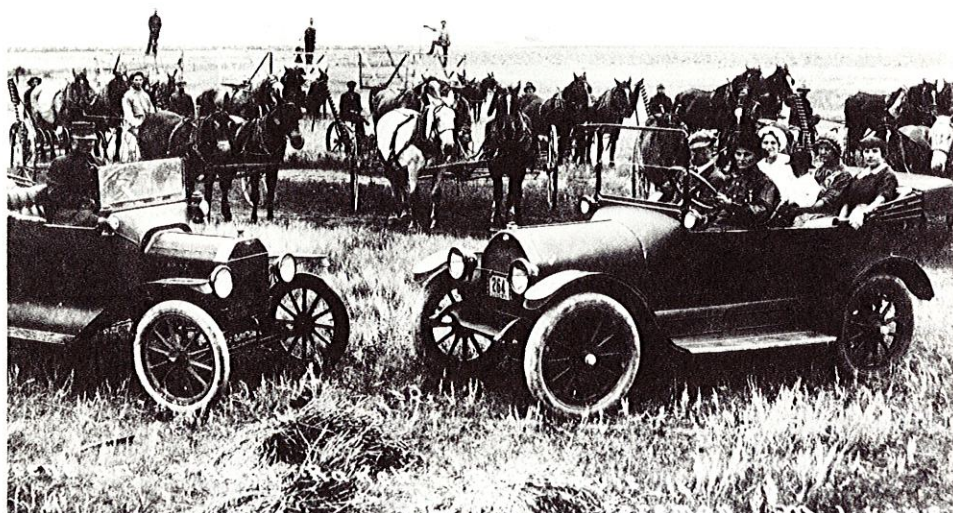
The final attempt to build motor vehicles in Saskatchewan came in 1924 when Derby Motor Cars Ltd. was formed in Winnipeg.<sup>43</sup> A factory in Saskatoon was acquired from Marshall tractors in early 1925 for an anticipated yearly output of 250-300 units.<sup>44</sup> No vehicles were actually produced here, the few Derby cars sold were Davis automobiles made in Richmond, Indiana. Derby badges and labels were added in Saskatoon. Registration records show the rise and decline of this make in the province:

1924 - 2	1930 - 7
1925 - 6	1931 - 14
1926 - 18	1932 - 9
1927 - 21	1933 - 9
1928 - 26	1934 - 9
1929 - 23	

The significance of the large Prairie market in the wheat boom was appreciated by Ford as early as 1916, when an assembly plant in Winnipeg was opened. General Motors moved more cautiously, and as it turned out too late, not announcing its plans to build a western assembly plant until 31 May 1928. The City of Regina, as part of an industrial development programme, sold 38 acres of land on Winnipeg Street to General Motors and granted a fixed ten-year assessment on the plant. The factory with its own test truck was an impressive modern design costing nearly \$1 million. The formal opening of R. S. McLaughlin, Chairman of General Motors of Canada, took place on 11 December.<sup>45</sup> The plant was too late for the market; it was closed in August 1931 and did not reopen until September 1936. Vehicle production lasted another five years before the plant was converted to wartime ordinance work.<sup>46</sup>

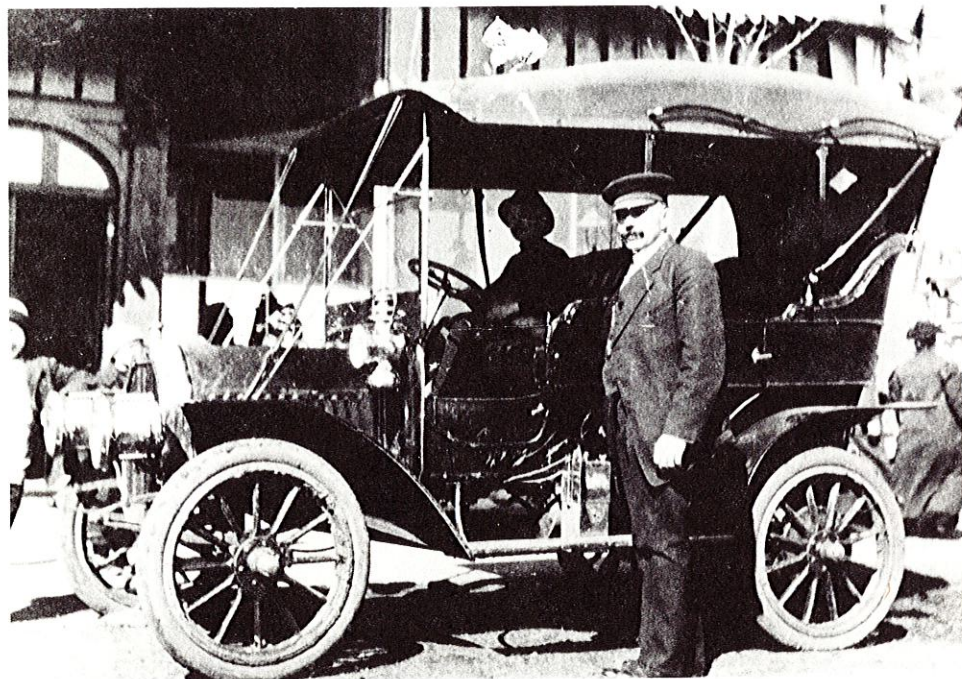
Motor vehicles required a complex service system for sales, maintenance, parts, supplies and fuel. The larger motor vehicle manufacturers established branches in the prairie cities in the same manner as the farm implement companies. Such branches provided display space for new automobiles, repairs, stocks of parts and in the early period storage for owners' vehicles. McLaughlin carriages had opened in Regina (1911) and Saskatoon (1913). Ford opened a branch in Winnipeg in 1910 and one in Saskatoon during 1912. By the following year Ford had 50 subsidiary dealers in the prairies.

Local merchants were also active in developing specialized facilities for the new motor trade. The Garage Ltd., incorporated in 1911 with a capital of \$50,000 and newly built premises on Broad Street, Regina, was typical of the new firms. This firm began with agencies for two Canadian automobiles, the McKay and the Galt.<sup>47</sup> By 1913 Regina had 12 auto dealers and was the principal distribution point in the



*Sask Archives Board RA119.*

Scene on S. Hart Ranch, Boscurvis. Ford car on left, McLaughlin on right, c. 1913.



*Saskatchewan Archives Board SB4608.*

Jacob Janzen's McLaughlin car at Rosthern, 1909. William E. Janzen at the driver's wheel.

province, handling \$1 ½ million of sales in the previous year.<sup>48</sup> The motor vehicle dealership was a new type of business with a sales franchise from a large, frequently multi-national corporation. Companies such as Ford set rigid standards, had inspection procedures and demanded a strong commitment from its agencies. Who were the people who entered this trade? How well did they succeed? Much of the history of this type of retailing and service has yet to be uncovered.<sup>49</sup>

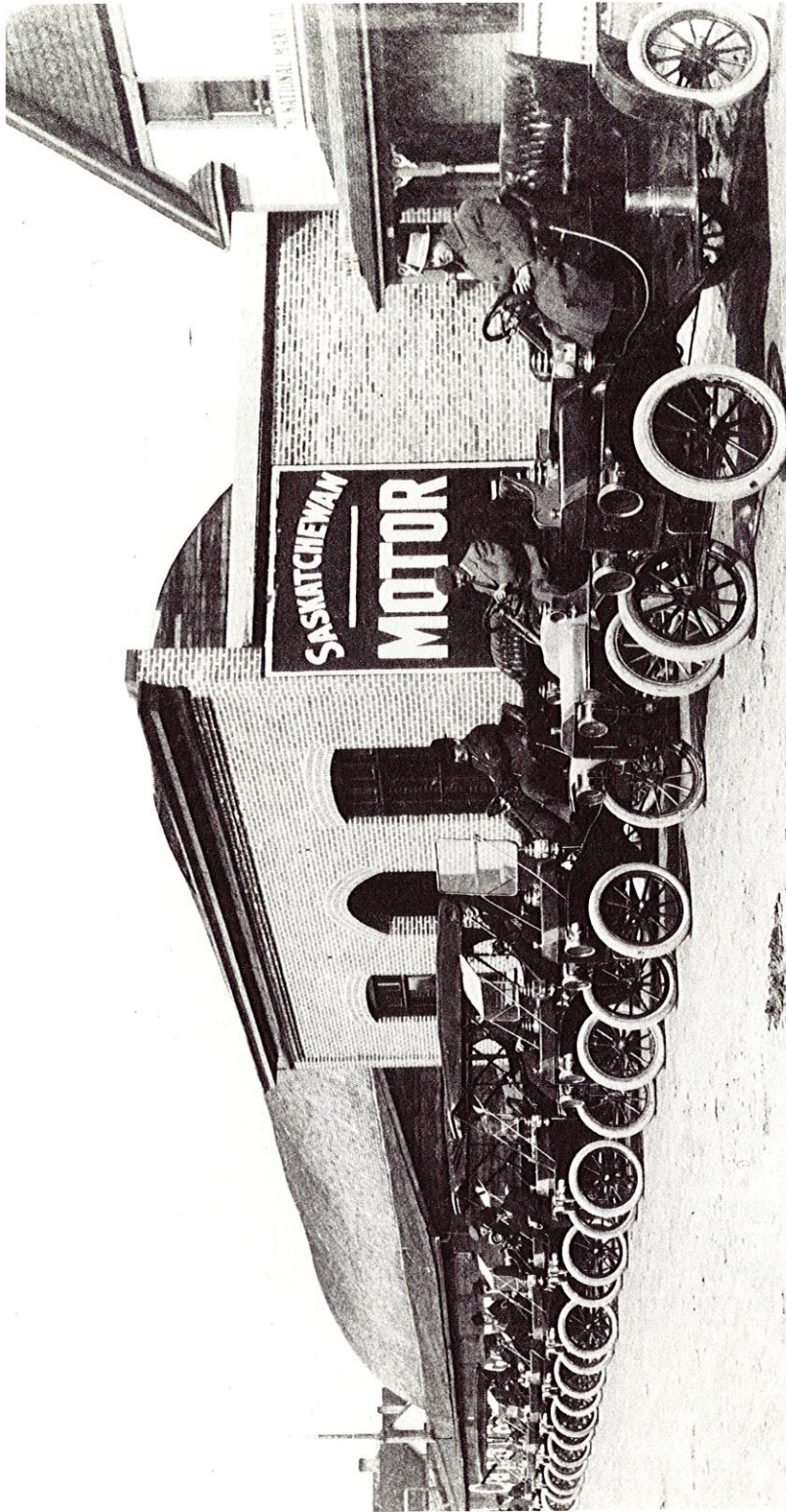
In spite of the claims that Model T Fords could be repaired with fence wire, automobiles required sophisticated maintenance and many specialized parts. Rubber tires were a major item of consumption since they rarely lasted for a high mileage. The Canadian Consolidated Rubber Co. of Berlin, Ontario built a \$40,000 warehouse in Regina in 1914, and the Regina City Council gave a substantial financial bonus to the Western Tire & Rubber Co. to build a plant in the city.<sup>50</sup> In local centres blacksmiths and livery stables added vehicle repairs and gasoline pumps. By the early 1920s the filling station had begun to appear on city streets; a new type of business often with architectural pretensions which are now being recognized.<sup>51</sup> Imperial Oil was the dominant supplier of petroleum fuels and lubricants in Saskatchewan and developed an extensive provincial network of bulk supply depots. The company had 3 depots in 1904, 80 in 1912, 138 in 1917 and numbers continued to rise until 1929 when there were 497 bulk depots in the province. Demand was so strong that Imperial built a refinery on the outskirts of Regina in 1916. Crude oil from Wyoming and later Montana was processed for the regional market. By 1926 Imperial Oil was supplying about 92 percent of the province's taxable gasoline sales.<sup>52</sup>

