Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919

Regina: “City Beautiful”

Reverend James Nisbet and the Prince Albert Mission
The Saskatchewan Archives Board

The Saskatchewan Archives Board was established by provincial statute in 1945. Under The Archives Act (RSS 1978, Chap. A-26) the Board is responsible for appraising, acquiring, preserving and making accessible documentary records in all media, from both official and private sources bearing on all aspects of the history of Saskatchewan, and facilitating the management of the records of government institutions. Two offices are maintained, affiliated with the University of Saskatchewan and the University of Regina, providing public access to a rich collection of archival materials for research and reference. The Archives Board comprises two representatives of the Government of Saskatchewan, one from each of the two universities in the province, and the Legislative Librarian. The Provincial Archivist serves as secretary.

In addition, the Saskatchewan Archives Board has produced several authoritative works over the years on provincial history and a number of other reference booklets and directories to assist historical research in the province. The journal Saskatchewan History first appeared in 1948 and has earned a reputation for excellence, receiving awards in 1962 from the American Association for State and Local History and in 1979 from the Canadian Historical Association.

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Front Cover: Hockey game on Wascana Lake in Regina, December 1912.
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Saskatchewan Archives Board:
News and Notes

ARCHIVIST RETIRES

Lloyd Rodwell, an archivist with the Saskatchewan Archives Board who has been on disability leave since 1985, is officially retiring. Rodwell first joined the Archives staff in 1961 where he served continuously in the Saskatoon office until he had to leave for health reasons.

Rodwell received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 1961 and his honours certificate in history in 1964, both from the University of Saskatchewan. He obtained his diploma as an Associate of the Royal Conservatory of Music of Toronto in 1949, and taught music in Saskatoon from 1944 to 1961.

During the late 1970s and the early 1980s, Rodwell worked with fellow archivist Trevor Powell on the Saskatchewan Archives Board’s Committee on Standardization of Finding Aids. In the 1970s he presented seminars on how to research community histories to groups throughout the province. This archival outreach program led to Rodwell’s involvement in the writing and production of Exploring Local History in Saskatchewan, an important part of the Saskatchewan Archives Reference Series.

Rodwell will long be remembered for the personalized service that he provided to researchers. “I certainly enjoyed the intellectual work—working along with researchers,” he recalls. Academics, graduate students and amateur historians would drop in to Rodwell’s office to discuss their topics of research. He particularly appreciated those researchers who were always asking perceptive questions, stating: “It was just wonderful working with people like that.”

The high esteem in which his piano teacher, Lyell Gustin, was held by musicians across Canada led Rodwell to purchase the Gustin house and contents in order to preserve them as a memorial to this internationally renowned musician. In 1989 the Gustin house and the Trounce house, which is the oldest building in Saskatoon and is located on the same lot, were both designated municipal heritage buildings. Rodwell received the City of Saskatoon Heritage Award for Voluntary Public Service in 1992 for his efforts to preserve these two important buildings.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I realize that it is bad form for an author to reply to a review of his book, but an exception may be made, I believe, where there is an error in fact. That is the case in the review of my book, Building a Province: A History of Saskatchewan in Documents, which appeared in the last issue of Saskatchewan History (Spring 1994).

There it is said that the book gives “no attention” to the drought and the depression “because the major pieces of remedial legislation, the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Act and the Prairie Farm Readjustment Act, were passed by the federal government.” While it is true that the focus of the book is on provincial documents, it is incorrect to say the book ignores either the drought or the depression. For instance, Document 124 is an excerpt of the House of Commons debate that took place during passage of the PFRA legislation. Again, Documents 62 and 123 comprise sections of the Saskatchewan government brief of 1937 to the Royal Commission on Dominion-Provincial Relations (Rowell-Sirois). Among other subjects, these deal with the hazards of wheat production (hail, insects, etc.), agricultural income fluctuation between 1929-1937, rural relief, debt adjustment and municipal taxation.

While Building a Province deals principally with the development of Saskatchewan through provincial activity, it is not as parochial a publication as the review suggests.

David E. Smith
Professor of Political Studies
University of Saskatchewan

We welcome letters from our readers and encourage you to write with your comments and suggestions to the Editor, Saskatchewan History, Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 0W0.
Naturally Divided:
Women in Saskatchewan Politics, 1916-1919

By Elizabeth Kalmakoff

Women will make mistakes. "God A'mighty made 'em to match the men." —Violet McNaughton

When the women of Saskatchewan were granted the provincial franchise on 14 February 1916, many people believed that a new era in politics had dawned. Both men and women expressed high hopes that women's direct participation in politics would lead to cleaner government and an increase in progressive social legislation. Three years later, the election of the first female member to the legislative assembly excited little interest either in women's organizations or in the press. It had become apparent that the women's vote would not by itself lead to significant change.

The Liberal government of Premier Walter Scott had hoped that it would not. Extensions of the franchise had been used in Canada as a tool to enhance the position of the governing party since colonial times and the Saskatchewan government followed this tradition. It granted the vote to women in 1916 not in order to achieve specific political goals such as prohibition or the anglicization of the immigrants, but simply because the optimum moment for doing so had arrived, the moment when the greatest possible credit would reflect upon the Liberal party. In the months immediately following the suffrage victory, the government actively wooed the female vote. The Conservative opposition followed suit.

In contrast to the government, the women who had participated in the campaign for woman suffrage during the previous four years were idealists, striving to create a more democratic and virtuous society. They were active in the larger reform movement through temperance and agrarian organizations. They were also feminists, aware of the economic, legal and political disabilities of their sex. Using egalitarian as well as maternalist arguments, they advocated reform of the laws affecting women's property rights, proposed various measures to protect women, and claimed the right to vote.

The argument that women had a right and a duty to extend their maternal role into the public sphere, “to make the whole world home-like,” could be used to justify taking an interest in a broad range of issues, from freight rates to international affairs, but the immediate goals of the Saskatchewan suffragists were more modest. They recognized that women had common interests in such matters as matrimonial property and child custody, and they shared an assumption that they had a social responsibility to defend the interests of children, young people and the poor and to protect public morality.

Why was the women's movement unable to use the newly acquired weapon of the vote to achieve these goals? This question was the subject of speculation and debate among the suffragists themselves and it has interested historians and feminists ever since. Was ideology to blame? Did a utopian “maternal feminism” lead people to expect more from woman suffrage than could possibly be delivered? Perhaps the “social feminist” arguments used in the campaign for the vote prevented the suffragists from formulating a critique of the family structure which was the real source of their oppression. Or did women lose interest in public issues as a result of the return to domesticity which followed the Great War?

During the three years between the achievement of woman suffrage and the election of the first female member to the legislative assembly, Saskatchewan suffragists continued to participate in the political life of the province. The story of their activities within the existing political system and in the context of a divided society may help to illuminate some of the answers to these questions.

Immediately following Premier Walter Scott's Valentine's Day promise to grant the vote to women, Saskatchewan suffragists remained unified and optimistic. It did not occur to the women who attended the second annual meeting of the Provincial Equal Franchise Board (PEFB), held four days later, to disband the organization. They behaved as if their work had just begun, adopting a constitution, electing a new executive and discussing the feasibility of hiring an organizer. Following the meeting, a committee convened by Ida

Elizabeth Kalmakoff received her Master's degree in history from the University of Regina in 1963. Her thesis examined the achievement of woman suffrage in Saskatchewan in the context of provincial politics and the women's rights movement. She is currently employed at the Saskatchewan Archives Board, Regina office.
Sifton of Moose Jaw drafted a Plan of Work which was adopted by the PEFB Executive at their meeting in June. The Plan of Work was a sweeping program of social, political and economic reform. It called for nationalization of public utilities and natural resources and an international council of arbitration to ensure a permanent peace. Five of the thirteen items listed dealt with reform of the political system, including securing of the federal franchise for women, abolition of party politics, requiring a “standard of efficiency” for eligibility for the franchise, reviewing the eligibility of candidates and making elected members subject to recall. The rest dealt with reform of the prison system, the criminal code and the education system, and social and moral reform.

The section dealing with education listed six reforms which were then being advocated by the Anglo community, including “English only in primary schools." The Social and Moral Reform item included sixteen specific proposals for reform which embraced both egalitarian feminist ideas such as equal pay for equal work, equal property rights for husband and wife, and joint responsibility of parents for their children, and maternalist proposals for protective legislation such as minimum pay and maximum hours of work for women, mothers' pensions and a maternity allowance. These reform proposals embodied ideas which were shared by the vast majority of socially active women. Some of the maternalist proposals found their way into the campaign platforms of both parties in the 1917 provincial election. The egalitarian items remain on the feminist agenda today.

The Plan of Work was adopted with little discussion in 1916, but over the next few years the suffrage coalition broke down, first over the appropriate relationship of women to the political system, and then over the vexed question of who should be entitled to the federal franchise.

In the spring of 1916, hopes were high that women would be able to vote in the next federal election. The Dominion Woman's Christian Temperance Union, meeting in Regina in June, heard a lecture by Emmeline Pankhurst, the British militant suffragist, which dealt mainly with women's war work, and reaffirmed its stand in favor of equal political rights for men and women. Immediately following the convention, a committee was formed to try to organize a federal equal franchise league which would be truly representative not only of the women of Toronto and Montreal but also of western and rural women. Because the meeting was held in Regina, the committee was actually dominated by westerners. Alberta's Nellie McClung was elected president and Alice Lawton, president of the PEFB, was secretary. The committee intended to press for a full federal franchise for all Canadian women.

THE REFERENDUM TO ABOLISH THE LIQUOR STORES

Unity continued to prevail when the women of Saskatchewan had their first opportunity to exercise their newly-won franchise in a referendum on the abolition of the liquor stores held in December 1916. It would be the first opportunity for any women in Canada to vote at the provincial level, as the province's Liberal newspapers frequently pointed out. The referendum was a perfect occasion for women to demonstrate the power they could wield if they stood together. Temperance was a nonpartisan issue.
as well as one in which women, as the victims of male drunkenness, had a special interest. The press, the government, both political parties, temperance organizations, the Grain Growers and the Equal Franchise Leagues all agreed that women had a right and a duty to vote to abolish the liquor stores. The Regina Morning Leader confidently predicted: "It will be a matter of life-long pride with thousands of Saskatchewan women that the first ballot cast by them was one cast against the liquor traffic." The issue was also one which united women with the majority of men. In the atmosphere of patriotic fervor which prevailed at the height of the Great War, the individual rights argument against government intervention in the liquor business lost its power. Hundreds of Saskatchewan families had sent a member overseas. Thousands of women and men were contributing much of their time, energy and money to the war effort. The consumption of alcohol, however pleasurable it might be, was readily perceived to be a waste of valuable human and material resources. The popular "Banish the Bar" legislation passed in July 1915, which restricted the sale of liquor to pharmacies and government liquor stores, had reduced the influence of the "liquor interests," leaving the field to the forces of reform. By 1916, both political parties, the Grain Growers' Association, churches, women's organizations and the press were united in their desire to abolish the liquor stores.

Despite the apparent weight of popular opinion, temperance organizations warned against overconfidence and mounted a campaign to mobilize the vote. Each municipality was canvassed by a committee made up of representatives of reform groups, various nationalities and both sexes. Voters who were doubtful or opposed to the measure were given literature, recanvassed and, if possible, persuaded.

Women's organizations were active in this campaign. The Women's Christian Temperance Union (WCTU), the Women's Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association (WGGA), the Provincial Equal Franchise Board and the Homemakers' Clubs participated in the canvass, provided speakers for clubs and public meetings, and acted as scrutineers on polling day. They helped raise funds for the campaign by holding Prohibition Tag Days across the province and by canvassing door-to-door in the cities. In Regina, the Central WCTU raised three hundred dollars in a canvass on 27 November, and Christina Sinton's tea for the temperance cause was a highlight of the social season.

The registration of voters held in the major towns and cities three months before the referendum offered a preview of voting day. Women registered in large numbers. The registration booths were filled with young couples and families with children in tow. In fifteen Regina polls surveyed by the Leader's editor, more women had registered than men. The Leader noted the new ambience in the booths and drew extravagant conclusions.

The atmosphere of the old-style registration booths, the air tainted with tobacco smoke with spit on the floor a common practice, was absent... But these things were but the outward and visible expression of a change that will be much deeper and more significant. Old-style campaign cries and appeals will disappear, the rougher element in political struggles will be suppressed... The vast majority of women will frown down upon tactics of a questionable kind which men have hitherto complacently permitted...

Referendum day fulfilled the reformers' highest expectations. Despite the intensely cold weather, "the ladies took full advantage of their first opportunity to cast a ballot." Throughout the province, 122,000 people voted, 36 percent fewer than would vote in the provincial election the following June, but a large turnout for a referendum. WCTU members who acted as scrutineers reported that the vote was orderly and that "few new voters spoiled their ballots," which proved that women could handle the mechanics of voting. The final count was four to one in favor of abolishing the liquor stores.

It has been suggested that the Saskatchewan government's purpose in giving women the vote in 1916 was to ensure the passage of its anti-liquor legislation. While it is undoubtedly true that the majority of women favored temperance measures, the Saskatchewan government had every reason to believe that woman suffrage was not necessary to pass the legislation. Earlier in 1916, before women had been able to vote, seven "local option" plebiscites had been taken to decide the fate of individual liquor stores, and all of these plebiscites went "dry" by an average of three votes to one.

Nine months earlier, Premier Norris of Manitoba had been so confident of a pro-temperance victory in a similar referendum in his province that he had refused to allow women to vote in it although his government had already granted equal franchise. If temperance measures could not be passed without women's votes, they would be unenforceable, he asserted. The male voters of Manitoba favored temperance by a margin of two to one.