The commercial significance of the automotive sector was clearly apparent by 1930 when the first Census of Merchandising was taken. This sector was found in all parts of the province and automotive sales represented 14 percent of total retailing (Table 4).

The provision of improved roads by government was a critical point where the private process of motorization impinged on public policy. Early motor travellers did much to publicize the inadequacies of the roads. John Mavor's trip across the prairies from Winnipeg to Edmonton in 1912 and Thomas Wilby's 1912 trans-Canada journey by car described the difficulties in detail.<sup>53</sup> Much detailed research needs to be undertaken on the role of the Good Roads Movement and the responses of the provincial government to the problems of the road system.<sup>54</sup>

In some senses the motor vehicle came into Saskatchewan at the wrong time; the process of land settlement was in full swing within the fixed commitments of a rigid land survey system and with railways the dominant form of interurban and long distance transportation. For most of the first three decades of the century, road transport was competing with other developing modes of transport, which in longer-settled areas of Canada were all ready mature if not partially obsolete. Road building was in competition with the railways for capital funds until 1929.<sup>55</sup>

Responsibility for most roads was placed with municipalities following the Rural Municipality Act 1909.<sup>56</sup> The drafters of this legislation had not foreseen the demands of the automobile on the vast mileage of road allowances of the survey system. Saskatchewan had the greatest mileage of roads in Canada when the first tabulation of roads was made in 1922. With 135,000 miles of road (an unknown proportion being unformed road allowances) Saskatchewan had 35 percent of the nation's roads. Further settlement in the decade increased the length of roads, and by 1934 the province accounted for a further 3 percent of the Canadian total.



*Saskatchewan Archives Board RB167.*

Ford Automobiles, Saskatchewan Motor Company, 1947 Rose Street, Regina, c. 1909.

Table 5  
Saskatchewan: Highways and Rural Roads  
1919-1934

Year	Highways and Rural Roads <sup>a</sup>		Total surfaced 000 miles	Expenditure <sup>b</sup> \$ million			Revenue \$ million		
	Total mileage 000 miles	Total 000 miles		Total	Construction	Maintenance	Provincial	Federal	
1919	..	..	1.3	1.1	0.2	0.7	-		
1920	..	..	1.8	1.5	0.3	0.9	-		
1921	..	..	2.5	2.3	0.2	0.7	-		
1922	135.0	..	2.2	2.0	0.2	0.8	0.2 <sup>c</sup>		
1923	135.0	..	2.0	1.7	0.3	1.1	0.5 <sup>c</sup>		
1924	135.0	..	2.1	1.8	0.3	1.2	0.4 <sup>c</sup>		
1925	152.0	0.1	2.1	1.8	0.3	1.4	0.3 <sup>c</sup>		
1926	152.0	0.1	2.7	2.3	0.4	1.7	0.1 <sup>c</sup>		
1927	152.0	0.1	2.5	2.0	0.5	1.9	0.2 <sup>c</sup>		
1928	152.3	0.4	4.4	3.6	0.8	3.5 <sup>d</sup>	0.1 <sup>c</sup>		
1929	152.3	0.8	6.7	5.9	0.8	3.8	-		
1930	154.6	1.9	10.4	8.4	2.0	3.5	0.5 <sup>e</sup>		
1931	155.6	2.1	8.0	6.9	1.1	2.9	0.8 <sup>e</sup>		
1932	155.6	2.1	0.9	0.3	0.6	2.8	..		
1933	155.7	2.2 <sup>f</sup>	0.9	0.2	0.7	2.8	..		
1934	155.7	2.4 <sup>f</sup>	1.8	1.0	0.8	3.1	-		

Notes: .. Not available or negligible.

a Urban roads were not counted until 1935.

b Expenditures by province and rural municipalities. Includes highways, rural roads, bridges and ferries.

c Federal contribution under Canada Highways Act 1919

d A gasoline tax was first introduced in 1928. Earlier revenue from vehicle, operator and dealer licences.

e Federal contributions under Unemployment Relief Acts.

f Includes 100 miles of paved road - statistics first collected in 1934.

Source: Compiled from: Canadian Tax Foundation, Taxes and Traffic, Canadian Tax Papers No. 8. (Toronto: 1955).

New legislation in 1912 recognized that the costs of road formation were beyond the financial capabilities of newly settled rural municipalities.<sup>57</sup> A three-member Board of Highway Commissioners was established to plan a highway system and assume part of the costs of municipal roads, while the government was empowered to borrow \$5 million for construction and improvement of roads. The Board of Highways Commissioners was replaced by a provincial Department of Highways in 1917, and the road movement received new impetus from the Canada Highway Act 1919 which allocated \$1.8 million (of the \$20 million) to Saskatchewan. By the early 1920s provincial highways, main market roads, colonization roads and local roads were defined and some plans were made. The idea of "main market roads" as a starting point for highway planning, was promoted as a means of linking farms with market towns and railheads. Most of the early bulletins circulated by the Highways Branch of the Dominion Department of Railways and Canals contained extensive reports of the cost reductions in farm produce haulage which came from improved roads.

Highway expenditure began to gather momentum in the early 1920s (Table 5) with most of the work being concentrated on culverts, bridges and levelling. Surfacing of motor roads with gravel began later and proceeded fairly slowly. The biggest visible effects of surfacing and a major increase of expenditure came just before the depression when all activity was drastically cut. The spatial pattern of this period of highway improvement can be seen in the plate of the 1932 road network in the *Atlas of Saskatchewan*.<sup>58</sup> By this time most of the largest centres in the province were linked by gravel highway. Few farms were located on all-weather roads. In 1931 only 2.7 percent of Saskatchewan's farms were located on gravel roads; 64.4 percent were located on improved dirt roads and the remainder were situated on unimproved dirt roads.<sup>59</sup>

Weaknesses of the road system persisted throughout the period and beyond. The vast area and enormous length of roads were too large for the public financial resources of a newly settled area. Rural roads and the burden of costs on municipal budgets still constituted a major problem in the 1950s. The impact of highway expenditure on the provincial budget has yet to be explored.

The motorization of Saskatchewan was accomplished in four major phases. The first phase (c. 1902-1909) was the introduction of motor vehicles mostly by enthusiasts for the new sport and technology. Phase two (1910-1913) was a critical period of substantial commercial investment in the new mode of transport which prepared all the sales and service foundations for phase three (1914-1918) when the mass market first developed. The final phase (1923-1929) was a further extension of ownership and an elaboration of the service facilities. Economic depression after 1929 delayed the process of motorization for another two decades.

Public investment in roads and bridges, although not insignificant after 1919, still lagged far behind the huge growth of private vehicles and commercial services. Motor vehicles were a key element of modernization and transformation in Saskatchewan, as elsewhere; their influences permeated virtually all aspects of economic and social life in the province.

## NOTES

\* This work forms a part of the research effort for the Historical Atlas of Canada, Volume III, edited by Professor Don Kerr, University of Toronto. I am grateful to the Archives of Saskatchewan and the Legislative Library, Ontario Legislative Assembly for access to material. Doug Wood and Steve Bellinger assisted with some of the preliminary statistical work.