What difference did women's votes make to the results in Saskatchewan? Accurate figures on the female vote are impossible to obtain, but it is clear that the measure would have passed easily even without women's votes. The vote from the military bases in Regina, Saskatoon and Moose Jaw, presumably predominantly male, went more than three to one for the abolition of the stores. On the other hand, certain municipalities with heavy German or Austrian populations voted as much as four to one against abolition, suggesting that ethnicity was a factor of greater significance than gender in determining
a voter's position on temperance issues.\textsuperscript{30}

In any case, the officers of the Saskatchewan Provincial WCTU gave considerable credit to the government for the victory. A month after the referendum, they wrote to Premier Martin to thank him for closing the liquor stores.

This is but another proof of the wisdom and fearlessness of our Saskatchewan Legislators in all that pertains to the public good and but adds another link in the chain that binds us closely together in united effort, for the uplifting and betterment of this the Banner Province of our Fair Dominion.\textsuperscript{31}

Martin was able to capitalize on this enthusiasm in the provincial election six months later.

**THE PROVINCIAL ELECTION OF 1917**

Because temperance was a nonpartisan issue on which most women agreed and in which their personal loyalties, economic interests and moral ideals could be expressed without conflict, the referendum on the abolition of the liquor stores reinforced the prevailing feminist assumptions that women were united in the desire for certain reforms and that they could use the vote to get those reforms.

The Saskatchewan provincial election of 1917 had the opposite effect. It divided women along political lines just as it divided men, making a mockery of the idea of gender unity. After it was over, Saskatchewan reformers were less inclined to think of female voters as a unified force.

Both the Liberals and the Conservatives were conscious of the potential voting power of the newly enfranchised women. During the campaign, both parties wooed the female vote by making promises designed to appeal to women, by using female campaigners, and by attempting to involve women in the lower levels of the political process.

The Liberals fired the opening salvo in the campaign in March by holding a huge convention in Moose Jaw, their first in eleven years. The purpose of the convention, aside from drawing up a platform and endorsing the leadership of Premier Martin, was to demonstrate that the party was democratically organized. During the previous session of the legislature the Conservative MLA J.E. Bradshaw had subjected the Liberals to severe criticism for their patronage and machine politics and they were anxious to refurbish their image as a progressive party, responsive to the desires of the electorate. The convention also provided a showcase for the Liberals to display their willingness to include women in the political process.

Women were a minority of the 600 to 800 delegates at the convention,\textsuperscript{32} but their participation was encouraged and their activities were prominently reported by the Liberal press. Two women, Isabel Cleveland of Saskatoon and Maude Stapleford of Regina,\textsuperscript{33} were among the officers of the convention elected from the floor. Both women were active in the WCTU and in their local Equal Franchise Leagues. Mrs. Cleveland received a standing ovation at the convention for a witty and eloquent speech in favor of the federal franchise for women. Five female members were elected to the Provincial Committee. Of the twelve members elected from the convention floor to the seventy-eight member Resolutions Committee, six were women.

Many resolutions were moved from the floor of the convention, but few of them were contentious. A typical example was the resolution sponsored by “the women...expressing their appreciation of Hon. Walter Scott in destroying the liquor traffic in Saskatchewan and conferring the franchise on the women.”\textsuperscript{34}

The platform which emerged from the convention contained several planks designed to win the support of women. It promised regulated hours of work and a fixed minimum wage for working women, better working conditions for women and girls in factories and offices, and pensions for widowed or deserted mothers. It promised improvements in education including giving every child a “thorough knowledge of the English language,” and it expressed an intention to “stamp out everything of a corrupt nature in connection with the public life of this province.”\textsuperscript{35}

The Conservative platform was remarkably similar to that of the Liberals, equally vague but slightly more extravagant. In addition to mothers' pensions, regulated hours of work and a minimum wage, it promised “equal pay for equal work between men and women.” It also promised to prohibit the consumption of liquor as a beverage in the province.\textsuperscript{36}

Because the parties' positions on them were so similar, “women's issues” were not the issues on which the election was fought. The Liberals campaigned on their record. The Conservatives attacked the Liberal record and emphasized the controversial issue of the teaching of “foreign” languages in the elementary schools.

The language issue was awkward for the Liberals. Several progressive organizations had taken an “English only” position, including the Saskatchewan Grain Growers' Association, the Methodist Conference, and the Provincial Equal Franchise Board.\textsuperscript{37} These organizations were traditional Liberal allies but the Liberals could not satisfy them without alienating their other important bases of support, the immigrant communities. They therefore walked a fine line, advocating both tolerance and high quality instruction in English.

Both parties opened special “Ladies' Committee Rooms” in Regina in order to encourage women's participation, both used women as poll clerks and scrutineers on election day,\textsuperscript{38} and both made considerable use of women as campaigners.
The Conservatives brought a Mrs. Philip Newcombe, described as an author and lecturer, from Saskatoon to Regina to share the platform with their leader, W.B. Willoughby, at the first major meeting of the campaign. Mrs. Newcombe made an inflammatory speech on the language question in which she alleged that the Union Jack had been torn from the walls of a Saskatchewan school and used for slate rags.\(^{30}\)

Mrs. A.D. Millar, the wife of a former Regina alderman, was a more restrained Conservative campaigner. Mrs. Millar addressed meetings in Milestone, Prince Albert and Regina. On the language question, she confined herself to reading the PEFB resolution calling for “English only” in the schools. She also pointed out that J.E. Bradshaw had presented resolutions to the legislature in every session since 1912 advocating female suffrage, and that his initiative had met resistance from some government members who now seemed converted to the cause.\(^{40}\)

The Liberals turned this statement back on their opponents, righteously declaring that women themselves had won the vote, that the Conservatives were trying to claim credit for a achievement which belonged to women. This view did not prevent the Liberals from frequently pointing out that their government had given women the vote and that women would therefore be inclined to vote for them.\(^{41}\)

Although both Newcombe and Millar followed the Conservative party’s usual strategy of implying that they were more progressive than the Liberals, neither had previously been active members of any reform organization. The Liberals, on the other hand, were able to display among their supporters women who were already well known to their communities as reform activists.

The leading female campaign speaker for the Liberals was Isabel Cleveland who was a member of the Saskatoon Equal Franchise League and had been an executive member of the Saskatchewan Provincial WCTU for several years.\(^{42}\) Mrs. Cleveland shared the platform with Premier Martin at the major Liberal rally of the campaign in Regina. She also spoke in Saskatoon, Prince Albert, Chamberlain and other centres. She argued that all women should support the Liberals because they had introduced temperance measures, dower laws, the Deserted Wives Maintenance Act and women’s franchise. In essence, she suggested, women’s principles and Liberal principles were the same.\(^{43}\)

Christina Sinton was another prominent Liberal supporter. An executive member of the PEFB, the Provincial WCTU and the Regina Local Council of Women, she was also the president of the Regina Women’s Liberal Association which organized several meetings especially for women. Sinton, too, argued that a vote for the Liberals was a vote for female ideals. She told a meeting in support of the incumbent member for Lumsden:

It was not to assist any particular candidate or political party...but it was to help in the social and moral life of the province that the vote was asked for. “The Liberal Party is the one that has always given legislation for the common people.”\(^{44}\)

She went on to enumerate the “many splendid pieces of legislation passed for the benefit of the women and children” by the Liberal government.\(^{45}\)

Maude Stapleford, wife of the principal of Regina College and a member of the WCTU, PEFB and Local Council of Women, seconded Premier Martin’s nomination. In her nomination speech, she advocated the abolition of the patronage system with no apparent sense of contradiction. A third of the people who signed Martin’s nomination papers were women, and that fact was prominently announced by the Morning Leader.\(^{46}\)
Christine Omand, wife of McKay Omand, the first provincial film censor, and sister of the prominent member of Executive Council, J.A. Calder, also spoke for the Liberals on several occasions. Her speciality was explaining the Liberal language policy.\(^{47}\)

The Liberals invited Nellie McClung, then residing in Edmonton, to participate in the campaign on their behalf. McClung declined with regret,\(^{48}\) but she did manage to write an article for the Morning Leader in which she urged women to vote for the men who had given them the vote rather than for those who had opposed it.\(^{49}\) Surprisingly, McClung was either unaware of the fact that neither party in Saskatchewan had opposed woman suffrage, or she deliberately ignored it.

By the end of the campaign, every leading suffragist in Regina had associated herself with the Liberal party. In Saskatoon, where the Equal Franchise League (EFL) executive included Mrs. Donald Maclean, wife of the Conservative candidate, the situation was not so simple. The Saskatoon EFL had reaffirmed its nonpartisanship in April 1917 but the election threatened to tear it apart. The PEFB district representative worried:

> These have indeed been strenuous times and I am wondering whether our E. F. League will survive the storm. The women have been pretty well lined-up here but perhaps cooler judgement will prevail when the election is over.\(^{50}\)

Little attempt was made by either party to actually nominate women as candidates. Mrs. Cleveland was unexpectedly nominated, along with two men, for the candidacy for Saskatoon City. She declined to stand, however, declaring that women had no experience in thinking about economic matters. The work of the reconstruction period demanded “more wisdom, experience and tact” than ever before, she said. “This responsibility must be met by those who have had experience in political matters.”\(^{51}\) These comments irritated at least one suffragist, who accused Cleveland of daring to “slander her sex.”\(^{52}\)

The important division among women reformers in 1917 was not between Liberals and Conservatives but between Liberals and nonpartisans of various kinds. Nonpartisan feminists, including Violet McNaughton, president of the WGG, and Alice Lawton, president of the PEFB, fought a valiant though ultimately unsuccessful battle to keep women from committing themselves to either party.\(^{53}\) Ida Sifton’s paper on “The Abolition of Party Politics” caused “lively discussion” at the third annual meeting of the PEFB in March.\(^{54}\) The Saskatoon Equal Franchise League sent out questionnaires to well-known Canadian women on the subject of political affiliation. Most of the respondents declared themselves non-partisan, including Nellie McClung who was by then firmly committed to the Liberal Party.\(^{55}\)

Nonpartisanship did not mean refraining from voting. On the contrary, the nonpartisans believed that women had a duty to vote, but to do so on the basis of principle and the character of the candidates rather than on the basis of party affiliation.\(^{56}\) According to McClung, “…if women will remain independent in thought and action they will…keep political parties sensitive to public opinion.”\(^{57}\) In theory, if women followed these instructions they would vote for the candidates who best represented their views on women’s issues. In practice, the positions of the Liberal and Conservative parties on women’s issues, as on most issues, was remarkably similar. In most constituencies, the choice available was to vote either for or against the government.

In a few constituencies, however, it was possible to be nonpartisan with a capital “N” as well as with a small one. Since women’s suffrage organizations were officially nonpartisan, it was fitting that the first woman to stand as a candidate for the provincial legislature should do so as a Nonpartisan. Zoë Haight

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Maude Stapleford (ca. 1930) of Regina was one of many prominent women who supported the Liberal party in the provincial election of 1917.
was a vice-president of both the PEFB and the WGGA and had been a leader in the suffrage campaign. She was also the daughter-in-law of Silas E. Haight, the founder and president of the Canadian wing of the Nonpartisan League. She was nominated by her Nonpartisan League local to contest the constituency of Thunder Creek.

The League's provincial organizer had advised the local against running a candidate in Thunder Creek. He argued that the League's resources were already stretched to the utmost to combat the Liberal machine, that insufficient preliminary organization had been done in the constituency and that the Liberal candidate there was very popular. In defiance of his recommendation, a nominating meeting was held only ten days before the election. Haight accepted her nomination on the condition that the meeting endorse the Plan of Work of the PEFB. It did so without discussion.

Haight received active support in her campaign from Moose Jaw suffragists as well as from the local Nonpartisans. She had expected to receive campaign assistance from Louise McKinney, the first woman MLA in Canada, who had just been elected to the Alberta legislature on the Nonpartisan League ticket. McKinney wrote Haight a warm letter of support but regretted that she was unable to assist with her campaign. Her reasons shed light on the political disability of women at that or any other time.

“I was fortunate enough to get a housekeeper for a few days during our campaign,” McKinney stated, “but I am alone again now and cannot get away till [sic] I am able to make further arrangements.”

Haight received letters of support from feminists across Canada but polled only six hundred votes in her constituency. Ida Sifton consoled her after the election:

I think, considering the hide-bound partizan principles in which the masses of the electors are saturated, that you have made a wonderfully good showing... If we had have [sic] been blessed with more time... we could I feel confident have won a good many for the cause of justice and humanity....

The disorganization and lack of resources of the League and its unpopularity with many SGGA members must also have contributed substantially to her defeat. Her candidacy did, however, have the effect of splitting the agrarian vote enough to allow the Conservative candidate to defeat the Liberal incumbent.

In the province as a whole, women's votes made no appreciable difference to the outcome of the election. Despite an electorate more than double the size of that of the previous election, the Liberals received the same percentage of the vote. Women apparently voted in about the same proportion as men, and voted about the same way.

There was nothing surprising about this result. Women had not been able to choose between the parties on the basis of gender issues. Except in Thunder Creek, they could not vote for a candidate of their own sex. Women were therefore forced to make their political decisions on the basis of factors which cut across gender lines: whether they approved of the record of the Liberal government, what they believed to be the best method of Canadianizing the immigrant, or which party their husband, father or brother supported.

Following its 1917 victory, the Liberal government fulfilled its promises to women by passing The Mothers' Pensions Act and The Minimum Wage Act. These statutes were significant steps toward the elaborate welfare and labour standards legislation we have today.

**THE FEDERAL FRANCHISE FOR WOMEN**

Meanwhile the question of the federal franchise simmered. The federal Minister of Public Works, William Pugsley, introduced a private member's bill which proposed to extend the franchise to women in those provinces where they already had it provincially, which by this time included Ontario and British Columbia as well as the three prairie provinces. With the exception of the Minister of Justice, who expressed the opinion that women were not “persons” in the legal sense and therefore could not be given the vote, there was little opposition in the House of Commons to the substance of the bill. Disagreements centred on how and when the measure should be introduced. The Pugsley bill died on the order paper, but the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, announced his intention to give women the vote before the next election.