<sup>1</sup> "The automobile adds virility to 20th century progress," *Gas Power Age* 3(5), May 1911, p. 69.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>3</sup> M. M. Willey and S. A. Rice, *Communication Agencies and Social Life*, President's Research Committee on Recent Social Trends in the United States Monograph (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1933), p. 27.

<sup>4</sup> The literature on the significance and impact of the motor vehicle is growing rapidly. Some major works published in the last decade include:

J. M. Laux, translator and ed., *The Automobile Revolution: The Impact of an Industry* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1982).

J. J. Flink, *The Car Culture* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.T. Press, 1975).

W. Plowden, *The Motor Car and Politics in Britain* (Harmondsworth; Penguin, 1973).

H. Durnford and G. Baechler, *Cars of Canada* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1973).

<sup>5</sup> Recognition in the published literature today is, however fairly limited. Only one motor vehicle reference was cited in Ved P. Arora, *The Saskatchewan Bibliography* (Regina, 1980). The *Saskatchewan History Index* includes a few automobile references mostly covering notes on early auto travel.

There are passing references to the automobile and its significance in the provincial histories and other works as for example:

John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980).

James H. Gray, *The Roar of the Twenties* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1975).

Local community histories through their emphasis on contemporary photographs and family reminiscences frequently provide a strong sense of the importance of motor cars. A view of the town of Lumsford c. 1915 shows more automobiles than buildings, see: *The Past to the Present: 70 years 1909-1979*, Sceptre-Lumsford Historical Association, 1979.

<sup>6</sup> Act to regulate speed and operation of motor vehicles on highways, *Statutes of Saskatchewan* 6 Edw VII, 1906, Cap. 44.

<sup>7</sup> The Provincial Secretary's Department administered motor registrations from 1906 until May 1930 when this function was transferred to the Department of Highways. The Provincial Tax Commission took over in late 1937. Other provincial agencies involved were the Department of Public Works, the Department of Highways, and the police. All municipal governments were also concerned with provision of services and control of automobiles.

It appears that none of the primary records of ownership have survived. Record keeping for tens of thousands of automobiles created huge problems for a small clerical staff. In addition to the annual re-registration and growth of new vehicle numbers there were continual changes of ownership and addresses of owners to be recorded. Demands by the police for rapid identification of vehicle ownership also added to the difficulties of maintaining record systems. As the sheer bulk of original annual records made storage unmanageable, most of the records were probably destroyed as they became obsolete.

Summaries published in the Provincial Secretary's Department annual reports contain most of the available details on motor vehicles. The most comprehensive record was that published in 1911 which listed the serial number, name of owner, location and in many cases the make of the vehicle. From 1915 to 1934 only a summary of total numbers was published in the annual reports although, uniquely in Canada, these were tabulated by make of vehicle.

In the early period of rapid increase in automobiles and close public interest in such growth, the newspapers often published detailed lists of owners and their cars. Regina's paper, *The Morning Leader*, 4 November 1911, Second Section, page 1 — in a long piece titled "Saskatchewan Folks enjoy the Chug-Chug Game" listed owners by place of residence with make of vehicle and licence number.

Apart from the provincial departmental records and newspaper reports there must be many other types of records awaiting rediscovery. Records of court proceedings could shed light on problems of automobile usage; minute books and membership lists of motor clubs would improve our knowledge of the early adopters and promoters of automobiles in specific communities, business records from garages and dealers would help in understanding the ways in which the new transportation was introduced and organized.

<sup>8</sup> *Gas Power Age* 4(5), November 1911, p. 10.

<sup>9</sup> *Gas Power Age* 9(4) April 1914.

<sup>10</sup> *Gas Power Age* 7(4) April 1913, p. 27. Students enrolled for a six week course for a fee of \$50.00.

<sup>11</sup> The prices quoted include the freight charges from Ford City (Windsor) to Moose Jaw. F.o.b. prices quoted in *Gas Power Age* 3(1) January 1911, p. 26, 7(1) January 1913, p. 55 and the *Ford Times* (Canadian Edition) vol. 3 October 1915 and vol. 4 May 1917. Freight rates were published in the *Ford Times*.

<sup>12</sup> See: R. E. Ankli and R. M. Litt, "The growth of prairie agriculture: economic considerations," in D. H. Akinson ed., *Canadian Papers in Rural History* vol. 1, 1978, pp. 35-64.

<sup>13</sup> *The History of the Mildred Community 1905-1965*, Mildred Historical Committee, 1966, p. 110.

<sup>14</sup> Compiled from various statistical publications including, *The Motor Vehicle* published by the Department of Railways and Canals, Highways Branch to 1928 and thereafter by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics.

<sup>15</sup> Provincial Secretary's Department, *Annual Report 1910-11*, pp. 9-22.



- <sup>16</sup> Department of Railways and Canals, Highways Branch, *The Motor Vehicle 1922*, Circular No. 5 (Ottawa: 1924) pp. 9-10.
- <sup>17</sup> Census of the Prairie Provinces 1926, and *The Motor Vehicle 1926*.
- <sup>18</sup> J. J. Flink, *America Adopts the Automobile 1895-1910* (Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press, 1970).
- <sup>19</sup> *Gas Power Age* 3(4) April 1911, p. 65.
- <sup>20</sup> See: W. Pearson, "Recollections and Reminiscences: Colonization Work in Last Mountain Valley," *Saskatchewan History*, XXI (3), 1978, pp. 111-13.
- <sup>21</sup> "Rumely - Oil Pull school of engineering classes for owners and operators in Regina", *Gas Power Age* 3(3) March 1911, p. 29.
- <sup>22</sup> "The Dominion Exhibition, Regina", *Gas Power Age* VI(3) September 1911, pp. 31/33.
- <sup>23</sup> R. E. Ankli, H. D. Hebbert and J. H. Thompson, *The Adoption of the Gasoline Tractor in Western Canada*, Working Paper Series No. 1, Agricultural History Center, University of California, Davis, 1979, p. 6.
- <sup>24</sup> *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 2 Geo V, 1912, Cap. 38, s. 16.
- <sup>25</sup> *Gas Power Age*, 6(5) November 1912, p. 38.
- <sup>26</sup> *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 18 Geo V, 1928, Cap. 74  
Further amendments in the early 1930s limited speeds of loaded and unloaded vehicles, weights and widths of vehicles, qualifications of drivers, etc.
- <sup>27</sup> "Saskatchewan first in Good Roads Movement", *Gas Power Age* 5(4) April 1912 p. 9.
- <sup>28</sup> *Gas Power Age* 7(6) June 1913, p. 43.
- <sup>29</sup> *Gas Power Age* 9(4) April 1914.
- <sup>30</sup> As late as 1925 a North Saskatchewan Motor League was formed, with 14 local clubs, to press for road improvements in the region. *Canadian Motorist*, November 1925, p. 508.
- <sup>31</sup> Monthly magazines such as *Gas Power Age*, published: Winnipeg 1908-14 provide a comprehensive view of all facets of the motor vehicle and other gasoline-powered machines. Library collections of this and other contemporary publications are rare.
- <sup>32</sup> See J. H. Gray, *The Roar of the Twenties* (1975) p. 47; J. H. Archer, *Saskatchewan, A History* (1980), p. 201-3.
- <sup>33</sup> Were the Saskatchewan cities and towns always ready to accept the motor vehicle? See B. A. Brownell, "A Symbol of Modernity: Attitudes toward the Automobile in Southern Cities in the 1920s", *American Quarterly* 24, 1972, pp. 20-44.  
The automobile owners in Regina proposed that the city should pave a section of Victoria Park for car parking. *Gas Power Age*, 7(6), June 1913, p. 41.
- <sup>34</sup> For details of some of the effects of automobile on small towns see:  
P. D. Crouse, *The Automobile and the Village Merchant* (University of Illinois, Bureau of Business Research, 1928).  
J. A. Jakle, *The American Small Towns: Twentieth Century Place Images* (Hamden, Conn.: Archon Books, 1982).  
N. T. Moline, *Mobility and the Small Town, 1900-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago, Department of Geography, Research Paper No. 132, 1971).
- <sup>35</sup> Anti-freeze was being advertised as early as 1912 but did not become fully successful for at least another decade. *Gas Power Age* 6(4) October 1912 p. 39.
- <sup>36</sup> M. L. Berger, "The Influence of the Automobile on Rural Health Care 1900-1929", *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences*, 28, October 1973, pp. 319-335.
- <sup>37</sup> M. Wilkins & R. E. Hill, *American Business Abroad: Ford on Six Continents*, (Detroit: 1964), p. 43.
- <sup>38</sup> R. M. Wik, *Henry Ford and Grass Roots America*, (Ann Arbor: 1972).
- <sup>39</sup> Details of all the makes listed in the Annual Reports may be found in G. N. Georgano ed., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Commercial Vehicles* (London: 1979) and G. N. Georgano ed., *The New Complete Encyclopedia of Motorcars* 3rd edition (London: 1982).
- <sup>40</sup> Details of all the Canadian makes may be found in Dunford and Baechler, *Cars of Canada* (1973).
- <sup>41</sup> Saskatchewan Archives: Department of the Provincial Secretary, Companies Branch, Defunct Company File No. 710.
- <sup>42</sup> Durnford and Baechler, *Cars of Canada*, p. 142-143.
- <sup>43</sup> Durnford and Baechler, *Cars of Canada*, p. 71, 170, 178.
- <sup>44</sup> *Industrial Canada*, April 1925, p. 55.
- <sup>45</sup> *Industrial Canada*, January 1926, pp. 157-159.
- <sup>46</sup> The assembly plant was sold by General Motors in 1945. Most of the plant survives in varied uses only. The office block on Eighth Avenue still bears the GMC insignia.
- <sup>47</sup> *Gas Power Age*, 6(2), August 1911, p. 71.
- <sup>48</sup> "Saskatchewan Automobile Trade", *Gas Power Age*, 7(4) April 1913, p. 1. This issue of the magazine included a major section on the motor businesses of Moose Jaw and Regina.
- <sup>49</sup> For an outline of the evolution of Ford dealers, see: H. L. Dominguez, *The Ford Agency: a pictorial history*, (Osceola, Wisconsin: 1981).
- <sup>50</sup> *Gas Power Age* 9(3) March 1914.
- <sup>51</sup> See for example Daniel I. Viegra, *Fill 'er up: An Architectural History of America's gas stations* (New York 1979).
- <sup>52</sup> Comprehensive details on Imperial Oil may be found in: J. S. Ewing, *The History of Imperial Oil*, 4 vols, Unpublished manuscript, Business History Foundation, Harvard Business School, Boston, 1951? Located at Imperial Oil Archives, Toronto.
- <sup>53</sup> See: John Mavor, "Auto Trip across the Prairie", *Alberta History* 30(2), 1982, pp. 37-38; Thomas W. Wilby, *A Motor Tour through Canada* (London: 1914) also summarized in *Saskatchewan History*. Volume 7, 1950, pp. 23-27.