The PEFB and the Federal Franchise Committee campaigned in favor of the Pugsley bill. The idea of tying the federal franchise to the provincial franchise appealed to western suffragists, many of whom were sympathetic to the provincial rights argument and liked to believe that they had won the vote by working harder for it than the women of the eastern provinces. As early as the autumn of 1916, Lillian Beynon Thomas expressed the following opinion:

Those eastern provinces will not be able to use the franchise right until they have had the education that securing the franchise gives. I believe in a federation of the provinces that already have the franchise, to secure for themselves the full rights. When we have fought the fight we will be able to use it wisely. But the women who have not fought have no vision.

At the same time, Thomas disapproved of deliberate limitation of the franchise.

I have been greatly stirred up lately over a body of
women here, who never helped in the least to secure the franchise for women, but are now very anxious to limit it. Some women are such todies [sic].

Ironically, one of the earliest public suggestions by a suffragist that the franchise should be restricted came from Thomas's close friend, Nellie McClung. McClung met the Prime Minister in Winnipeg in December 1916 to request that the franchise be extended to women. She urged, however, that "in view of present conditions" it should be restricted to British and Canadian-born women. Borden received the suggestion favorably, remarking, "There is no doubt the women of Canada have earned the right to every consideration."

The idea of a restricted franchise was hardly a new one in Canada. The municipal franchise was still firmly tied to the ownership of property. Suffragists had occasionally used the argument that their votes would increase the proportion of educated and native-born electors. Since the suffrage had been granted, the PEFB had regularly advocated that "a general standard of efficiency" should be required of voters. Many western suffragists, however, particularly those connected with the agrarian organizations, saw themselves as thoroughgoing democrats. McClung's proposal that access to the franchise should be based on national origin shocked them.

Francis Beynon wrote an eloquent repudiation of McClung's suggestion in the Grain Growers' Guide which inspired a spate of letters on both sides of the subject. Beynon protested that McClung had not spoken as a representative of the organized western suffragists. She admitted that women were probably divided on the question but hoped that:

...the majority of the women who fought and won the suffrage fight on the ground that democracy is right still believe in democracy.... The foreign-born women...will suffer just as great an injustice as we have done in the past if their point of view does not find expression in the government of the country.

Beynon's views were perhaps more idealistic than most. The following spring, the Dominion government passed the Military Service Act, which allowed for the implementation of conscription. Anti-conscriptionists rioted in Montreal, but most westerners, including most western suffragists, supported conscription. Francis Beynon's pacifism became so unpopular that in June 1917 she resigned her position as women's editor of the Grain Growers' Guide and moved to New York.

Despite their relative unity on conscription and in support of the war effort, suffragists were divided about whether the franchise should be limited. During the summer, representatives of the National Council of Women and the Toronto-based National Equal Franchise League sent telegrams to women's leaders across the country asking them to determine, "as quietly as possible," whether, "the granting of the federal franchise would make conscription assured at the general election...taking carefully into consideration the vote of the foreign women...."

Violet McNaughton, who was committed to egalitarian democracy and ethnic harmony, replied disapprovingly:

Provincial party controversy on the language question has to a great extent consolidated the foreign element in Saskatchewan. Therefore could not express an opinion as to the effect of the women's federal vote on the possible conscription issue. Trust that you are taking active steps to ensure conscription of wealth.

During the provincial election campaign and at the height of the conscription crisis, some members of the PEFB took it upon themselves to call for "disfranchisement of any person who is definitely proved to be detrimental to the nation's welfare on account of pro-German principles" and of those unwilling to defend their country. They were, however, unable to get the support of the PEFB executive for the proposition. "Judging that the time is not opportune," they stated, "we do not ask for the Dominion Franchise at this time." During discussion, some members expressed concern about the reliability of "foreign" women and worried about the likelihood that the women of Quebec would vote against conscription, but in the end the group stuck to democratic principle and voted to ask the Dominion government for the federal franchise on equal terms with men.

The Wartime Elections Act, which disenfranchised "enemy aliens" while bestowing the franchise only on those women who had a close relative in the armed forces, was passed in the fall. The National Council of Women favored it unequivocally. Its official organ, Woman's Century, editorialized:

The women of Canada need their franchise; long for it, but they are more than willing to forego this advantage of citizenship for such length of time as will enable them to do their part in making German ideals and German domination impossible in Canadian citizenship.

The Prince Albert Local Council, however, opposed the Act. One of its members objected that "...we who endorse such legislation...are following German ideals and using German domination." The Regina Local Council expressed its regret at the limited franchise, pointing out that women's war work had not been done by British and Canadian-born women alone. Some western women saw the Act as an attempt to reduce western representation at Ottawa, others as an attempt to reduce Liberal support while increasing the Conservative vote.

Despite such grumblings, most people in Sask-
atchewan accepted the legislation. Lillian Myers of the Saskatoon EFL summed up the situation in this way:

...the women here both enfranchised and others seem indifferent. To be sure the Conservative women seem to approve of it and the Liberal women vice versa but there is no doubt of a lamentable indifference.

Such indifference was lamentable, perhaps, but not surprising. After all, most of the women who were active in suffrage and reform organizations were British or Canadian-born or had a relative in the services and were therefore entitled to vote under the Act. The 1917 election aroused little controversy among either women or men. Everyone wanted the war to be over and won, which was what the Union government promised.

The wartime nonpartisan ideals to which the Union government appealed were also expressed in the attempt by a few Ontario women, members of the National Council of Women, to organize a Women's Party. Unfortunately for feminine unity, the platform of the Women's Party did not confine itself to the usual "women's issues" but took positions on such matters as Imperial politics, industrial relations and the government of India. Violet McNaughton, who was the WGGAs delegate to the National Council of Women, was a champion of the progressive ideals of nonpartisanism and co-operation. She had been a member of a National Council of Women committee to draft a Women's Platform for the 1917 election. Nevertheless, she was quick to oppose the Women's Party on the grounds that its platform conflicted in important respects with the Farmers' Platform of the Canadian Council of Agriculture. She argued that women were divided by economics more than they were united by gender:

It would be impossible for the women of the Dominion to unite politically except upon a very limited and non-contentious platform. Whilst economic injustice prevails in Canada to the extent that it does, there is bound to be class struggle, and women will be just as naturally divided as the men.

The organizers of the Women's Party saw McNaughton's objections as knee-jerk western opposition to anything originating in central Canada. Constance Hamilton responded with ill-concealed impatience:

Logically, I think you will see on careful reflection, that if it is of advantage for agriculturalists to unite for their own special interests, then it is equally advantageous to women to unite for their own special interests. This does not mean sectionalism since any number of such united bodies may unite together to take up all that we call progress.

That "progress" could mean different things to different classes of Canadians was illustrated by the rapid demise of the Women's Party. By the end of the year, it had become the Ontario Women's Citizens' Association and dropped into obscurity.

GROWING DIVISIONS

As the war dragged to an end, the divisions among Saskatchewan people were exacerbated. The pro-British patriotism of wartime fanned the flames of linguistic chauvinism. The issue of whether schools should be taught in languages other than English divided women and men along ethnic and ideological lines. The Citizens' Educational Board, the successor to the PEFB, reaffirmed its position in favor of the eradication of languages other than English from the primary grades. In December 1918, the government prohibited instruction in languages other than English, except that French could be used in the first grade and studied in subsequent grades. Even this legislation did not satisfy some women. At the WGGA convention in February 1919, Zoa Haight reiterated her belief in an "English only" policy and complained that the government had not gone far enough.

The PEFB did not meet again after its fourth annual meeting in February 1918. The historian Carol Bacchi has argued that the suffragist coalition in Saskatchewan fell apart because "city women" dominated the PEFB and refused to allow the farm women fair representation. She says that Violet McNaughton and the WGGAs refused to endorse the organization after 1916 because of a progressivist distrust of Liberal party sympathizers and a regionalist aversion to "eastern" suffrage organizations. But McNaughton was herself responsible for the organizational structure which Bacchi sees as weighted in favor of urban women. While she recognized the divisions of regionalism and occupational class, McNaughton clearly believed that women had common interests which crossed those lines. She and the WGGAs continued to support the PEFB, both with money and by attending meetings, until its demise. While McNaughton, like most suffragists outside Ontario, was not anxious to get involved in the dispute which divided the two Toronto-based "national" suffrage organizations, in the spring of 1917 she arranged for the WGGAs to join the National Council of Women. At the same time, she recognized that there were many issues on which women would not agree. Her irritation with the PEFB arose out of that organization's presuming to speak on behalf of all women on issues on which women did not necessarily have a united view. She had established the Board because she saw woman suffrage as an issue on which there had to be a single-issue campaign, conducted by women, but she did not see an ongoing role for a women's political organization.
One class whose view was not shared by either the urban middle-class reformers or the progressives of the agrarian movement was the urban working class. The division between working-class women and their sisters in the urban middle class and on the farms was revealed in the wave of labour unrest which swept Saskatchewan as the war was ending. The first recorded strike in Saskatchewan in which women were involved was the Regina restaurant workers strike in September 1918. The second occurred the following month when two hundred and fifty telephone operators walked out. In the second strike, the extreme inequality of the wages paid to men and women was a major issue.97

Although the principle of equal pay for equal work had been espoused by women’s organizations for some time, none of these organizations supported their striking sisters. Their inaction was probably due to the formidable differences in economic class which divided the women of Saskatchewan just as they did the men. Saskatchewan’s urban feminists, almost without exception, were married women who were not themselves employed in the paid labour force, although a few were highly educated and had been teachers before their marriages. Their husbands were professional men, small businessmen, financial agents or civil servants, frequently employers of labour themselves. The women often employed domestic labour. While they may have felt a genuine humanitarian interest in the welfare of their employees, they were content with the social structure itself. Less than a year after the Russian Revolution startled the world, the Saskatchewan urban middle class was wary of labour radicalism.

Rural women might have been expected to feel more sympathy for their working sisters. Agrarian organizations regularly spoke of the unity of interest of farmers and workers. Farm men and women were also employers, however, employers who often worked harder than their employees and who sometimes realized little profit.98 During the fall of 1918, while the strikes were occurring in the cities, the WGGA was preoccupied with the problem of attracting female labour to the farms to lighten the burden of farm wives during the harvest. Their campaign consisted of making patriotic appeals for assistance to middle-class urban women, and was ultimately unsuccessful.99

The first year after the war saw the unleashing of a surge of agrarian discontent which had been gathering during the war. The annual convention of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association (SGGA) held in February followed the lead of the farmers’ organizations in Ontario, Manitoba and Alberta in adopting the Farmers’ Platform drawn up by the Canadian Council of Agriculture. The convention also decided to hold a series of conventions in the federal constituencies of Saskatchewan with a view to nominating a candidate for the federal arena who would pledge himself to support the Platform.100 The Provincial Secretary of the SGGA, J.B. Musselman, disapproved of the idea of independent political action and was determined to persuade the farmers not to nominate candidates.101 He attended almost all of the conventions and sought to divert the evident militancy into a harmless channel by warning his audiences at length about the “Red Peril” which threatened “...to abolish all private ownership, including the ownership of farms...” 102

The biggest problem on the farmers’ minds was the protective tariff which kept the prices high on the things the farmers had to buy, regardless of the fluctuations in the price of wheat. Special appeals were made to women to join the campaign against the tariff. Mary MacCallum wrote a series of articles for the Grain Growers’ Guide discussing the effect of the tariff on the price of “edible starches.” She argued that the purpose of the tariffs was not to protect producer or consumer, or to create revenue, but to protect
industry. The Manitoba WGGA proposed that the Farmers’ Platform add household necessities to the list of farm necessities it wanted placed on the “free list.” Appeals were also made to women on the grounds that the new movement was politically independent, free of corruption and espoused high ideals, and that the men of the farm movement had displayed a marked willingness to co-operate with women. Even Musselman exhorted women to use their franchise for “social improvement” and to remain nonpartisan.

Women attended all but one of the political action conventions as delegates, and the female delegates took an active part in the proceedings. At most of the conventions, women constituted about ten percent of the total number of delegates. They were elected to the nominating committees and to the executive committees of the conventions in similar proportions.

Although the root cause of the movement was the intensified cost-price squeeze in which farmers found themselves after the war, dissatisfaction was not confined to farmers or to agrarian issues. Urban women like Mrs. A.W. Rodgers of Estevan, an executive member of the provincial WCTU and the wife of a staunch Liberal, and Sara Davidson, the Regina suffragist who had supported the Liberals in the 1917 provincial election, were involved. Resolutions were passed on woman suffrage, which was still under the terms of the Wartime Elections Act, and on prohibition.

Several weeks later, the chairman of the conventions met with the SGGA executive to found the New National Policy Political Association, which eventually developed into the Saskatchewan branch of the National Progressive Party. Women were an even smaller minority at that meeting than they had been at the conventions. Although women had been elected to nominating and executive committees, no women had been elected to chair a convention. Because the founding meeting had been deliberately structured to keep control of the political organization in the hands of an elite, the only women present were those on the SGGA executive.

Women’s domestic duties also interfered with their political activity. The women’s editor of the Grain Growers’ Guide wrote that few women attended the conventions because “…women feel that it is next to impossible for them to leave their homes and their children for the necessary length of time.” She urged women to make the “sacrifice,” apparently believing that the difficulties were more psychological than real. Violet McNaughton also recognized the problem, and saw it as genuine. Although she and a few other women were able to be politically active, she feared that most women would be too tired to study political questions. She attributed this fact not to an unequal division of responsibilities between husband and wife but to the shortage of female labour in rural areas.

SASKATCHEWAN’S FIRST WOMAN MLA

Less than a month after the farmers’ political action conventions, Saskatchewan’s first woman MLA was chosen in a by-election in the constituency of Pelly. Sarah Ramsland’s election was unrelated to the agrarian movement, which at that time was primarily directed against the federal government. Neither was it the result of a sudden groundswell of feminism in the area. Ironically, the one political action convention which had been attended by no women at all was in the federal constituency of Mackenzie, which included Pelly.