<sup>54</sup> It is likely that substantial volumes of records on highways finance and construction have survived and await the patient research worker.

<sup>55</sup> The Saskatchewan railway network grew as follows:

1970 — 2,025 miles	1919 — 6,148 miles
1909 — 2,631 miles	1924 — 6,942 miles
1914 — 5,089 miles	1929 — 7,761 miles

See: *Canada Year Book*.

<sup>56</sup> Province of Saskatchewan, Royal Commission on Agriculture and Rural Life, Report No. 4, *Rural Roads and Local Government* (Regina, 1955) p. 190.

<sup>57</sup> *Statutes of Saskatchewan*, 2 Geo V, 1912, Cap. 5 and 7. Six other acts passed during this session of the Legislature provided guarantees to the railway companies for the construction of branch lines.

<sup>58</sup> J. H. Richards and K. I. Fung, *Atlas of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon, 1969) p. 22.

<sup>59</sup> Census of Canada 1931, vol. 8, *Agriculture*, Saskatchewan, Table 34.

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I noticed in your Tangleflags correspondence some enterprising young men of the district have invested in a motor truck to haul grain to town, and we are very much interested in that experiment, as undoubtedly that is what in the absence of railway accomodation will be evidently adopted. I am told the truck is a success, but experiences much trouble on account of neglected spots in the roads . . . The farmer can be the man of the hour if he will insist that the roads (the main roads) must be put in and kept in the best condition.

*Lloydminster Times*, 14 November 1918, p. 7.

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A road should be smooth for motor traffic . . . We usually object to deep ruts on any road, but ruts on a high crowned grade across a slough are a real necessity on a rainy day — they offer the only hope of being able to pilot a car across the grade without skidding into the slough . . .

R. H. Mackenzie, Chief Field Engineer, Department of Highways at the 22nd Annual Convention of the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities, 1927.

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Driven by a woman resident of White Fox, Saskatchewan a car thickly covered with mud arrived here last night en route to Saskatoon. Coming by the north road, she is probably the first motorist to make the trip from that direction this year. The highway along the Nipawin, Tisdale and Melfort route to Prince Albert is said to be impassable except from Birch Hills to the city.

*Prince Albert Daily Herald*, 18 April 1935, p. 3.

# KELSEY'S JOURNAL OF 1691 RECONSIDERED

*By Allen Ronaghan*

**I**t may appear unnecessary to reopen the question of the route followed by Henry Kelsey when he reached the prairies in 1691. The theory advanced by the Reverend James W. Whillans in 1955 and published in the *Encyclopedia Canadiana* appears to be generally accepted. He concluded that Kelsey followed an east-west route across central Saskatchewan to reach a point just east of the eastern boundary of Alberta.<sup>1</sup>

Whillans spent many years developing his theory, travelled over much of central Saskatchewan on foot, by automobile and aeroplane, and used several disciplines before reaching his conclusions. Unfortunately he appears to have paid little attention to the Indian terms for major landmarks in the area, and to have held in low esteem the few specific clues offered in Kelsey's Journal for 1691.<sup>2</sup> In my opinion it cannot be shown that in the sixty day period for which Kelsey kept a journal he penetrated any further inland than the Touchwood Hills region of east-central Saskatchewan. I think it can be shown — and it is the central argument of this paper — that Kelsey came onto the open prairies of Saskatchewan in the Preeceville-Sturgis area, using a route now followed by a railway which carries prairie products to Hudson Bay. To arrive at this conclusion I have used some of the same disciplines which Whillans used, but I paid more attention to the terms used by the Crees and Assiniboines for landmarks of a country they knew intimately.

The major source of information on Kelsey's route is his Journal of 1691. The Journal was one of a group of handwritten papers discovered in Belfast in 1926 and published jointly by the Public Archives of Canada and the Public Records Office of Northern Ireland in 1929 as *The Kelsey Papers*.<sup>3</sup> Previous to the discovery of these originals scholars had realized the futility of trying to trace Kelsey's route using the cited versions of his Journal to be found in *Papers of Committee of the House of Commons, 1749*.<sup>4</sup> The Journal covers a sixty day period and begins with an entry for 15 July 1691 which tells of Kelsey's departure from "Deering's Point" with a band of Indians, and of his movements towards the interior in the hope of persuading an inland tribe known as the "Naywatamee Poets" to come to Hudson Bay to trade. The last entry dated 12 September tells of his meeting with that tribe and blends into an account of how strife broke out during the winter, with the result that the "Naywatamee Poets" did not meet Kelsey in the spring of 1692 as had been agreed upon.<sup>5</sup>

Following the publication of these documents as *The Kelsey Papers* several theories were advanced concerning Kelsey's route. Kelsey's unusual spelling and punctuation and his use of some unusual terms complicate the task of determining his route and to a large extent underlie the different conclusions reached by researchers. Hugh Conn, who had an intimate knowledge of the northland, thought

that "Deering's Point" was at The Pas, Manitoba, and A. G. Doughty and C. Martin favored that hypothesis.<sup>6</sup> Charles Napier Bell's study of Kelsey's Journal appeared in 1928. He held that "Deering's Point" was at Cedar Lake in Manitoba, and that "Waskashreesebee" referred to the Red Deer River of eastern Saskatchewan.<sup>7</sup> In *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71* A. S. Morton developed the theory that Kelsey set out from The Pas and reached the Red Deer River country by way of Birch River, the Saskeram Lake and the Carrot River.<sup>8</sup> The Rev. James W. Whillans came to the conclusion that "Deering's Point" was at The Pas, but that the "Waskashreesebee" was the South Saskatchewan River. Whillans believed that Kelsey had reached a point near Cut Knife, Saskatchewan, before turning back.<sup>9</sup>

A few words of explanation will probably be of use here, especially for the reader who has not had a chance to study the Journal. Kelsey left York Fort on 12 June 1690, and reached "Deering's Point" on 10 July. Kelsey did not keep a journal for this trip and the only record we have of it is the rhymed introduction to the 1691 Journal. After his arrival at "Deering's Point" in July 1690, he followed the Indians to the plains for the winter, and returned to "Deering's Point" in July 1691, to meet the Indians returning from the Bay. There is no journal for the winter of 1690-91 and the only record of it is to be found in the same rhymed introduction, together with a few bits of internal evidence from the 1691 Journal. Thus, the Indians on the plains, he notes on 30 July 1691, were "glad that I was returned according to my promise."<sup>10</sup>

Kelsey evidently waited at "Deering's Point" in July 1691 for a party of Indians returning from York Fort with a message and supplies (including a notebook).<sup>11</sup> The Stone (Assiniboine) Indians had given up waiting and had gone inland ten days before because there was an inadequate supply of food at "Deering's Point."<sup>12</sup> It was Kelsey's intention to rejoin these Stone Indians as soon as possible, although it was to be more than two weeks before he accomplished this, somewhere not far from "Waskashreesebee."<sup>13</sup>

The Journal begins on 15 July 1691 and closed on 12 September, so is the record of only sixty days of Kelsey's stay inland. Of those sixty days Kelsey and the Indian band he was with travelled on forty-one. The largest distance travelled — when Kelsey and a party of young men travelled light was thirty miles. The smallest with a full band of men, women and children and their baggage was six miles. The average was about fourteen and one quarter miles a day.

The first three and one half days saw Kelsey and his small party travelling by canoe.<sup>14</sup> Then they left the canoes and went "forward into the woods."<sup>15</sup> On 23 July they came to "good footing." "For," Kelsey observed, "all that we had passed before was heavy mossy going."<sup>16</sup> On 30 July they finally caught up to the Indians with whom Kelsey had gone to "Deering's Point."<sup>17</sup>

Two days prior to this Indian "strangers" had come to the camp, asking that Kelsey and his band meet their people at a "place called Waskashreesebee,"<sup>18</sup> and Kelsey had said that they would "make as much hast [*sic.*]" as they could to meet them there. After Kelsey caught up with his own party he evidently informed them of this intention, for on 1 August they "Gott to the River Aforesaid"<sup>19</sup> where the rendezvous was to have taken place, but the "strange" Indians had already gone. Kelsey's party set off after them, and on 2 August<sup>20</sup> found twenty-six tents of Eagle Creek Indians.