Sarah McEwen Ramsland and her husband, Magnus O. (Max) Ramsland, were born in Minnesota where Max’s father and Sarah’s grandfather had been Democratic members of the state legislature. In 1905, Max “secured the privilege of handling the townsite of Buchanan” on the Canadian Northern line, which allowed him to build up a business in real estate, loans and insurance and to acquire some farm land. While Max devoted “his time and energies to the exploiting of this locality on a sound and conservative basis,” Sarah Ramsland raised their three children and devoted herself to her domestic duties. She was not a member of the WCTU, the WGGA or the Homemakers’ Club.

Max’s nomination as the Liberal candidate for Pelly in 1917 was the occasion for some controversy. A few discontented local Liberals petitioned the Premier to overturn the nomination on the grounds that Ramsland represented the “foreign element” and opposed conscription. Such a reputation was hardly a political liability in a constituency in which Ukrainian and Doukhobor settlers outnumbered the British and Canadian-born. Ramsland was elected over his Conservative opponent by a comfortable margin of 1015.

Max Ramsland died in November 1918, a victim of the influenza epidemic which swept the province. His death presented Pelly Liberals with two difficulties. They needed a candidate, and they felt obligated to provide a decent living for the young widow and her family. Hitting on a single solution, they invited Mrs. Ramsland to run in the byelection to fill her husband’s seat.

The idea of running an incumbent’s widow had been tried the previous year in British Columbia and had met with admirable success. Mary Ellen Smith had been elected by a substantial margin to fill the Vancouver seat of her deceased husband, Ralph Smith, in the British Columbia legislature thus becoming the third female member of a Canadian provincial legislature and “…the first woman in the world to take her husband’s seat in Parliament.”
Unlike Ramsland, Smith had been a feminist and a
reform activist in her own right.\textsuperscript{121}

The main issue in the Pelly by-election, as in most
byelections, was the record of the government.
Ramsland presented herself simply as a representa-
tive of the Martin government. Her platform was the
one which the Liberal party had drawn up at its 1917
convention.\textsuperscript{122} The issue was loyalty, and no better
symbol of loyalty could be found in the year after the
Great War than the loyal widow of a loyal Liberal.

Ramsland’s opponent, Corporal W.W. Whelan, was
not a Conservative but an “Independent Soldier.” His
election manifesto referred kindly to “our foreign-
born citizens” and to the wartime sacrifices of “our
noble women.” It expressed support for the Farmers’
Platform and advocated extension of railway lines
and provincial control of natural resources.\textsuperscript{123} His
platform was so similar to that of the Liberal party
that the \textit{Morning Leader} referred to him as an
“Independent Liberal.”\textsuperscript{124}

Perhaps surprisingly, given the similarity of the
candidates’ policies, the Liberal candidate’s gender
was not a factor emphasized by either side, and
women’s issues were not a significant factor in the
campaign. Ramsland demonstrated women’s equality
and moral purity by touring the remote northern
part of her constituency by car, accompanied only by
her sister-in-law,\textsuperscript{125} but she made no claim to moral
superiority and promised no reforms of the existing
political system.

The by-election results suggest that neither
Ramsland’s gender nor her widowed condition made
much difference to the voters. She was elected, but with
a smaller majority than her husband had received two
years earlier.\textsuperscript{126} Her election was hailed by Liberals, not
as a victory for women’s rights, but as a confirmation
of support for the Martin government.\textsuperscript{127} It was dismissed
by her opponents as an indication of the strength of the
Liberal machine among the foreign-born. Similarly, her
opponents hailed the reduction in her majority as evi-
dence of the growing strength of agrarian discontent
and dissatisfaction with machine politics.\textsuperscript{128}

It has been suggested by modern feminists that
Ramsland received “little support” from the provin-
cial Liberal Party.\textsuperscript{129} A contemporary opponent, how-
ever, declared that “Mrs. Ramsland had the support
of the Liberal machine.”\textsuperscript{130} The \textit{Yorkton Enterprise}
 alleged that the Liberal machine was particularly
vigorou during this by-election:

Many irregularities marked the election.... In
the Vernoe poll the Liberals piled up a majority of
103, no scrutineers being present to protect Corp.
Whelan’s interest. These votes, it is alleged, were
principally those of Doukhobor women, who are
not entitled to vote. At Kamsack, the Liberals
refused to allow returned Indian soldiers to vote.
The English-speaking vote throughout the con-
stituency went solid for Whelan, but was downed
by the Liberal machine, with its hordes of hench-
men. Some of these were chased out of Kamsack,
followed by a Liberal shower of rotten eggs.\textsuperscript{131}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{saskatchewan-archives-board-r-b-4190}
\caption{The Executive of the Provincial Committee of Saskatchewan Supporters of the New National Policy, ca. 1919, was dominated by
a male elite. Violet McNaughton, seated at the left in the center, was one of the few women in the province who was able to be
politically active.}
\end{figure}
Despite such allegations, there is little evidence that the machine worked either more or less vigorously than usual. Premier Martin spoke once in the constituency on Ramsland’s behalf. If any activities were engaged in beyond the usual efficient organization, they escaped the attention of Ramsland herself. After she had taken her seat in the legislature, she wrote to her parents of the kindness of Max’s friends in Regina and affirmed: “...if I for one moment thought I could not be the same lady I had always tried to be I would never have entered politics. And...my vote...can never be bought.”

Ramsland’s record in the legislature was clean but undistinguished. Martin invited her to second the speech from the throne in her first session, but she declined the honour. She spoke rarely, usually on education issues. She introduced one resolution, advocating equal grounds for divorce for men and women. She is remembered for urging the marking of historical sites. She was re-elected in 1921, running against three independent opponents, but was defeated by a Progressive in 1925.

Sarah Ramsland was elected to the legislature not as a feminist reformer, not even as a candidate in her own right, but as her husband’s widow and a loyal supporter of the Liberal government. Thus the election of Saskatchewan’s first female MLA ironically undermined the idea that women had a special contribution to make to public life, and marks the triumph of traditional politics over the feminism of the day.

CONCLUSION

This examination of Saskatchewan women’s political activity in the years immediately after the adoption of woman suffrage shows that neither the suffragists themselves nor the larger body of women voters were united. The suffragists were divided along the same political lines as was the larger progressive movement during those years. While some of the leaders of the suffrage struggle felt that feminist goals could best be achieved through the Liberal party, others believed that the party system itself encouraged dishonesty, corruption and the concentration of political power. They advocated the abolition of the party system and therefore did not make a concerted assault on the centres of political power within the existing parties.

Such an assault would certainly have been necessary if the reformers were to achieve political power. Those who controlled the political parties did not welcome idealistic newcomers. Party structures designed to concentrate power in a few hands reduced the influence of women, even within the embryo of the Progressive Party. And even if the suffragists had been sufficiently united to be able to put their concerns on the political agenda, they would not necessarily have been able to win the support of the electorate. The female voters of the province were no more a monolith than were their husbands and brothers.

Although women as a group shared certain duties, concerns and grievances, there were important differences among them, differences of class, ethnicity, religion and political belief, which undermined their sisterhood. The political differences among the suffragists, the entrenched structure of the political parties and the divisions in Saskatchewan society combined to ensure that women would not quickly wield political power.

Sarah Katherine (McEwen) Ramsland (1882-1964) was the first woman elected to Saskatchewan’s Legislative Assembly.
ENDNOTES

1 Violet McNaughton, “Some Women Will Vote Wisely, Some Foolishly and Some Not At All,” in Saturday Press and Prairie Farm, 1 May 1915.

2 This argument is developed in Elizabeth Kalmanoff, “Woman Suffrage in Saskatchewan” (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Regina, 1983). This article is based on a later chapter of the thesis.

3 Many writers have discussed the tension between “egalitarian feminism” or feminism based on a theory of the natural rights of citizens, and “maternal feminism” based on the idea that women have different needs than men and have different contributions to make. Two seminal works in this discussion are Aileen S. Kraditor, The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1971) and William O’Neill, Everyone Was Brave: The Rise and Fall of Feminism in America (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1969).

4 “Maternal feminism” is defined by Linda Kealey in Linda Kealey, ed., A Not Unreasonable Claim: Women and Reform in Canada 1880s-1960s (Toronto: The Women’s Press, 1979), 7-8. These writers suggested that an earlier egalitarian feminist ideology which claimed political and social equality with men on the grounds of the essential similarity of the sexes was replaced, perhaps for reasons of expediency, by an ideology which emphasized gender differences. More recently, it has been recognized that the two ideological strains existed. See, for example, Veronica Strong-Bboa, “Pulling in Double Harness or Hauling a Double Load: Work, Women and Feminism on the Canadian Prairie,” in Journal of Canadian Studies 21, no. 3 (Fall 1986): 32-51. That Saskatchewan suffragists used both types of argument, were indeed seemingly unaware of any contradiction between them, is one of the themes of my MA thesis, ibid. It should be noted here that the women and men who campaigned for women’s rights before 1920 rarely referred to themselves as feminists. In this article, the term “feminism” is used to refer to a movement and an ideology which recognize that women suffer systematic social injustice because of their sex, and which protest against such injustice. This is a broad definition which allows for many different forms of feminism and emphasizes the continuities among feminists of many different times and places.

5 Mrs. H.E. Armstrong, president of the Qu’Appelle District WCTU, addressing a district convention, quoted in Morning Leader, 16 June 1917, 7.

6 An important example of this argument is Kraditor, op.cit. 38-63. See also Ramsay Cook’s “Introduction” to Catherine Lyle Cleverdon, The Woman Suffrage Movement in Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1950).

7 This view is espoused by O’Neill, op.cit.

8 In The Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Mississauga: Copp Clark Pitman, 1988), Veronica Strong-Bboa discusses the struggles of Canadian women in the 1920s and 1930s “to make their way in a world that...remained committed to their sex’s primary responsibility for the maintenance of family and home,” 217.

9 Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), PEFB Minute Book, credits the Plan of Work to “the Organization Committee, Miss Sifton, Convenor.” Elizabeth L. Scott, also known as Mrs. Barrett-Scott, of Moose Jaw was also on the committee.


11 It also contained a few ill-conceived ideas the implementation of which would have required a high degree of government intervention in private life: making “the absconding of either parent” a criminal offence and “the protection of persons of young womanhood to age of 21 years.” SAB, PEFB Minute Book, Plan of Work for 1916, 18-21.

12 Pankhurst was finishing a speaking tour of Saskatchewan which had been organized by the Yorkton EFL. Ibid., 15.


15 Morning Leader, 9 December 1916, 4.

16 See Grain Growers’ Guide, 6 December 1916, 14 for an example of this argument. See John Horst Thompson, The Harvest of War: The Prairie West, 1914-1918 (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1983), 95-114, for a discussion of the influence of the war on the temperance and suffrage campaigns.


19 SAB, Haight Papers, WGA File #4, D.R. Sharpe to Zoa Haight, 28 October 1916.

20 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, Erna Stocking to Elizabeth Owens, 28 August 1916; Morning Leader, 7 December 1916; see also SAB, WCTU Records, “The Vote to Banish the Remaining Liquor Stores in Saskatchewan,” op.cit.

21 Morning Leader, 24 November 1916, 6; 27 November 1916, 6; 7 December 1916, 6; and 8 December 1916. Christina Sinton was an executive member of the PEFB, the Provincial WCTU and the Regina Local Council of Women. See below.

22 Morning Leader, 11 September 1916, 4.

23 Morning Leader, 12 December 1916, 1.

24 Ibid., 6.


30 Ibid.

31 Pinno, op.cit., cites figures, 121-123, which “clearly confirm that the anti-prohibition sentiment was strongest in the foreign-born settlements, particularly the German and Austrian regions.”


34 Mrs. G.B. Cleveland and Mrs. E.W. Stapleford.

35 Morning Leader, 29 March 1917, 1 and 9; 30 March 1917, 1.
and 10. See also Canadian Annual Review, 1917, 762-765.
35 Morning Leader, 30 March 1917, 10.
36 Regina Daily Post, 27 April 1917, 14.
38 Regina Daily Post, 15 June 1917, 12; 14 June 1917, 10; 26 June 1917, 17.
40 Regina Daily Post, 5 June 1917, 6.
41 Morning Leader, 20 June 1917, 4. See also the cartoon in Morning Leader, 16 June 1917, 1.
42 The Saskatchewan Equal Franchise League, with Mrs. Cleveland as its representative, had been admitted to the PEFB at a meeting held following the 1915 suffrage delegation to the legislature.
43 Morning Leader, 16 June 1917, 17.
44 Morning Leader, 19 June 1917, 9.
45 Ibid. The Daily Post’s report of the same meeting says that Sinton included in her list the legislation prohibiting Chinese employers from hiring white women, but the Morning Leader does not mention this.
46 Ibid.
47 Morning Leader, 21 June 1917, 9.
48 SAB, Martin Papers, 24302-24304, J.J. Bowlen to Martin, n.d. and Martin to J.J. Bowlen, 19 May 1917; and 24311, N.L. McClung to Martin, 6 June 1917.
49 Morning Leader, 16 June 1917, 17.
50 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, Lillian Myers to McNaughton, 25 June 1917.
51 Regina Daily Post, 30 May 1917, 10. See also Morning Leader, 16 June 1917, 17.
52 SAB, Haight Papers, Nonpartisan League File #6, Isabella Scott to Haight, 20 June 1917.
53 Violet McNaughton wrote articles advocating that women avoid party politics in Woman’s Century, January 1917, 7; and June 1917, 11.
54 SAB, PEFB Minute Book, minutes of meeting held 15-16 March 1917.
55 “The Woman Vote ‘Pairing’” by Mary Irvine Robertson in Woman’s Century, August 1917, 5.
56 Grain Growers’ Guide, 18 April 1917, 34.
57 Woman’s Century, August 1917, 5, op.cit.
58 Paul F. Sharp, The Agrarian Revolt in Western Canada (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1948), 7.
59 SAB, Haight Papers, Nonpartisan League File #6, D. Mumbo to S.V. Haight, 12 June 1917.
60 SAB, Haight Papers, Nonpartisan League File #6, Minutes of Thunder Creek constituency nominating meeting, 16 June 1917.
61 Ibid.
62 Regina Daily Post, 18 June 1917, 10.
63 SAB, Haight Papers, Nonpartisan League File #6, Louise McKinney to Haight, 21 June 1917.
64 SAB, Haight Papers, Nonpartisan League File #6, Ida A. Sifton to Haight, 3 July 1917.
66 The total vote cast in 1917 was 218 percent of the total vote cast in 1912. There were approximately 150 males for every 100 females over twenty years of age in Saskatchewan in 1916. The population of the province increased by 31.6 percent between 1911 and 1916. It also appears that the percentage of eligible voters who actually voted was slightly higher in 1917. A comparison of twenty-one constituencies in which the percentage is known for both elections shows an average increase from 62 percent in 1912 to 70 percent in 1917. Unless women were entirely responsible for this increase, which there is no reason to believe, it appears that they voted neither significantly more nor significantly less enthusiastically than men. This information was compiled from ibid. and Government of Canada, Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Census of the Prairie Provinces 1916: Population and Agriculture (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1917).
67 Government of Saskatchewan, Statutes of Saskatchewan 1917 (2nd Session) (Regina: Government Printer, 1918), Chap. 68.
68 Government of Saskatchewan, Statutes of Saskatchewan 1918-1919 (Regina: Government Printer, 1920), Chap. 84.
69 Hon. Charles Joseph Doherty KC DCL LLD.
70 Grain Growers’ Guide, 23 May 1917, 1 and 31.
71 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, form letter from Alice Lawton and Nellie McClung, 28 March 1917; SAB, Martin Papers, Lawton to Martin, 25 April 1917, 777-778.
72 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, Lillian B. Thomas to McNaughton, 17 September. The year is not given, but the letter refers to “your temperance campaign.”
73 Ibid.
77 John Herd Thompson op.cit., makes the point that opposition to conscription was the exception rather than the rule in the prairie west of 1917, 116-127.
79 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E41, Night Letter from Mrs. Torrington, Mrs. Gooderham and Mrs. Hamilton to McNaughton, 2 August 1917.
80 Ibid., McNaughton’s reply, n.d.
81 Nonpartisan Leader, 13 June 1917, 9. The item was likely written by Miriam Green Ellis, Press Correspondent for the PEFB, with authorization from the President, Alma Lawton, and the Corresponding Secretary, Miss A.E. Patterson, both of Yorkton.
82 SAB, PEFB Minute Book, Minutes of executive meeting held 4 September 1917. The resolution was moved by Ellis and seconded by Mrs. Misenheimer. The contrary resolution was moved by Christina Sinton and seconded by Mrs. Scott.
83 Woman’s Century, October 1917, 15. The article was written by Miriam Green Ellis.
85 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, Johan Wilson to McNaughton, 27 September 1917.
87 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E18, Lillian Myers to McNaughton, 27 October 1917.

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91 SAB, McNaughton Papers, E54, Constance E. Hamilton to McNaughton, 16 December 1918.


93 SAB, Martin Papers, 30120, Citizens’ Educational Board to Martin, 27 March 1918; SAB, PFEB Minute Book, 61-77, Minutes of meeting held 12 February 1918. This appears to be the last meeting of the organization under either name.


95 *Morning Leader*, 19 February 1919, 34.


98 For a discussion of the relationship of farmers to their hired labour, see W.J.C. Cherwinski, “In Search of Jake Trumper: The Farm Hand and the Prairie Farm Family,” in David C. Jones and Ian MacPherson, eds., *Building Beyond the Homestead* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985), 110-134.

99 For a detailed description of the WGGA campaign, see R.G. Marchildon, “The Women’s Section of the Saskatchewan Grain Growers’ Association: A Study in Agrarian Activism” (MA thesis, University of Victoria, 1982), Chapter IV.


103 *Grain Growers’ Guide*, 7 May 1919 and 2 July 1919, for example.


110 Courville, op.cit., especially Chapter V, 109-114.


112 *Morning Leader*, 19 September 1919, 11.

113 *Grain Growers’ Guide*, 2 July 1919, 41.


115 SAB, Martin Papers, 24223-24224, petition from some Pelly Liberals to Martin, n.d.


117 *Canora Advertiser*, 21 November 1918.

118 SAB, Martin Papers, 3437-3440, exchange of letters between J.W. Wallace, President of Pelly Constituency Liberal Association and Martin, 25 January 1919 to 10 March 1919.

119 SAB, Martin Papers, 3441-3442, Sarah Ramsland to Martin, 29 February 1919.

120 A.L. Normandin, ed., *The Canadian Parliamentary Guide 1919* (Ottawa: King’s Printer, 1920), 427-429; and *Morning Leader*, 16 September 1919, 6. Two women had been elected to the Alberta legislature in 1917: Louise McKinney for the Nonpartisan League and Roberta McAdams, a nurse elected by the armed services overseas.


122 *Morning Leader*, 30 June 1919, 9.

123 *Canora Advertiser*, 12 June 1919, 1.

124 *Morning Leader*, 22 July 1919, 12.

125 *Morning Leader*, 23 July 1919, 2.


127 *Morning Leader*, 30 July 1919, 18; and 31 July 1919, 4. See also *Saskatoon Phoenix*, 30 July 1919, 3.

128 *Yorkton Enterprise*, 31 July 1919, 1; *Turner's Weekly*, 9 July 1919, 7.


130 *Turner’s Weekly*, 9 August 1919, 7.

131 *Yorkton Enterprise*, 31 July 1919. These events were not reported in any other papers.

132 SAB, Sarah K. Ramsland Papers, Sarah Ramsland to her parents, 29 November 1919.

133 SAB, Martin Papers, 3450-3451, Martin to Ramsland, 1 November 1919; and Ramsland to Martin, 5 November 1919.

134 *Leader*, 16 January 1925. See also Savage, *Foremothers*, 44-44.

Visions of a "City Beautiful":
The Origin and Impact of the Mawson Plans for Regina

By J. William Brennan

Almost from the beginning, Regina has been a "government town." In 1882, when Regina was still little more than a cluster of shacks and tents, Lieutenant Governor Edgar Dewdney chose it as the seat of government of the North-West Territories. Fortune smiled again in 1905 when the federal government named Regina the provisional capital of the new province of Saskatchewan. The provincial legislature bestowed the permanent honour a year later. Regina has derived important tangible benefits from its capital status—handsome public buildings and a substantial civil service payroll come readily to mind—but the most significant has been the creation of Wascana Centre, one of the largest and most attractive urban parks in Canada.

There has been a tendency to emphasize the genius of architects and planners in enhancing the physical appearance of Regina (and undeniably some very gifted individuals have left their mark on Saskatchewan's capital city), but architects and planners do have clients. The client's wishes and expectations merit greater attention than they have often received in studies of urban planning and design. In Regina's case this is particularly so, for much of the impetus for civic beautification there originated with the first Premier of Saskatchewan, Walter Scott. He had the foresight to recognize that the bare prairie adjoining man-made Wascana Lake could be transformed into an attractive seat of government. The most important element in Walter Scott's vision for the capital was an imposing Legislative Building set in spacious grounds, but it was not the only one. Scott intended the Legislative Building to be the centrepiece of a larger grouping of monumental structures that would mark Saskatchewan's coming of age as a province. His grand conception found expression in the plan which the provincial government commissioned.

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renowned English landscape architect Thomas H. Mawson to prepare in 1913.

This plan, and a companion scheme which Mawson subsequently completed for the city of Regina, were products of the exuberant optimism of the boom years that preceded World War I. The Mawson Plans, and indeed the two governments' whole approach to civic beautification, also reflected contemporary British and North American attitudes regarding architecture and town planning. More specifically, they reflected the influence of the City Beautiful movement. Inspired by the grandiose design of the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago, the City Beautiful approach to urban planning favoured the construction of monumental civic centres filled with neoclassical buildings and the laying out of wide boulevards and interconnected parks. At the turn of the century first Washington, D.C. and then other American cities began to draw up comprehensive civic beautification schemes. City Beautiful concepts early began to have an impact in Canada as well. In 1899 the federal government created the Ottawa Improvement Commission with the objective of making the nation's capital, as Prime Minister Wilfrid Laurier put it, "The Washington of the North." The Commission turned to Frederick G. Todd, an American landscape architect then practicing in Montreal, to prepare an appropriate plan. Completed in 1903, it reflected the prevailing enthusiasm for civic beautification on a grand scale. Ottawa was to become a "City Beautiful" through the creation of a system of parks connected by driveways which would enhance the monumental appearance of the Parliament Buildings.1

Regina of course was no Washington, or Ottawa for that matter. Indeed, it initially possessed few if any natural advantages as a townsite, let alone as a capital. Regina was situated on a flat and treeless plain. A meandering creek was its only visible source of water. Pile of Bones, or Wascana Creek as it came to be known, rises southeast of Regina, near Tyvan. Fed principally by spring run-off, it eventually emptied into the Qu'Appelle River west of Lumsden.

The Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) built a temporary dam across the creek during the summer of 1882 to provide a supply of water for its locomotives. A year later the Townsite Trustees, acting for the CPR and the federal government (which had jointly laid out the Regina townsite), built a more permanent structure. The reservoir thus created covered an area of 160 acres, with an average depth of five feet.2

In addition to supplying Reginans with water (supplemented by wells in the town proper) the reservoir also afforded opportunities for recreation: boating and swimming in the summer, duck hunting in the fall and skating in the winter.

The CPR, however, chose not to locate its station near the creek. Since the town grew up around and particularly south of the station, it remained some considerable distance from either body of water. Indeed, when Regina was incorporated as a town in December 1883, only a small portion of the creek was included within the town limits and the reservoir not at all.

Reginans and their local government early turned their attention to beautifying the town. They planted trees in Victoria Square, which had been reserved for a park in the original townsite plan, and along some of the streets. Most died. In 1887 the town sought to acquire a portion of the government reserve between Sixteenth (now College) Avenue and the reservoir for park purposes, but the Department of the Interior refused to part with it.3 The town enjoyed more success in another early venture. In 1889 it acquired title to a triangular parcel of land between Broad and South Railway Streets and the CPR tracks, then known popularly as "the Gorge." It was renamed Stanley Park and laid out in the style of a flower garden. The cost of maintaining what became Regina's most attractive early park was borne jointly by the town and the CPR.4

There were also early attempts to landscape the grounds surrounding the Lieutenant Governor's residence, which stood in splendid isolation west of the town. The key development here was the hiring of George Watt in 1892. Trained in Scotland, where he had apprenticed on the estate of the Duchess of Athol, Watt was the first to successfully coax carрагana, elm and Manitoba maple to grow and flourish in Regina soil.5

In 1903 the new city of Regina made a second attempt to obtain a portion of the government reserve along the north shore of the reservoir. This time it was successful, and in 1905 city council appointed a committee (comprised of three prominent local businessmen) to act in an advisory capacity in the laying out of Regina's newest park, which became known as Wascana Park (see Map). The committee recommended that the city hold a competition and invite proposals for an appropriate design. It did so in 1906, and awarded first prize ($200) to William Reilly, a local surveyor.6

By this time Regina's attention was focussed on the selection of a capital for the new province of Saskatchewan. The bill establishing the province had named Regina as the provisional capital but stipulated that the local legislature, once elected, would make the final choice. In 1905 Regina had been confident that it was certain to be chosen. After all, it had served as the capital of the North-West Territories for more than twenty years. It was the largest city in the new province. And it could count on the support of local (and Liberal) newspaperman Walter Scott. He had represented the city and district in the House of Commons since 1900 and in September 1905 was sworn in as Saskatchewan's first Premier.
These calculations were nearly upset by the results of the first provincial election. With the constituencies north of the CPR main line solidly Liberal and those farther south evenly divided, it seemed that the government might choose a northern community as capital. The bustling town (and soon to be city) of Saskatoon proved to be the most serious rival. Regina's claim was further weakened by the fact that when the ballots were first counted it appeared that voters there had returned an opposition man. Even Walter Scott was forced to admit that “by giving an adverse majority they have put the Govt [sic] in a mighty precarious position on this question.”

The final count gave the seat to the Liberal candidate, J.F. Bole, by a majority of three votes, and Regina began a determined campaign to keep the capital. One alderman proposed that Victoria Square be turned over to the province as a free site for a new and larger legislative building, though no concrete offer seems in fact to have been made. Saskatoon redoubled its efforts, quietly lining up support among members of the Legislature.

The climax came on 23 May 1906 when W.C. Sutherland, the MLA for Saskatoon, introduced a resolution in the Legislature naming his city as the permanent capital. The spread of railways and consequently of settlement would soon make Saskatoon the more central location, he argued, and it was also the more attractive site. “The Government buildings would overlook the valley in which the greater part of the city is situated and between the city and the buildings will flow the mighty Saskatchewan….”

Saskatoon, he enthused, would be “a second Ottawa.” There was little that J.F. Bole could say to counter the latter argument, though he did dispute the claim that Saskatoon was more central. He also argued that Regina had been the capital for many years and that it had developed certain vested interests which required that the capital remain there. In retrospect the final outcome was predictable. Once Regina was safely in Liberal hands and the danger of political embarrassment was removed, Premier Scott was able to have his way and preserve the status quo, even if he had to crack the party whip to do so. When his turn came to speak on the motion he announced that “the Government has decided to decline to direct the removal of the capital from Regina.” Regina was confirmed as the permanent capital by a vote of twenty-one to two.