Now here it must be observed that reference has been made to "a place called Waskashreesebee" and later to "the River Aforesaid." The Red Deer River rises in

the vicinity of Nut Lake to flow first in a northerly, then a northeasterly and then an easterly direction to cross the present-day Saskatchewan-Manitoba border and enter Red Deer Lake, north of the Porcupine Mountains. Somewhere along this river's valley there must have been a well-known gathering-place of the Indians. This point is mentioned here for reasons which will become obvious.

On the day after coming together with the Eagle Creek Indians it was necessary to travel fifteen miles because they "had no great store of victuals."<sup>21</sup> On 4 August some messengers came to them from "some stone Indians which was to be Southward of us."<sup>22</sup> These messengers said that the "Nayhaythaways" (Crees) had had three of their women killed by the "Naywatamee poets" in the spring. The Crees had agreed to meet them (the Stone Indians) but as for the "Naywatamee poets" "they were fled so far that they thought I should not see them."<sup>23</sup> Kelsey asked the messengers, in case they should see the "Naywatamee poets," to give them every encouragement to come and see him.

We are about to arrive at the one entry of Kelsey's Journal which gives a description of natural features clear enough to make one believe they can be identified. On 6 August, the day after the conversation mentioned above, Kelsey made a longer than usual entry in his Journal. I quote it in full:

To day we pitcht to yt River wch I have spoken of before wch is not a hundred yards over & but very shoal water this River breants away much to ye Southward and runneth through great part of the Cuntry & is fed by a lake wch feedeth another River wch runneth down to ye Southward of us and is called Mith . . . Now ye water wch runneth down this River is of a Blood red Colour by ye description of those Indians wch hath seen in wch makes me to think yt it may run through some mine or other our Journey this day by Estimation 10 miles.

The reader will have noticed that Kelsey's spelling and punctuation leave much to be desired. This is typical of the entire Journal. There are puzzling points too. What does "breants" mean? It has been suggested that the word is really "treants"<sup>24</sup> (trends). It obviously has a meaning related to the flow of the river or the situation of the valley. What about "Mith"? In the Journal these four letters were still legible after having been erased by Kelsey.<sup>25</sup> Bell was the first to suggest, and Morton, Whillans and Kenney all agreed, that this was Kelsey's attempt to write the Swampy Cree word "mithcoo," meaning "blood" or "red," and early name of the Assiniboine River.<sup>26</sup>

These puzzling points and poor punctuation, however, cannot disguise the fact that there is a precision of detail in this paragraph not to be found elsewhere in the Journal. Clearly there is a lake from which one river runs to the northward and another river runs to the southward. This is a phenomenon to be found here and there in topography: a lake at a height of land or "divide" from which rivers flow in opposite directions. Identification of this "divide" has to be a priority in a study of Kelsey's Journal.

Let us see what researchers have done with this problem.

Morton assumed that "this River"<sup>27</sup> meant the Red Deer River. But the Red Deer fits the statement so poorly that Morton had to make qualifying statements in his application of it, first about the general direction of the Red Deer's flow, then about the Red Deer's source, and finally about the fact that Nut Lake is not the source of the Assiniboine. Really, the only characteristic of the Red Deer that fits Kelsey's description is that it does "run through great part of the Country."<sup>28</sup>

Bell had trouble too. Like Morton he assumed that "this River" meant the Red

Deer, and he then had the problem that the Red Deer simply did not fit. He decided that Kelsey was "given an Indian story" concerning the headwaters of the Assiniboine and Qu'Appelle Rivers.<sup>29</sup> Whillans dismissed the entry as "second-hand information and quite indefinite." Like Bell he thought there could be a reference to the headwaters of the Assiniboine River.<sup>30</sup> Clearly this entry has to be looked at in some different way. Morton and Bell both assumed that "this River" meant the Red Deer. In my opinion this is where they went astray.

Kelsey was near some identifiable place along the Red Deer when he made the Journal entry of 6 August. What makes a place along a river identifiable? One of the most common identifiable places is the junction of one river with another. Let us assume that Kelsey was at such a place. As we read his entry for 6 August let us assume a change of subject where the period should be after "shoal water." There is nothing contrived about this. Kelsey has, after all, changed from "yt (that) River" to "this River" in his entry. The sentence "Today we pitch to yt River wch I have spoken of wch is not a hundred yards over but very shoal water" is descriptive of the Red Deer River as it appears at, the town of Hudson Bay, Saskatchewan. The Red Deer River is neither large nor fast, averaging in that vicinity about 250 feet in width.<sup>31</sup> The next sentence tells us that "this River breants away much to the Southward . . . etc." Which river are we now considering? Let it be remembered that the "strangers" who came to the camp on 4 August were "from some stone Indians wch was to ye Southward of us." If Kelsey is interested in seeing those Indians in case they have had word of the "Naywatamee poets" he is interested in a river which "breants away much to ye Southward." In my opinion — and this is the key to my entire argument — "this River" is the Etomami River, which flows into the Red Deer River near the town of Hudson Bay. "Etomami" is a Cree word which means "divide" or "downstream either way."<sup>32</sup> The Etomami River, which on old maps appears as the North Etomami River, rises in a lake at the "divide" near Usherville and flows north to join the Red Deer River. The Lilian River, which used to be called the South Etomami River, rises from the same lake and flows due south to join the Assiniboine River between Preeceville and Sturgis.<sup>33</sup> The valley in which the lake lies and out of which the two rivers flow has been used by engineers as the route for the railway which leads north to Hudson Bay "junction" and on to Hudson Bay.<sup>34</sup>

How does the assumption that "this River" is the Etomami fit with a reading of Kelsey's Journal? I submit that even a casual study shows that it fits in a way the Red Deer River never did. Let me give some examples. I have already touched upon one. Previous to making the entry of 6 August Kelsey had made only one reference to a compass direction, and that was on 4 August when he wrote about "strangers" coming "from some stone Indians which was to ye Southward of us." If Kelsey was where I contend that he then was, that is, in the vicinity of the junction of the Red Deer River and the Etomami River these Indians had simply come along the Etomami valley from the south to find the camp at a commonly-used camping site at the junction of the rivers. It has to be borne in mind that Kelsey, far from being in the position of an intrepid explorer, was rather in that of a travelling salesman scouting out new markets and new customers. For the greater part of the sixty days which concern us here he was simply following the movements of people who were hunting in a country with which they were thoroughly familiar. Whenever he could he asked about the "Naywatamee poets," and of course he eventually found them, as the Journal tells us. The routes the people followed and the camping places they

used were dictated by the needs of people for whom hunting was life itself. A careful study of Kelsey's Journal reveals no fewer than nine occasions when Kelsey sent Indians "forward" or "back" with messages of some kind. On six occasions strangers came to camp or messengers returned. On three occasions it was decided to meet at some place a certain distance away.<sup>35</sup> We are clearly reading a Journal whose actions take place along a well-travelled route. As for "Waskashreesebee," it was evidently a well-known camping place in Kelsey's time and in later times the trading companies would establish trading posts there.<sup>36</sup>

Another example has to do with the nature of the country through which Kelsey travelled after 6 August. In the days following that date Kelsey and the Indians are travelling "up the side of this River aforesaid."<sup>37</sup> On 9 August they are still travelling "along the Riverside."<sup>38</sup> The valley of the Etomami River could be described as a "pass" through a country where travel is difficult even today. Indians probably used the route along the Etomami River for generations. In recent times their use of carts and wagons wore a trail which is still to be found along it.<sup>39</sup>

Some idea of the size of "this River" was given on 9 August when Kelsey described it as "Running or lying up between the South South west but unnavigable for either boat or Cannoe."<sup>40</sup> Informants have suggested two reasons for this. First it was late in the month of August.<sup>41</sup> Water levels in most rivers would be low then. Also the presence of numerous beaver dams would likely render the Etomami River, never more than a good-sized creek, completely "unnavigable."<sup>42</sup>

One of the most interesting of all examples is Kelsey's observation of 12 August, after they have been travelling and hunting along the river valley for several days. "About noon," Kelsey wrote, "the ground begins to grow healthy and barren in fields of about half a Mile over Just as if they had been Artificially made with fine groves of Poplo growing round ym."<sup>43</sup> In the valley of the Etomami River the country changes noticeably in the space of a mile or so near Usherville. Suddenly it opens into typical parkland with "fine groves of Poplo," to use Kelsey's expression. Today it is the beginning of settlement as one travels south.

The next day Kelsey observed that the "Ground" was "Continuing as before But no fir growing the wood being for ye most part poplo and Birch."<sup>44</sup>

On 20 August they reached "ye outermost Edge of ye woods." "This plain," wrote Kelsey, "afford nothing but short round sticky grass and Buffilo and a great sort of a Bear wch is Bigger than any white Bear and is Neither White nor Black But silver hair'd like our English Rabbit . . ."<sup>45</sup>

On 22 August they entered the "barren ground," in my opinion the open country between Preeceville and Insinger.<sup>46</sup> Several days of travel, totalling an estimated forty-six miles, were necessary to cross this plain. Then they entered the Beaver Hills part of the Touchwood Uplands, having reached "ye woods on the other side."<sup>47</sup> "In these woods," Kelsey wrote, "there is abundance of small ponds of water of which there is hardly one Escapes without a Beavour house or two."<sup>48</sup> Kelsey, the representative of a great fur-trading company, must have thought he was in paradise.