Hard on the heels of this decision came another that was to have profound consequences for Regina's physical appearance. It had long been recognized that the Territorial government buildings on Dewdney Avenue were inadequate. The Territorial Council and later Legislative Assembly met in a small wood frame building which was no more imposing than the site it occupied, a single block. A larger “Administration Building,” designed by Dominion Architect Thomas Fuller and completed in 1891, housed the modest Territorial government bureaucracy. Once the “capital question” had been resolved, Premier Scott, who was also Commissioner of Public Works, began drawing up plans for the construction...
of new and more impressive quarters for the Legislative Assembly and the various government departments. The first step was the selection of a site, and this proved no easy task.

In all, Scott and his colleagues considered seven possibilities, including still-treeless Victoria Square, Wascana Park on the north shore of the reservoir and a 168-acre portion of a larger tract of land located south of it which McCallum Hill and Company, an up and coming real estate firm, had acquired and was in the process of subdividing into residential lots. James A. Calder, the Provincial Treasurer, who conducted a thorough review of the sites for the cabinet, argued strongly for the last-mentioned site. On 14 June 1906 he wrote to Scott, stating: “It is high and dry and if the buildings were erected there they would face the city and at the same time overlook the reservoir. The grounds could be easily beautified...” The other members of the cabinet concurred, and Calder promptly purchased the site on behalf of the government for $96,250.12

The choice of the McCallum Hill property proved to be a wise one, for it provided an opportunity to set the province’s new legislative building in spacious grounds; it was not, however, universally applauded at the time. Critics, particularly Regina’s city council, argued that the site was too far from the downtown business district. It was, in fact, outside the incorporated limits of the city and would not be included until Regina extended its boundaries in 1911. In the hope of inducing a change of heart, city council offered to donate Wascana Park instead. Premier Scott declined the offer, but suggested that the park land on both sides of the reservoir be developed as a single entity. This proposal was accepted,13 and the basis was laid for what has become one of the most extensive and attractive urban parks in Canada.

The government then engaged Frederick G. Todd to choose the actual site for the legislative building and begin laying out the grounds. The reasons for Todd’s selection are not entirely clear. The Premier was convinced that a landscape architect should work in conjunction with the architect eventually chosen to design the building, and Scott would certainly have known of Todd’s plan for the national capital. Scott first approached Todd in August 1906. Three months later the landscape architect visited Regina to meet with the provincial government and the city of Regina and to examine first hand the proposed park sites on both sides of the reservoir.14

Todd forwarded his completed plan at the end of January 1907. His principal recommendation was that the legislative building should face north with its centre

...at the axis of Smith Street, on the highest elevation across the lake. This seems to be the best location, as it has the most commanding aspect and such an important building as this should certainly be placed on the axis of some street, and Smith Street seems the only one of the several streets which would be practical.

If set on high ground as Todd proposed, the building would be situated well back from the water. To link the two he proposed that there be “a broad landing and walk leading up to the building, thus rendering it more important as seen from the town.” Although final details concerning the arrangement of the grounds immediately adjacent to the building would have to wait until its design had been fixed, Todd’s plan made provision for other “...drives up to it and a terrace in front.” He also suggested that a number of scenic drives be laid out in Wascana Park on the north shore and that a pavilion be erected at the highest point of land there which would give “good views across the lake to the parliament building and of the full extent of the lake.” Todd even included a general planting plan and promised that more detailed instructions would follow. They arrived in March 1907.15

Next came the choice of an architect. Scott’s initial inclination appears to have been to simply appoint one, as the Alberta government did in 1906.16 Scott even had an architect in mind. “I have almost come to the conclusion,” he confided to Calder in June 1906, “that there is no architect in Canada from whom we can expect as good results as Rattenbury of Victoria....”

Francis Mawson Rattenbury certainly enjoyed a considerable reputation. He had come to British Columbia from Yorkshire in 1892. Less than a year later, at the age of twenty-five, Rattenbury had won the competition to design the new legislative building in Victoria. Thereafter success had followed success. His clients included the Bank of Montreal and the CPR (for whom he designed mountain chalets and the imposing Empress Hotel in Victoria in 1904). By 1906 Rattenbury was preparing the design for the new Vancouver Court House.17

But some of Walter Scott’s colleagues, and the Deputy Commissioner of Public Works, F.J. Robinson, favored a competition, and their view won out.18 Scott approached Percy Erskine Nobbs, then Macdonald Professor of Architecture at McGill University, to take charge of it, but only after making discreet inquiries about his background.19 Born and educated in Scotland, Nobbs had come to McGill in 1903. He brought with him an enthusiasm for vernacular architecture which derived from the Arts and Crafts movement then in vogue in Great Britain. Nobbs soon came to admire the traditional architecture of Quebec, and this served to strengthen his belief that architects should be responsive to local circumstance and culture, geography and climate.20

Nobbs’ influence proved to be considerable. He per-
suaded Scott that the competition should be a limited one (that is, it would not be open to all architects). In the end they agreed that seven architectural firms would be invited to participate. Rattenbury's was one of the seven, of course, along with four other Canadian firms: Storey and Van Egmond (Regina), Darling and Pearson (Winnipeg and Toronto), E. and W.S. Maxwell (Montreal) and Marchand and Haskell (Montreal). One British firm (Mitchell and Raine) and one American (Cass Gilbert, whose design of the Minnesota state capitol Scott also much admired) rounded out the field. Nobbs also drew up the conditions for the architectural competition.21 These too reflected Nobbs' thinking. With regard to the design of the building, he pointed out that "as the site is so far from the city, some dominating feature such as a dome or tower is suggested." The specific style to be employed would of course be left to each of the competitors, but Nobbs did remind them that "the Province is politically within the British Empire, and that this fact should be expressed in its public buildings." He also urged the participants to consider the climate, availability of building materials and local labour conditions in preparing their submissions. Indeed, he indicated that these factors would "...largely... dictate the type of building selected by the Assessors." While the precise building material to be employed would be determined later, for the purposes of the competition all designs were to assume that the completed structure would be clad in red brick with "pale buff limestone trimmings."22

It had at first been intended that there would be two assessors: Nobbs, of course, and (on Nobbs' recommendation) Bertram Goodhue, partner in the New York City firm of Cram, Goodhue and Ferguson.23 But one of the competitors, Cass Gilbert, expressed misgivings to Premier Scott about Goodhue's qualifications and urged that a third assessor be added. Scott promised to take the matter up with Nobbs, who was agreeable. Rather than delay the competition while a third assessor was sought, the Premier amended the conditions to give him the authority to add one later.24 Despite Nobbs' misgivings, Scott decided to solicit suggestions from each of the competitors; Francis Rattenbury suggested that the Premier himself serve as the third assessor. On the basis of their responses, Scott drew up a list of three. The first two were not available, as it turned out, but Scott's third choice—Frank Miles Day, past president of the American Institute of Architects—agreed to serve.25

As is well known, the assessors unanimously chose the design submitted by Edward and William Sutherland Maxwell. Edward and his younger brother had built a flourishing architectural practice in Montreal, counting the banks and the CPR among their clients. William had studied at the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris, and the Beaux-Arts style is reflected in several of their early commissions, including a Royal Bank branch in Westmount (1903) and the CPR station in Winnipeg (1904). It is also reflected in their design for Saskatchewan's Legislative Building, though the Maxwell themselves were to describe the completed building as "...a free adaption of English Renaissance work...that marks it unmistakably as representative of the British sovereignty under which the Province is governed."26 Architectural critics have noted that it is not as rigorous an expression of Beaux-Arts style as is found in American state capitols of the period. To cite the most obvious difference, the columned base (or drum) supporting the Maxwells' dome is square; those on the Rhode Island and Minnesota state capitols, both of which were completed in 1905, are round.27 This, Kelly Crossman has observed, was the genius of the Maxwells' design: they took the American state capitol and gave it a British character. In the process they managed to "capture the nature of the new western provinces: essentially British societies on the plains of North America."28

The construction of the Legislative Building, the largest public works project undertaken in Saskatchewan to that time, was awarded to another Montreal firm, P. Lyall and Sons. (Their tender price was $1,424,150.)29 On the bare prairie south of Regina an army of workmen were soon driving piles and pouring concrete. Gradually the Legislative Building began to take form. Premier Scott decided that its appearance would be cheapened if it was finished in brick, and instead chose Tyndal limestone.30 As the work progressed, the province began to take steps to enhance the grounds surrounding the seat of government. In 1908, for example, it built a new concrete bridge and dam across Wascana Creek at Albert Street. It was necessary to drain the reservoir during construction, and this permitted the deepening of its shallower portions to make it a more attractive "lake."31

Two years later the provincial government had Edward and W.S. Maxwell prepare a more detailed scheme for the layout of the property adjacent to the Legislative Building, using the original Todd Plan as the basis for their design. It was now possible to be more specific about the location of the driveways which Todd had only been able to hint at. On the Maxwells' plan, one driveway would follow the shore of Wascana Lake and another would encircle the Legislative Building. A semi-circular driveway flanked by broad sidewalks would provide access to its three front entrances. Todd had also suggested some formal treatment of the property between the lake and the central entrance to the Legislative Building. The Maxwells elaborated on this concept as well, proposing walks, a wide lawn and two fountains, all enclosed by a border of hedges. They also introduced a number of new features in their 1910 plan, notably a conservatory to be located south of the Legislative Building.32
The province also acquired title to an additional parcel of land on the north shore, east of Wascana Park, when it took over the administration of jails from the federal government. The Regina jail, built in 1886, was located near the reservoir. Part of the property was laid out as a farm, with the inmates providing the labour. In 1911 the Scott government sold twenty-three acres fronting on Sixteenth Avenue to a group of prominent Regina Methodists who proceeded to build a residential high school, Regina College, on the site. In time it also hoped to offer university work.

Anticipating that the jail itself would eventually be relocated, and having found another site for the jail farm in the meantime, the provincial government began that same year to conceive an even more ambitious beautification scheme. In June 1911 the Morning Leader gave a hint of what the government had in mind. The largest part of the “jail farm” property, located south of Sixteenth Avenue between Broad and Winnipeg Streets, would be laid out as a high-class residential area, with fifteen acres of it set aside for a proposed Anglican cathedral and college. The principal streets would be oriented to the southwest, ...all focussing on the dome of the Parliament Building—that is, looking southwesterly down the whole length of these broad avenues the dome would be the predominant feature, just as the dome of the Capitol building at Washington is visible down a score of streets.

Farther south there would be another park, twice the size of Wascana Park. “With the carrying out of this magnificent plan,” the province’s leading Liberal newspaper exclaimed, the Government will have completed the laying out of all the grounds surrounding the Parliament Buildings. The general effect will be the creation of what will practically be a magnificent park of over 600 acres in extent right in the heart of Regina, divided in the centre by Wascana lake, and having within its bounds such splendid monumental structures as the Parliament Buildings, Methodist College, Anglican College, Anglican Cathedral, and in all probability ultimately the Supreme Court buildings, Normal School and Government House.

Private interests were active too. After 1906 McCallum Hill and Company began to promote the land it owned west of the Legislative Building site as

The Legislative Building under construction, 1910. It was Premier Walter Scott's decision that the Legislative Building be finished in Tyndal limestone rather than red brick as first proposed.
Regina’s most exclusive residential district. W.H.A. Hill, E.D. McCallum and other prominent Reginans erected substantial homes in “Lakeview,” some costing as much as $30,000.36

The municipal government also took some important initiatives. In addition to collaborating with the province in implementing Frederick Todd’s plan for Wascana Park, it hired him to prepare a landscaping scheme for Victoria Square. The trees planted there prior to World War I would in time transform this barren tract into a delightful downtown park.37 In 1911 the city hired Malcolm Ross as “Superintendent of Parks.” Ross had been employed for a time as a landscape gardener on private estates in the eastern United States before coming west in 1892. He had worked for a time at the Dominion Experimental Farm at Indian Head, then took up farming in southern Manitoba.38

One of Ross’ first tasks was to identify possible sites for new parks in the city. His report was almost certainly completed by the fall of 1912. By all accounts it was a comprehensive document, though no copy appears to have survived save in newspaper accounts.39 Its most striking feature was a proposal that the city acquire the land adjacent to Wascana Creek for a distance of approximately sixteen miles. Two large new parks would be laid out at either end, and these would be connected by scenic drives. The centrepiece of this elongated park would of course be

...Wascana Lake with its architectural surroundings and...the wide strip which is being reserved for public purposes by the provincial government along the lake. This, including the Wascana Park, should be considered as the real centre of development. No scheme can be considered as complete or satisfactory which has no definite beginning or ‘Gateway’...The Wascana park appears admirably suited for development as a magnificent entrance to a continuous park scheme, but the only logical position of the entrance is the northwest corner, which it has been proposed to use for other purposes.40

And indeed it had, for the city found it hard to resist the blandishments (and bullying) of powerful railway corporations. Anxious to attract the two new transcontinental railways, but wary of the congestion that would result if each built its own passenger terminal, the city favored the construction of a union station that would serve all three. It was even prepared to turn over Stanley Park to achieve this objective. As it turned out, only the CPR and the Canadian Northern could reach an agreement to share such a joint facility, and then only after protracted negotiations and the sacrificing of a portion of Stanley Park to provide access to it.41

The Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP) was bent on a different course. Seeking to avoid high land prices, its Melville-Regina line skirted the northern and western boundaries of the city, leading some to assume that it would enter Regina from the west along Sixteenth Avenue. It did, but not before extracting a series of concessions in November 1910. The city gave the GTP land for spur tracks and freight sheds, and agreed to close a number of streets so that the company could build a short line along Sixteenth Avenue to Albert Street, where it proposed to construct its own passenger station. The GTP also agreed to build a “first class hotel” in the vicinity of the station, to make Regina a divisional point and to erect suitable shops and other facilities on land it acquired north of the city.42

Two years later city council agreed to lease a portion of Wascana Park (the northwest corner in fact) to the GTP and provide tax and other concessions for the construction of its hotel. Designed in the “Château Style” which had become so popular for Canadian railway hotels, it was to cost $1,000,000 with furnishings and would contain 174 rooms on eight floors. Two of Regina’s three daily newspapers and some leading citizens condemned city council’s action, to be sure, but their objections centered around its refusal to submit the agreement to the ratepayers for ratification. Three aldermen also opposed it, but again on the grounds that it ought to have been put to a vote. Only a few agreed with Norman F. Black, a prominent Regina educator, that the alienation of any park property was a “civic blunder,” and construction of the “Château Qu’Appelle” began with great fanfare at the end of October 1912.43

It would be easy to condemn the city for its lack of

Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B 8606. Sketch of the proposed Château Qu’Appelle Hotel. Designed for the Grand Trunk Railway in the “Château Style” which was then very fashionable, it was to have 174 rooms on eight floors and cost $1,000,000 to complete.
foresight, as Norman Black did, but the provincial government also acquiesced in the arrangement. From the outset its newspaper organ in Regina supported the leasing of part of Wascana Park to the GTP. The hotel’s location in the park and its proximity to the Legislative Building would place Regina in the same advantageous position as Ottawa and Victoria, where hotels built in similar locations had become the object of great civic pride. When a bill ratifying the city’s agreement with the GTP was introduced in the Legislature, not a single government member raised any objection to it.45

As for Malcolm Ross, he had left the city’s employ by the time council considered, and quietly shelved, his ambitious parks scheme.46 Ross took a similar position with the provincial government, and here he was to prove far more influential.