If my theory is correct the area covered by the Journal of 1691 shifts some distance to the south and east of what Morton and Bell believed to be true. Both considered that Kelsey had reached the Touchwoods, but at a point considerably to the north and west. In my opinion we know almost precisely where Kelsey was for the period from 6 August to 20 August, that is, he was following the valley of the Etomami River from Hudson Bay to Usherville, and the present-day Lilian River

from Usherville to the junction of the Lilian River with the Assiniboine River between Preeceville and Sturgis.

It may be useful for the reader if I now outline in present-day terms what I consider to be true of Kelsey's journey of July to September 1691. Kelsey probably reached "good footing"<sup>49</sup> somewhere south-east of Nipawin, I would argue that he probably passed near Carrot River, Arborfield and Zenon Park,<sup>50</sup> circling around the base of the Pasquia Hills. Passing by New Osgood he moved in a south-easterly direction near Mistatim, Bannock, Silas and Greenbush to the more or less open country around Hudson Bay. Then he travelled south-west along the Etomami River past Bertwell and Reserve. From Reserve south the valley lies practically due north and south. The nature of the country changes at Usherville and gradually opens out past Endeavour, Hinchliffe and Lady Lake.<sup>51</sup> His travels on the open plain may have taken him south past Good Spirit Lake and then in a south-south-westerly direction to the Beaver Hills south-west of Theodore. These hills even today are simply studded with sloughs and small lakes. But lacking anything more precise by way of landmarks we can only speculate on Kelsey's movements after he reached the hills. In my opinion Kelsey's trip to the northward, to take a message to "a parcel of Indians,"<sup>52</sup> would take him to the lovely parkland country around Fishing Lake, south-east of Wadena. When Kelsey returned in a southerly direction to meet the "Naywatamee poets" he likely did so in the area north-west of Yorkton.<sup>53</sup>

Who were these "Naywatamee poets"? I can only make a suggestion. The historian has had to look into the Cree language to solve a puzzle in topography. I suspect that the anthropologist will likewise have to look into the intricacies of the Cree or Assiniboine languages to find the answer.

#### FOOTNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> *Encyclopedia Canadiana*, 1977 edition, Vol. 1, p. 96, article on Alberta. See Whillans, *First In The West*, map on page 110.
- <sup>2</sup> Whillans, *op. cit.*, p. 92.
- <sup>3</sup> A. G. Doughty and Martin, *The Kelsey Papers*, 1929.
- <sup>4</sup> Doughty and Martin, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.
- <sup>5</sup> United Kingdom. Parliament. *Paper of Committee of House of Commons, 1749*. Hudson's Bay Archives, Winnipeg, Manitoba.
- <sup>6</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. xxxix.
- <sup>7</sup> C. N. Bell, "The Journey of Henry Kelsey," p. 21. A short criticism of his theory is to be found in Doughty and Martin, *op. cit.* pp. xxxviii-xxxix. "Waskashreesebee" (waskasewesepe) is the Cree expression for Red Deer River. See Faries, *Dictionary of the Cree Language*, p. 505. See also p. 66.
- <sup>8</sup> A. S. Morton, *A History of the Canadian West to 1870-71*, pp. 111-113.
- <sup>9</sup> Whillans, *op. cit.*, p. 110.
- <sup>10</sup> Doughty and Martin, pp. xxxiii-xxxiv; p. 9.
- <sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxxv.
- <sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5. It must be kept in mind, too, that it was getting well into the summer season. All dates in the Journal are from the Julian calendar, ten days later by the Gregorian calendar. If Kelsey left "Deering's Point" on 15 July by the Julian calendar it was 25 July by the reformed, or Gregorian, calendar.
- <sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.
- <sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.
- <sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7. A phrase omitted in the published versions of 1749.
- <sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8. The 1749 versions have "at an appointed place."
- <sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9. Eagle Creek in west central Saskatchewan.
- <sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- <sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*



- <sup>25</sup> The published versions of 1749 omitted all reference to "this River," to the lake at the "divide," and to the erased word "Mith . . ." All that is left as a clue is that the Waskashreesebee is "not 100 yards over and shoal water."
- <sup>26</sup> Bell, op. cit., 31-32; Morton, op. cit., p. 112; Kenney, "The Career of Henry Kelsey," p. 48. Isham's vocabulary has "mirthcoo" p. 11. See Mackenzie's *Voyages*, Vol. I, pp. clx and clxv. See also, Harmon, *Sixteen Years in the Indian Country*, pp. 35, 84.
- <sup>27</sup> See note 25.
- <sup>28</sup> Morton, op. cit., p. 112.
- <sup>29</sup> Bell, op. cit., pp. 31-32.
- <sup>30</sup> Whillans, op. cit., pp. 92-93.
- <sup>31</sup> David Myer, "The Red Deer River Grave: An Historic Burial," p. 6.
- <sup>32</sup> Faries, *A Dictionary of the Creek Language*, p. 256.
- <sup>33</sup> One informant has stated: "... it is true that from this lake the water flows both ways. Even from the one creek the water divides and flows both ways . . . all this you can see in the spring breakup, when the waters are high, due to the construction of the highway and municipal roads" (Letter from M. Gregory, 18 January 1976).
- <sup>34</sup> See map "Hudson Bay," 63D, Edition IASE, Series A502.
- <sup>35</sup> See Journal entries as follows; July 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 28; August 1, 2, 4, 8, 18, 21, 24, 28, 31; September 2, 4, 8, 10.
- <sup>36</sup> Myer, op. cit., pp. 6, 23, 24.
- <sup>37</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. 10.
- <sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.
- <sup>39</sup> Letters from George Rupchan, Sturgis, Sask.; Mrs. Violet Downs, Preeceville, Sask.; W. Yanchinski, Naicam, Sask.
- <sup>40</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. 11.
- <sup>41</sup> See note 12.
- <sup>42</sup> Letters from Richard Hermann, Carragana, Sask., and from Dave Dalke, Hudson Bay, Sask. Personal observation confirms this.
- <sup>43</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. 11.
- <sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>45</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. 12.
- <sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.
- <sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- <sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>49</sup> Whillans' research is probably strongest on this particular point. See *First in the West*, pp. 72f. He was doing research to find the line along which the statement "good footing" would be true.
- <sup>50</sup> See map "Pasquia Hills."
- <sup>51</sup> See map "Hudson Bay."
- <sup>52</sup> Doughty and Martin, p. 14, entry of August 31.
- <sup>53</sup> See map "Yorkton."

## STOCKHOLM'S FIRST TEACHER

### *Excerpts from the diary of Violet Goldsmith*

Violet Brown, nee Goldsmith, was raised in Prince Edward Island and attended the University of New Brunswick receiving a B.A. in 1905. In the same year she and her sister and an aunt moved to Saskatchewan where her father, John Goldsmith, had taken a homestead the year before. Violet had applied for a teaching position in Saskatchewan but it was only after her arrival in Saskatchewan that she learned that her application had been accepted and she became the first teacher at Stockholm. Her professional career, like that of many another young woman teacher on the prairies, was fairly brief as she met her future husband before her first year of teaching was completed. They were married in 1906 and subsequently lived in Broadview, Airdrie and on a farm near Drumheller. Mrs. Brown died in 1964.

The following excerpts are taken from a diary kept by Violet Goldsmith and describe her first impressions of the prairies and her early teaching experiences.

We are grateful to Mr. and Mrs. Arthur D. Brown, son and daughter-in-law of Violet Brown, for making the diary available to us for preservation in the archives and for granting us permission to print excerpts from it.

The Editor

*Stockholm, June 30, 1905.* We were much rushed the last few days we were in Fredricton . . . we had a rough time of it till we got to Montreal. There was a crowd of men in the upper berths. They sang an Italian song. One of them in getting off the berth gave me a kick on the back of the ear. Of course it did not hurt. At Montreal it was fun to see how hurt Eva looked when "Colonists" were ordered to make way for "Tourists". It takes going out west to take some of the aristocratic notions out of people. The first night we were very uncomfortable. Four had to do with the space intended for two. A very nice English lady was with us. The heat was unbearable, but after that we suffered from cold. We met with a nice family from Nova Scotia. Eva and I swiped some ice at the stations. Minnie and Emma left us at Winnipeg. . . . When we got to Regina we asked for Y.W.C.A. rooms, but found there were none. Then we asked for hotels. I asked if there were anywhere we could take a room and board ourselves. The man who we found to be the Immigration Officer said there was nowhere but the Immigration Hall, so there we went, and the five of us piled into one room. We made tea in the kitchen and ate our lunch in our room. We went to church morning and evening and to S.[unday] School in the afternoon. . . . The mud in Regina was simply dreadful. Monday morning Eva and Isabel and I went downtown. I registered in the Teachers Agency. Then we hustled to get our things to the station and get on the 10 A.M. train. Papa was at Lumsden to meet us. We got

dinner at Steele's and drove out to Verna. I was surprised to find so many trees and hills. I had thought all prairie was level. . . . On Friday I made butter and it was excellent, though I had made none for over nine years. That evening I got letters from the Agency offering me Stockholm school. The letter had been to F[redric]ton and had been chasing me around so long that we went to Lumsden on Saturday to find out by telegraph whether the position was still open or not. The answer came "Position is open. Get there as soon as possible". . . . Monday was not pleasant. Papa and I went to Lumsden and took the 4:40 train for Regina, arrived there, got my tea in a restaurant went to League and spent the night in the waiting room. . . . It was about 11 A.M. when we arrived at Elkhorn. I went to the Manitoba Hotel and had dinner, tea and room for the night. . . . The train left at 6 A.M. We got breakfast at Kirkella and dinner at Esterhazy. . . . I went to Mr. Lamont's first and stayed till after tea then came to the Boarding House. They are Germans. It is a nice clean place and the board is excellent. I have the honor to be the first teacher of the Stockholm School. There is no schoolhouse yet and we must use the Church. There are Swedes, Hungarians, Germans, Bohemians and what not to come to school.