By the time Malcolm Ross became the province’s “Landscape Architect” there was growing dissatisfaction with the 1907 Todd Plan. George Watt, the Government House gardener who had been given the responsibility of supervising plantings on the Legislative Building grounds, believed that “...on account of the entire change of the lay-out, this plan is absolutely useless...” It seems most likely that Watt was referring to the Maxwell’s modifications to the Todd Plan, for he went on to make some suggestions of his own for the further enhancement of the Legislative Building grounds. These included the addition of facilities for lawn bowling and tennis “...for the use of members while house is in session...preferably to South of Building,” sports grounds and a bathing pool. Watt recommended that the government commission a fresh plan.47 It must have been more than a coincidence that within two weeks of Watt writing this letter to his superior, the Department of Public Works began to quietly secure the names of internationally renowned city planners.48

Watt’s letter aside, the government must have been under considerable pressure to seek a new planner, given its decision to include the property east of Wascana Park in its overall development scheme. Indeed its plans for the development of this area were already well-advanced. By 1912 Regina architects Edgar M. Storey and William G. Van Egmond had completed the design of one of the buildings to be located there, a normal school.49 Construction was underway by the end of the year. The government also had a site in mind for the new Lieutenant-Governor’s residence: directly east of the Legislative Building on the opposite shore of Wascana Lake.50

Malcolm Ross, too, had misgivings about the Todd Plan and the Maxwell’s additions to it. He shared them with the prominent firm of English landscape architects and town planners, Thomas Mawson and Sons, which had recently opened a Canadian office in Vancouver. J.W. Mawson, head of the Vancouver branch, was quick to reply. “On the whole,” he told Ross in December 1912, “I think it would be very much to the advantage of the government if they decided to commission us to prepare an entire new scheme, subject, of course, to due consideration being given to the existing work.”51

Thomas Mawson was not one of those recommended to the Department of Public Works as a result of its quiet canvass.52 The government, however, certainly was aware of him and his considerable reputation. Mawson was then at the height of his career. He had laid out numerous public parks and prepared town planning schemes for clients in Great Britain and Europe, and had published two books on these subjects. In 1912 he began to look farther afield, making the first of several well-publicized speaking tours across the United States and Canada. By all accounts Mawson had a forceful personality and was a compelling platform speaker; in fact he was to prove the most influential proponent of City Beautiful planning ever to set foot in Canada. Partly as a result of his speaking tours and partly his own persuasiveness, Thomas Mawson obtained commissions in Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Calgary, Banff and Vancouver.53

It was during his initial Canadian tour, in the spring of 1912, that Mawson first spoke in Regina. He made another tour in the fall and stopped in Regina again, on his way to Saskatoon to begin the preparation of a landscaping and general plan for the University of Saskatchewan.54 In his autobiography, whose chronology is not entirely reliable, Mawson claims that on the second visit he obtained a commission “…to lay out the gardens and park surrounding the Parliament Buildings, also a building estate of about three hundred acres.”55 Mawson may well have discussed the matter with the government at that time,56 but his firm did not forward a detailed cost estimate until February 1913. The government reviewed this, and presumably the lengthy memorandum which Malcolm Ross prepared on the “laying out of the government property north of Wascana Creek.”57 In May 1913 it reached an agreement with Thomas Mawson and Sons to prepare a plan for the proposed high-class residential district and a general report covering the whole of the government property.58

Mawson’s reputation also appealed to the city of Regina. In quietly shelving Malcolm Ross’ parks plan early in 1913, city council had decided to secure the services of a “landscape architect of international reputation” to prepare a more comprehensive scheme.59 It hired Thomas Mawson. Reputation aside, there were also practical reasons for choosing him. As the City Commissioners put it in their report to council:

Mr. Mawson is at present engaged in the preparation of a plan to cover the whole of the Government’s property which covers a large section of the residential area as well as the grounds.
around the Legislative Buildings. Mr. Mawson's reputation in his profession is beyond question and your Commissioners are of opinion that his services can be obtained so that his plan might cover the whole of the city and not a part only, the general public interests would be better served than by the selection of another City Planning Expert, whose plan in all probability would not dovetail in with that which Mr. Mawson will submit to the Government.  

The Department of Public Works, and particularly Malcolm Ross, worked closely with Thomas Mawson. Indeed Ross would be listed as a collaborator on the completed plans. Evidence of Ross' influence can be found most clearly in the provision for a driveway skirting the north shore of Wascana Lake from Winnipeg Street to Albert Street. Mawson's landscaping plan for the grounds surrounding the Legislative Building also owed much to Ross, as Mawson readily acknowledged.

In other respects, too, Mawson elaborated a concept which the government had already begun to develop. For example, Premier Scott and his colleagues had already determined the general location for a new and more palatial Lieutenant-Governor's residence. They had also commissioned Edward and W.S. Maxwell to prepare architectural drawings for it, drawings which were completed by the time Mawson was hired. Even Mawson's recommendation that it be centered on the formal driveway which was to run from Albert Street east across the front of the Legislative Building (rather than, for example, on the Legislative Building itself) might well have originated with Malcolm Ross. The same can be said of Mawson's proposal that two artificial islands be created adjacent to the Lieutenant-Governor's residence. A similar feature appears, albeit farther east, on the plan Ross prepared for the city of Regina in 1912. The location of the Anglican cathedral and the general street layout in the proposed high-class residential area had also been determined prior to Mawson's receiving the commission from the province.

On the other hand, Mawson's plan was the first to make provision for future government office buildings. These were to be located south of the Legislative Building, flanking a formal landscaped mall.

Whatever its provenance, the 1913 Mawson Plan is testimony to the continued determination of the Scott government to make Regina a fitting capital for the province of Saskatchewan. Little of the Mawson Plan would be carried out, however, for by this time Saskatchewan was beginning to feel the effects of a world-wide financial depression. The government decided almost immediately not to proceed with construction of the Lieutenant-Governor's residence in 1913. Cost was the reason. Saskatchewan's new vice-regal residence was to have been an imposing structure. By the Maxwells' own estimate it would have cost $150,000 to build, but all of the tenders received exceeded even that figure. Economic conditions did not improve in 1914, and construction was postponed again. When war came in August, the government quietly shelved the scheme.

The most important legacy of Walter Scott's vision for the provincial capital was not the building that was never constructed, but the one that was, that "...superb great House of Parliament, with a wide sheet of water in front of it...." as the English poet Rupert Brooke described it when he visited Regina in 1913. The landscaping of the grounds was well-advanced: by 1913 a total of 10,885 trees and shrubs had been set out. There were 61,800 more, representing some 233 different varieties, in the government's nursery. This park-in-the-making was already becoming a popular recreation spot for Regina residents, particularly after Sunday street car service was inaugurated in 1913. (The car line ran south across the Albert Street bridge to the Legislative Building.) Swimming and picnicking were the most popular pastimes. The Regina Boat Club, organized in 1907, also used Wascana Lake for its regattas.

The prewar depression also cooled the city's enthusiasm for the plan which it had commissioned Thomas Mawson to prepare. A preliminary draft was almost certainly ready by the time war broke out, but the city had no wish to see it. The collapse of the boom was also doubtless responsible for the shelving of a proposal to create a joint provincial-municipal "Capital Parks Commission" with wide-ranging powers to make Regina a "City Beautiful." The war stopped construction of the Grand Trunk Pacific's lavish hotel in Wascana Park, with the steel framework only partially erected. The hotel was still unfinished in 1919 when the GTP went bankrupt. Work never did resume. In the mid-1920s the steel girders were dismantled and the site was cleared and returned to the city. As for the Anglican cathedral, no architectural drawings had even been prepared by 1914, or ever would be. The laying out of the high-class residential district that was to surround it was also abandoned.

After 1914 the provincial government showed no interest in beautification schemes for Saskatchewan's capital city. Some of the individuals who appear to have been the driving force behind earlier efforts departed from the scene. Malcolm Ross, for example, enlisted in the Canadian Expeditionary Force (CEF) in 1914. Walter Scott left public life two years later on account of ill health (and was succeeded as Premier by another Regean, William Melville Martin). Even if they had stayed, though, the war would have stifled any new initiatives.

Saskatchewan's contribution to the war effort proved to be a substantial one. Its residents gave generously to the Canadian Patriotic Fund, the Red Cross, Belgian relief and other worthy causes. The

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1917 and 1918 “Victory Loan” bond drives were both oversubscribed. A total of 844 commissioned officers, 70 nursing sisters and more than 40,000 other ranks eventually enlisted for service in the CEF. Six Saskatchewan men were awarded the Victoria Cross, the Empire’s highest recognition for valour. By war’s end Saskatchewan units had suffered 17,594 casualties, including 4,385 deaths.\textsuperscript{73}

The “boys” began to return home to Saskatchewan in the spring of 1919. They were greeted by cheering crowds and civic receptions, and an announcement that the provincial government intended to erect a War Memorial Museum in Regina at a cost of $400,000. In making the formal announcement on 9 April 1919 the Minister of Public Works, A.P. McNab, indicated that the building was to serve a two-fold purpose. It would be first and foremost a fitting memorial to the province’s war dead, whose names would be immortalized in a “hall of honor.” It would also display war trophies captured by Saskatchewan units and provide a permanent home for a natural history collection which the province had begun to assemble in 1906.\textsuperscript{74}

The idea of constructing such an elaborate building did not emerge full-blow at the end of the war. Rather, it evolved out of a more modest conception which appears to have originated with the three soldier representatives elected to the Saskatchewan legislature in 1917. One of the overseas MLAs, Captain F.B. Bagshaw, wrote to Premier Martin in April 1918 urging the provincial government to begin collecting war trophies with a view to their eventual display in a “Saskatchewan War Museum.” Bagshaw even suggested a possible location for this museum: the former Territorial government buildings on Dewdney Avenue. Bagshaw and his fellow MLAs, Colonel J.A. Cross and Private Harris Turner, also sought the support of other influential individuals, including prominent Regina lawyer and art collector Norman MacKenzie.\textsuperscript{75} For his part the Premier “took up....the matter of getting our share of the war trophies....” when he visited Great Britain during the summer of 1918. By December the government had decided to build a museum to house them.\textsuperscript{76}

Martin decided to follow the example of his predecessor and hold a limited competition to select a suitable design. The first step was to find someone to conduct the competition. Again the province looked to McGill University and chose Professor Ramsay Traquair, who had succeeded Percy Nobbs when the latter went into private practice. Septimus Warwick, another Montreal architect, was subsequently selected as the second assessor.

Then came the preparation of the conditions for the competition. The government decided that the War Memorial Museum (as it was now officially known) would be located south-west of the Legislative Building, facing Albert Street. Coincidentally or not, the site corresponded to one which Thomas Mawson had set aside for a future government office building in his 1913 plan. The “Conditions of Competition for the Selection of an Architect for the Proposed War Memorial Museum at Regina, Saskatchewan” made no stipulation with respect to its design, other than that it should be in harmony with the Legislative Building. And like that imposing structure, the museum was to be finished in Tyndal limestone.\textsuperscript{77}

Percy Nobbs and his partner G.T. Hyde were invited to enter the competition, and they won out over seven other Montreal, Winnipeg and Saskatchewan firms. While they prepared detailed drawings, the province began to accumulate a wide variety of captured German field guns, trench mortars and other weapons, including at least one airplane.\textsuperscript{78} It was initially the government’s intention to erect the muse-
um in 1920, but other proposed buildings competed for funds at the cabinet table. While the government proceeded with construction of a normal school in Saskatoon and the province’s second mental hospital in Weyburn that year, it postponed even calling for tenders for the War Memorial Museum. A postwar depression led to further delays. Wheat prices fell sharply in 1920 and 1921, and remained far below record wartime levels until mid-decade. Neither W.M. Martin nor his successor, Charles Dunning (another Regina man who assumed the premiership in 1922) could have justified the cost of the War Memorial Museum to the province’s hard-pressed farmers. Although wheat prices, and hence the provincial economy, began to recover in 1925, the ornate building which Nobbs and Hyde had designed would never be completed.

The same fate befell Thomas Mawson’s master plan for Regina. The city continued to refuse to accept it, even after the provincial Town Planning and Rural Development Act (1917) compelled Regina and other cities to prepare a development plan by 1921 and appoint a board to implement it. As a result of pressure from the provincial government, the city eventually relented and informed Mawson that he could complete and submit a preliminary report. Designed for a population of 120,000, it incorporated all of the elements found in his 1913 plan for the property surrounding the Legislative Building and added a proposal for a grandiose civic centre consisting of a city hall, court house and other public buildings. These were to be grouped together between the north shore of Wascana Lake and Sixteenth Avenue and were intended to complement the Legislative Building on the south shore of the lake. (Indeed they were to be situated on the axis of Smith Street just as the Legislative Building was.) Mawson’s Regina: A Preliminary Report on the Development of the City also proposed that a system of diagonal roadways be superimposed on the city’s existing rectangular grid layout, and made a number of other costly suggestions.