...  
*Monday, July 3.* Saturday being Dominion Day there was a celebration here, a picnic and football games, etc. in the afternoon and in the evening an entertainment and dance which lasted till two or three o'clock on Sunday morning, a disgrace to a Protestant village. I went out early in the afternoon and came in just before a heavy shower and stayed in the rest of the day. Yesterday afternoon I went to S[unday] School. There were ten children and no teachers or superintendent so I took charge of them. They were very easy to interest. I went to church in the evening. There were not many there but it was a good service. Mr. Bompas [Presbyterian missionary] and Lillian Lamont and I went for a walk afterwards. Today was the first day of school. There were 11 children present. We had boards supported by boxes for desks. . . .

*Wednesday, July 5.* . . . After tea I went to a meeting of the Trustees to tell them what I needed for school. Today Reggie Lamont asked to get a drink of water and when he got to the door he went out and got his finger in a gopher trap. I hope that will cure him.

*Wednesday, July 12.* Last Saturday I did my washing. There is a nice little room in the barn with a stove to heat the water on and every convenience for washing. In the evening Mr. Bompas took me for a drive. . . .

*Monday, July 31.* Last Tuesday the Inspector arrived. He said I had the pupils classified properly. Last Wednesday I went to Round Lake. It is beautiful down there in the Qu'Appelle Valley. We had lunch by the shore of the lake. I skipped stones for half an hour, then we went to Mr. McKay's. I hope to go down to see the Indian children in school.

*Thursday, August 10.* This has been a remarkable day. There was to have been a marriage in Church this morning at 9 A.M. Last evening I swept the church and polished the stove and got the children to clean up around the outside of the church and plant poplar trees at the door. This morning I went over early and the children carried house plants and got wild flowers and flags and we fixed up as nicely as we could. About 9:30 the bridal party arrived but no clergyman. Mr. McKay appeared about 11 A.M. only to discover that they had no license. They had to go to Dubuc for it, so it was about 3 P.M. when the marriage took place. The bride thanked me several times for the trouble I had taken and I know she appreciated my work. . . . This evening I heard one of my pupils informing one of the men of the place that

"there's poison in that cigarette" . . . In one lesson the word *ballad* occurred, also the word *damsel*. I explained them as best I could, but one little girl got them mixed and when asked to write sentences she wrote "The ballad went for the cows." . . .

*Monday, December 4.* On Thursday, Nov. 4, after school, the Rev. John Brown came into school and introduced himself to me. On that day I "met my fate", though I did not know it. . . . On Thursday, Nov. 30 we became engaged. . . .

## Book Reviews

THE DEVELOPING WEST: ESSAYS ON CANADIAN HISTORY IN HONOR OF LEWIS H. THOMAS. Edited by John E. Foster. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1983. Pp. viii, 342. \$15.00.

This *festschrift* comprises an introduction, a biographical sketch of the man it honours, 13 papers on diverse topics in western Canadian history and a bibliography of the late Lewis H. Thomas' published work. It is a worthy tribute to a scholar who has helped to explain the prairie West to Canadians living in that region and to Canadians living outside it.

The editor begins his Introduction by saying of the 13 papers that this "diversity of subject matter . . . emphasizes the variety of mechanisms involved in the metropolitan-hinterland relationship in western Canadian history." That relationship is the theme of this book, and the remarkable achievement is that each paper contributes if not something always new then at least a revision of the familiar so as to complement the thesis' interpretation. Credit for this must be shared between the editor, whose introductory comments precisely define the contributions each paper makes to the theme's development, and the authors who with varying degrees of ease and success make the same attempt.

As with any collection of this kind the range of subject-matter is immense and defies the reviewer who would try to discuss intelligently all that comes within its ken. There are, for instance, papers that deal with communication within the region ("The Hudson's Bay Company's Prairie Transportation Problem, 1870-1885" by A. A. den Otter), or between it and the rest of the country ("The Telegraph and Community Formation in the North-West Territories" by David R. Richeson). Both evoke but do not cite the political economy work of Harold Innis, and in so doing encourage the reader to speculate about the determining impact of linkages, concrete and imaginary, on the West's evolution. Similarly W. J. C. Cherwinski, in "The British Harvester Movement of 1928," writes intriguingly not of the transport of things or ideas but of persons, whose economic, social and cultural impact appears to have been contrary to all expectation. They helped, for example, to discredit racial stereotypes then popular on the prairies, in particular Anglo-Saxon superiority. Quite different from the foregoing are the contributions by Irene M. Spry, "The 'Private Adventurers' of Rupert's Land," and by Sylvia M. Van Kirk, "What if Mama is an Indian?: The Cultural Ambivalence of the Alexander Ross Family." These investigate levels of economic enterprise and racial sensibility seldom touched on in western Canadian scholarship to date and thus reveal the personal costs associated with metropolitan-hinterland tension.

The reviewer's interests and knowledge often determine which studies commend themselves for comment. In this collection four papers deal with events or

actions of fundamental importance to those who (like the reviewer) study political integration and community in Canada. They are: George F. G. Stanley, "New Brunswick and Nova Scotia and the North-West Rebellion, 1885," W. Peter Ward, "Population Growth in Western Canada, 1901-71," W. Leland Clark, "The Location of Experimental Farms and Illustration Stations: An Agricultural or Political Consideration?" and T. D. Regehr, "Bankers and Farmers in Western Canada, 1900-1939."

Perhaps in 1885 the Maritimes were not yet the hinterland they would become thanks to the National Policy, but with Confederation the centre of political action had moved to Ottawa and the Maritimes as a consequence were now most definitely a region. What George Stanley's paper does is to analyze the response in one region to events in another and to conclude that the most significant result of the Rebellion for Maritimers was that they "were compelled to look at their country, Canada, for the first time in national rather than in regional terms." This is the only paper in the book that moves beyond the one-on-one relationship of the West and the centre to deal with multiple relationships. The analysis constitutes a skillful inter-weaving of the themes of region and nation recognizing as it does the contribution of political party as a nationalizing agent, and is of value because of its departure from the traditional, single dimension found in the other studies.

The West is a land of settlement and the population necessary to bring its vast tracts under cultivation was attracted from home and abroad. That much is known and repeated in western Canadian literature. W. Peter Ward demonstrates, however, that the demographic data constitute a rich lode of information which to date has been superficially mined. Comparisons of British Columbia and the prairie provinces reveal paramount differences in population growth through natural increase versus migration, the provenance of the migrants, and the concomitant implications of these differences for provincial or regional society and economy. The prairies are shown to have shared "population characteristics that clearly distinguish the region from the Pacific province." As Ward demonstrates, the present population profiles are a product of numerous determinants, of which migration is but one; differential fertility and mortality rates and contrasting age and sex compositions are others. And the implications of these data rest not only in helping to explain the past but in anticipating the distinctive consumption patterns for social services and material well-being that governments will face.

Agriculture, which still dominates prairie life if not its economy, is constitutionally unusual for being one of any two concurrent powers, the other is immigration. The formal sharing of this area of jurisdiction indicated the pre-eminence the Fathers of Confederation granted agriculture. But, as W. Leland Clark shows in his paper on experimental farms, it was easier to share in theory than in practice. The dividing line between federal and provincial power and responsibility was never indisputably clear, even for the politicians, while for the public it was most often ignored altogether. Partisanship infected some decisions and this might explain the ambiguity about respective duties, but it was not the guiding principle. The more likely explanation is that the distinctions were difficult to draw and even more difficult to maintain. Although the Clark paper deals with only one policy area in agriculture, it is a rare investigation of what was once the premier department at both levels of government and of what remains a largely unexplored dimension of Canada's federal system.

Among the eternal verities of prairie life is that bankers are scoundrels or at

most one remove from such villains: they deny credit when it is needed and charge usurious rates when they give it. T. D. Regehr explores the legend and if he does not actually explode it, he deflates it to realistic proportions. Using the archives of some of Canada's major banks he examines the special credit problems that confronted both farmer and banker. Implicit in the analysis is the broader question of institutional adaptation, a problem which for a region such as the West was not limited to banks. The West was a net importer of institutions. In time its residents might create alternative organizations (for example, the Saskatchewan Cooperative Elevator Company in successful competition with the private grain companies) but this was not always possible where legal or constitutional impediments limited action. The banks fall into this category, and "near-banks" have not proved a totally satisfactory alternative. No wonder then western irritation at central control; no wonder the vitality of metropolitan-hinterland tension.

The editor argues that Lewis H. Thomas' scholarship "demonstrated many, if not most, of the technological, economic, sociological and political mechanisms that constitute the metropolitan relationship." This is the peg upon which all of the essays in the book hang. But as Lewis G. Thomas notes in his "Biographical Sketch," Lewis H.'s academic contribution and personal interests were not cribbed and cramped by a national-regional dialectic. In 1948 he was appointed Provincial Archivist of Saskatchewan and the following year assumed the editorship of *Saskatchewan History*. In these capacities what the biographer calls "the pastoral aspect of scholarship" in Lewis H. Thomas was allowed full expression, and countless Canadians of East and West, as well as some non-Canadians, stand in his debt as a result. The reader is reminded too that conviction, expressed through a commitment to the social gospel and Christian Socialism, informed this historian's perspective. It is to be regretted that these elements of the scholar's personality and work find no expression in the essays selected in his honour. Had they been included, a good work would have been made better.

David E. Smith

THE CANADIAN PRAIRIE WEST AND THE RANCHING FRONTIER, 1874-1924 by David H. Breen. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983. Pp. 302. Illus. \$28.95.

During the past several years David Breen has published a number of articles on the ranching frontier of the prairie west. In this well researched book the themes suggested in these articles are elaborated on and extended.

The strength of Breen's account is that it explains the rise and fall of the cattle industry in the west. He shows that its success and failure was determined mainly by the availability or deficiency of land and markets. And, this, in turn, was caused by a number of factors including federal government policies, fluctuations in the international market, and climate.

A considerable portion of the book is devoted to examining the social make-up of the ranching community. The main point Breen makes here is that the Canadian ranching frontier, contrary to popular belief, was un-American, even anti-American in outlook. He presents an impressive amount of evidence to prove that is obviously one of the book's central arguments.

Thus, it is shown that because of the type of land leasing system adopted in

1881 the government maintained control of land use, and the problems encountered in the United States as a result of ill-defined range rights were avoided. As well the N.W.M.P. was an integral part of the ranching community, and consequently the violence of the American frontier never occurred. Most of the ranchers were eastern Canadian or British in background and not American, which was reflected in their political and social thinking. Calgary was the centre of this ranching frontier. Breen describes it as "a society that displayed an especially strong attachment to things British" (p. 97) and as having "extraregional ties with Montreal and London". (p. 98)

In this way Breen attempts to destroy what he considers a myth about the Canadian ranching frontier — that it was a northward extension of the American cattle empire. But despite his convincing analysis some questions remain. Why did or does this myth exist? Why did Alberta come to be viewed as Canada's most American province and Calgary its most American city? Can these popularly accepted views be traced back to the ranching era, or are they more recent in origin — the product of oil and not cattle?

As well, little emphasis is placed in the book on those areas of the ranching frontier (southeastern Alberta, south and southwestern Saskatchewan) which were clearly American. An informative table (p. 178) and a few paragraphs about "significant numbers of cattlemen from Montana . . . (moving) into the area around Medicine Hat, the Cypress Hills, and Swift Current" are included. But no attempt is made to analyze this ranching community as was done with the ranchers of the foothills. Were there two ranching regions, geographically separate and possibly also culturally and socially distinct? In this regard Simon Evans' article "American Cattlemen on the Canadian Range, 1874-1914," (*Prairie Forum*, Vol. 4, no. 1, 1979) should be read in conjunction with Breen's work.

These reservations aside Breen's volume is now the standard account on what has been a neglected aspect of prairie history. All further research will have to begin with it.

George Hoffman

**SYRUP PAILS AND GOPHER TAILS.** By John C. Charyk. Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1983. Pp. 135. Illustrations: \$19.95.

What an intriguing title! *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails, Memories of the One-Room School*, together with the excellent painting on the jacket by Don Frache, are enough to conjure up vivid images of rural school days on the prairies in the minds of those who experienced them. But delve into the text, and examine the photographs for the wealth of details revealed through the recollections of the author, John Charyk, and the people who shared their memories with him. In crisp, economical style Charyk has done an invaluable service in preserving the facts, and much of the spirit, that characterized the one-room prairie school. It is a plain, straightforward report, true in every respect because it is based on the real-life experiences of the author and his many correspondents, together with his careful research through official records at the local and the provincial levels.

The many photographs, undoubtedly dredged from numerous family albums, form a priceless record of the physical and human aspects of rural school life, thanks to the availability of the Brownie Box Camera in the early 1900s, and to the initiative

of people in not only taking pictures of life as it was, but also in making a written record of the related facts — time, place, and often the names of the people depicted.

To the initiated, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails* is a masterly choice for the title. But unfortunately, the significance may not be apparent to those who never attended a rural school. For them, a clearer description of the way the gopher tail bounty system worked would have been helpful, along with some anecdotes about drowning out gophers in the schoolyard at recess and the procedure for collecting the one cent per tail from the municipal office. The syrup pail gets even less attention in the text. In reality, it was the universal carrier of school lunches because it had a handle, because it had a tight-fitting lid, and because it cost nothing. Every home purchased Rogers syrup, and the pails were a bonus. Also, they made excellent vessels for carrying water to drown out gophers, or for transporting home assorted specimens of frogs, garter snakes and other local fauna.

The author has confined himself strictly to the role of reporter, avoiding all temptation to editorialize or evaluate. For example, one would appreciate having his views on the net educational worth of the inevitable school Christmas concert which required two or three months of school time to prepare for it each year. Moreover, he makes little attempt to commend the skills, the encouragement and the professionalism of the many rural teachers that inspired a love of learning among the many students who went on to higher education and to positions of leadership in the communities, the provinces and the nation. Neither is there any significant appreciation for the sacrifices teachers so often made to supply learning materials for the children, sometimes by making or scrounging them, and sometimes by purchasing them out of their own meagre salaries.

The reader watches in vain for any account of music in rural schools, although some produced excellent choirs with the help of nothing more than a pitch pipe or a wheezy organ.

Besides those omissions, there are a couple of negative points to be made. By implication, the author leaves the impression that the school was generally looked upon by children as a prison to be escaped from by any means, fair or foul. For some, this was true, but for many children it was a haven from drab homes, endless chores and dull lives. Many of them loved school, loved learning, and loved their teachers, developing a life-long sentimental attachment for "the little red schoolhouse" which was usually white.

The author also implies that school inspectors were ogres, bent on the humiliation and destruction of the teacher. In reality they were usually capable people, well trained for that time, devoted to the improvement of education, and going to great lengths to achieve it under arduous, often impossible, conditions. The cruelty really came from the departments of education which required precise numerical ratings on teachers, and from the local school boards that committed the ultimate indignity by reading those ratings aloud at public annual board meetings.

Despite these minor shortcomings, the author is to be commended for making a valuable contribution to the history of education on the prairies. The book is well conceived and well executed, attractive in appearance, and easy to read in the two-column format. It leads one to hope that a sequel will be forthcoming in which the author will give his own opinions free rein and assess the elements that made the rural school a vital force for good in spite of the adversities of the times, particularly



the human elements, the teachers, the school boards, the parents and the children themselves.

A. Clare Hume

DICTIONARY OF CANADIAN BIOGRAPHY, VOL. XI, 1881-1890. Frances G. Halpenny (General Editor), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982. Pp. 1092. \$35.00

DICTIONARY OF CANADIAN BIOGRAPHY, VOL. V, 1801-1820. Frances G. Halpenny (General Editor), Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1983. Pp. 1044. \$45.00

These are the seventh and eighth volumes of the *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* to be published. Begun in the late 1950's through a bequest from prominent business man James Nicholson, the publication of the *Dictionary* has also been supported by the Canada Council and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. With the publication of Volumes V and XI, the *Dictionary* has now published the biographies of prominent Canadian men and women who died before 1820 and those who died between 1861-1890. Much remains to be done to complete the project. It is a truly monumental work of scholarship which will still require some time to complete but when it is complete it will be of inestimable value to researchers.

Of the two volumes noted here, Volume XI is probably of the most interest to persons studying the history of Western Canada as it contains biographies of a number of people prominent in our history. Perhaps the most important is a major entry on Louis Riel prepared by the late L. H. Thomas. But there are also a number of entries for native people including Ta-tanka I-yotank (Sitting Bull), Kamiyis-towesit (Beardy), Kapapamahchakwew (Wandering Spirit), who was executed for his part in the Frog Lake massacre, Kapeyakwaskonam (One Arrow), Kiwisance (Little Child), Minahikosis (Little Pine), Mimi (Cote), Mistahimaskwa (Big Bear), and Pitikwahanapiwiyin (Poundmaker). There are also biographies of such well known people as Lawrence Clarke, Richard Hardisty, John McLean and John Palliser.

As would be expected, Volume V contains the biographies of a number of people associated with the fur trade in Western Canada. Included are Cadot, Isham, Longmoor, Pangman, Pond and Sir Alexander Mackenzie.

As in previous volumes, the entries are arranged in alphabetical order and there is a general bibliography, an alphabetical index of contributors, an index of classifications according to occupation, a geographical index and a nominal index.

One can only congratulate those involved in producing these fine volumes.

## Notes and Correspondence

### Caring For Our Past:

#### Documenting Saskatchewan's Multicultural Heritage

What is the future of our multicultural past? The Saskatchewan Archives Board and the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan invite you to attend a conference, *Caring For Our Past: Documenting Saskatchewan's Multicultural Heritage*, to be held on October 25 - 27, 1984 in Regina.

The theme of the conference is ethnic heritage records, their value as a cultural and historical resource, the need for their preservation and conservation, and their availability for research, exhibition, publication or broadcast purposes in meeting community and academic needs.

The programme is a blend of plenary and round table meetings, group discussions and an audio-visual presentation, with workshops to cover specific features and technical points of interest. It includes a retrospective look at multicultural studies, their themes, sources and methods of research; archival resources pertaining to ethnocultural groups and special-interest areas such as oral history, folklore and photographs; how to write ethnic local history; record-keeping today for tomorrow's archives; and assistance in funding multicultural studies.

Besides the scheduled meetings, there will be opportunities for discussion and social interchange at the Thursday evening welcome session and a banquet on Friday evening.

A display gallery of multicultural publications, research and reference tools and publishers' information will be available for browsing throughout the conference.

All are welcome. Please make plans to attend and share your interest and experience with others.

For more information contact the Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Regina, Regina, S4S 0A2 (565-4068) or the Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan, 2005 Victoria Avenue, Regina, S4P 0S4 (522-3651).

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