The whole plan was, in fact, an anachronism. It harkened back to the grandiose City Beautiful concepts that had been so much in fashion before the war. By the time Mawson was allowed to complete it, Regina was in no position financially to implement it. Instead, the city took a less ambitious and less expensive approach to town planning. In 1924 it created a town planning board, composed of senior municipal officials and members of the recently founded (1922) Regina Town Planning Association. These individuals then prepared a draft zoning by-law, which was adopted in 1927. The ambitious plans which Thomas Mawson had prepared for the city and the province were not completely lost sight of during the 1920s. The Landscape Architect’s Branch of the Department of Public Works continued to follow his plan in planting trees and shrubs on the grounds of the Legislative Building. In 1920 it implemented another of Mawson’s recommendations, laying out a series of ornamental flower beds between Wascana Lake and the Legislative Building. These soon became the most distinctive feature of the grounds.

In the early 1920s the city and the province also briefly considered the construction of a memorial drive-way along the north shore of Wascana Lake, but nothing came of it. Instead the city decided in 1925 to erect a cenotaph in Victoria Park to honor the memory of those Rejilans who had fallen in battle during World War I.

From 1919 on there was also some interest in creating at least one of the artificial islands which Mawson had proposed to locate east of the Legislative Building. There was more interest in raising the level of the lake, particularly on the part of the Regina Boat Club and others who used it for recreational purposes, but also by the Board of Trade and the municipal and provincial governments. The city used lake water to cool the turbines in the power plant which it had built east of Winnipeg Street in 1914. Both the city and the province drew water from the lake to irrigate the lawns and shrubs that were making the area such a beauty spot. The level of the lake was of course controlled by a dam beneath the Albert Street bridge. Matters came to a head in 1929, for by this time the bridge required significant repairs. The city also now judged it too narrow, and approached the province (which, it will be recalled, had built the original structure) with a proposal that the bridge also be widened to carry four lanes of traffic. Since Wascana Lake would have to be drained to facilitate such extensive reconstruction, it could be deepened at the same time. City and provincial officials quickly reached an agreement in principle to repair and widen the bridge, excavate the lake bottom and build two islands with the fill.

It was at this point that the cycle of boom and bust turned again, as first wheat prices and then the entire provincial economy began to collapse. To make matters worse, there was severe drought across much of southern and western Saskatchewan. The ranks of the unemployed grew ever larger as 1929 gave way to 1930. Caring for them, and for drought-stricken farmers, depleted municipal and provincial treasuries.

Under such circumstances it might have been expected that even these modest initiatives to improve the appearance of the Legislative Building grounds would have been abandoned. In fact they were undertaken at once as relief work schemes, with the cost shared by the city (fifty percent) and the two senior governments (twenty-five percent each). The bridge was rebuilt in a vaguely Art Deco style in 1930, and renamed the Albert Memorial Bridge in honour of Regina’s war dead. The project provided work for 710
unemployed men. The following year Wascana Lake was deepened by two feet and two islands, now known as Willow Island and Spruce Island, were constructed. Neither, it can be noted from the map, was put in the exact location which Thomas Mawson had proposed.) This work was even more labour intensive, employing 2,058 different men for at least one six-day shift. The Regina Board of Trade thought at the time that the city and the province should go farther and create a “Joint Parks Improvement Commission.” It attempted to convince the two levels of government to act, but without success. The notion of a Joint Parks Improvement Commission was to suffer the same fate as the earlier, and equally ephemeral, Capital Parks Commission.

What has been the ultimate legacy of the Mawson Plans? By the early 1930s Regina was a more attractive place than it had been at the turn of the century. Nowhere was the change in Regina’s appearance more striking than along the banks of modest Wascana Lake, itself created by damming a meandering creek. Where once there had been only flat prairie, there were now wide lawns, attractive flower beds and shrubs, and a “...sturdy young forest of trees...” to provide a formal setting for the province’s imposing, neoclassical Legislative Building. Most of the credit for this transformation has been given to Thomas Mawson, and far less to those who preceded him: Frederick Todd, Edward and W.S. Maxwell and Malcolm Ross. To the extent that Mawson built upon (and indeed borrowed from) their earlier plans, they deserve greater recognition than they have received. They, no less than Mawson, saw in Wascana Lake and the land surrounding it the one natural endowment upon which the city and the province should capitalize.

Succeeding planners shared this vision, including E.G. Faludi in his 1947 plan for the city of Regina, and the Toronto firm of Shore and Moffat, which in 1960 was assigned the task of assessing possible sites in Regina for a satellite campus of the University of Saskatchewan. There were two possibilities: the existing Regina College property (which Shore and Moffat judged too small), and a larger parcel of land south of the uppermost portion of Wascana Lake. The province owned the property, but had leased it to the federal government for use as an experimental farm. Since the land was undeveloped, there would be nothing to “…hinder free planning of a new campus.” The consultants were not unaware of Thomas Mawson’s earlier plan for the property surrounding the Legislative Building and Wascana Lake, and advanced another argument in favour of the experimental farm site:

The proposed new Campus Site at one end of ...Wascana Lake and joined by continuous lakeside parkland to the established Provincial Capital at the Albert Street end is a natural extension in a contemporary manner of earlier plans.... The Governmental, Civic and Educational group can then complete one complex centred around Wascana Lake which is the most significant landmark of the City of Regina. The prospect of this great development extends to the present the original vision of fifty years ago when the Capitol plan was started.

The physical fundamentals are available in this site and with renewed vision and imagination it is possible to create a capital centre in which the Province, the University and the City can share a prominence of great significance...

The Shore and Moffat study hinted at something far more ambitious than the construction of a university campus. It led, in fact, to the creation of the Wascana Centre Authority two years later. Wascana Centre, which now comprises some 2,300 acres in the heart of Regina, provides an attractive setting for the

![The Albert Memorial Bridge, c. 1935. Built as a relief work scheme in 1930, the bridge features elements of Art Deco style.](Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-B 3078)
Legislative Building, government offices, the University of Regina, museums, an auditorium and other cultural facilities.

Thomas Mawson also conceived an elaborate civic centre which, in terms of its grandeur, would have rivalled the Legislative Building and its environs. Although it proved too ambitious and expensive for the city to undertake, E.G. Faludi made a similar proposal for a civic centre to be located west of Victoria Park. In more buoyant economic times the city has implemented much of it; the last building to be constructed in the civic centre, a new city hall, was completed in 1978.

There is a danger, however, in becoming preoccupied with the handiwork of architects and planners, however gifted. They have unquestionably made Regina a more attractive city, but the historian ought not to lose sight of the client, and of the client's conception of how Regina's physical appearance might be enhanced. The vision of Saskatchewan's first Premier, Walter Scott, and the decisions of successive provincial (and sometimes municipal) governments, the opportunities they seized, or ignored, or abandoned, have also shaped the urban landscape in Saskatchewan's capital city.

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Assessor.” (Conditions of Competition, L.)
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competitors, 30 November 1907. In their biography of Francis
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the third assessor but that the Premier “suffered a breakdown
in health which forced him to withdraw from the selection
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Crossman makes a similar assertion (147). Unfortunately
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Ross certainly made such a suggestion to the government. (Ibid., File 111, M. Ross to Acting Deputy Minister, 8 January 1913.)

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“The Most Good to the Indians”: 

The Reverend James Nisbet and the Prince Albert Mission

By W.D. (Bill) Smiley

The story of the Reverend James Nisbet, the founder of Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, is one of pioneer courage. While Nisbet’s mission to the Indians on the North Saskatchewan River met with only limited success, his farming operations in the transition zone between parkland and forest succeeded so well that settlers from the Red River area, and eventually from eastern Canada, came and made Prince Albert the first agricultural community in what is now the Province of Saskatchewan. In this sense, James Nisbet was a trail blazer.

James Nisbet was born in Glasgow, Scotland in 1823, the son of Jean Crawford and Thomas Nisbet, a carpenter and shipbuilder. The youngest of ten children, some of whom died at an early age, James was brought up as a Presbyterian. As a youth, James expressed interest in becoming a missionary for the church. When he was eighteen, he and his brother Henry set off on foot for London to enlist in the Foreign Bible Society. Henry was accepted and spent most of his life as a missionary in Samoa. James, because of his youth, was not accepted, and so he trudged back to Glasgow. Here he joined his father in his trade and became a competent carpenter.¹

In 1844 Thomas Nisbet, his son James and two daughters, Isabelle and Janet (married to Robert Paterson who died in 1847) immigrated to Canada and settled in Oakville, Canada West (now Ontario). Jean, the eldest of the Nisbet children, had immigrated to Toronto in 1827; another daughter, Sarah, died in Sarnia in 1847.

James had not lost his desire to do the Lord’s work in the Presbyterian Church. He enrolled in the first class at Knox College in 1844. One of his classmates, John Black, continued as a close friend and fellow worker in the western missions.²

After completing his course, Nisbet, who had taught Sunday School in Glasgow at the age of fifteen, was employed by the Canada Sabbath School Union to travel across Canada West to promote the importance of Sabbath Schools. In 1850, he received a call to be minister of the congregations of Oakville and Sixteen Mile Creek and was ordained in January 1850. He continued to minister in Oakville until 1862. During these years he was called to do missionary work in a number of communities.³ The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church observed in November 1874 that Nisbet “had many peculiar qualifications both mental and physical for missionary work. He loved the work and engaged in it with zeal and heartiness and laboured with perseverance and patience beyond praise.”⁴

In 1862 Nisbet received an appointment from the Presbyterian Church of Canada to go to Kildonan (in present-day Manitoba) to work with John Black on the Red River. Nisbet used his skills as a carpen-

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ter to help build churches and schools in the Red River communities.

In 1864, James Nisbet married Mary McBeath, the daughter of the Honourable Robert McBeath, one of the original Selkirk settlers. Mary loyally supported her husband during the next ten years of hard work, hardship and suffering. It is fitting that Prince Albert has named a beautiful campground after her, as she had a great deal of experience camping on a number of trips over the Carlton Trail. She was a remarkable pioneer woman who not only endured the hardships of pioneering but also shared the frustrations that her husband experienced in dealing with the hierarchy of the Presbyterian Church of Canada.

Black and Nisbet were concerned about the need for missions to the Indians of the plains. Part of the mandate of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Canada Presbyterian Church was to promote and guide missionary work among Indians and European immigrants in western Canada. Black repeatedly asked the church to fund such a mission, but it was not until 1865 that a mission was authorized and funding was provided.

The next task was to find a missionary to establish the mission. Nisbet was offered the position but he declined saying that it was an appointment for a younger, more robust man. When it became evident that no other, younger minister would accept the appointment, he humbly agreed to accept the task. Nisbet did not speak Cree and this was to prove a major disadvantage.

In the spring of 1866, preparations were under way for the long trip to the West. Nisbet decided to travel to Fort Carlton on the North Saskatchewan River and from there determine the best location for a mission. The Red River parishes of Kildonan, Headingley, Little Britain and Fort Garry that Black and Nisbet had served were generous with gifts of animals and equipment for the trip and the new mission.

It required considerable planning to prepare for the trip and to gather the supplies that would be required by the mission party. John McKay, a large, powerful man noted for his prowess as a buffalo hunter, his ability to speak Cree, and his good relations with the Indians, volunteered to act as a guide for the party. Mrs. McKay, a sister of Mrs. Nisbet, accompanied her husband. The party was composed of Nisbet and his wife, their small daughter, John and Mrs. McKay and their two small daughters, and two workmen, Alex Polson and William McBeath. Later, another young man, James Green, was engaged for the trip. Along with the party already mentioned, two young women on their way to Fort Pitt and Victoria Mission (both on the North Saskatchewan River) also joined the party and travelled with them to Fort Carlton. The carts, supplies and livestock were eventually collected at Fairfield, west of Kildonan.

The Nisbets remained in the manse at Kildonan for the night of June 6, and joined the party at Fairfield on June 7. It was a painful departure for Mrs. Nisbet and Mrs. McKay because a younger sister was quite ill and two older brothers had left for St. Cloud. Mr. McBeath, their father, was unhappy about the loss of so many family members.

Mr. and Mrs. Black accompanied the Nisbets to Fairfield, and on the way Black and Nisbet called on Governor MacTavish. He kindly furnished Nisbet with a letter to the officers of the various forts instructing them to assist the mission party in the safe storage of their supplies.5

The party had intended to leave on Thursday, June 7; bad weather delayed their departure until Monday, June 11. On Sunday, they received the sad news that their McBeath sister had died. This was a serious blow. There was some discussion about whether either Mrs. Nisbet or Mrs. McKay should return and stay with their father. As

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Mr. and Mrs. John McKay in later years. John McKay assisted Rev. Nisbet with the work of establishing the Prince Albert Mission. At the time this photograph was taken, McKay was an ordained minister.
Nisbet wrote later to Rev. R.F. Burns: “We finally came to the decision that having deliberately and prayerfully come to the conclusion to go on together, and having actually set out, providence seemed to say ‘go forward’.”

The party had eleven carts and one light wagon, twelve oxen, one horse, and one cow belonging to the mission. John McKay had one cart and three horses of his own. William McBeath had one horse; Nisbet had a horse, two cows and a calf. In their preparations they discovered that they required an additional cart and even then they had to leave a load of flour, the lack of which would be felt the coming of winter.

The first nine days of their journey was described by Nisbet in a letter to Reverend Burns that June:

Thus far we have got along pretty well, the oxen making a good distance each day - the roads are very fair considering that so much rain had fallen lately. The creeks and little rivers are high, and the banks soft, giving some difficulty in crossing - but we have passed all of them as yet with loaded carts except the Little Saskatchewan. We came to that river at 9 o'clock, and found that the water would come into the carts, so we could not attempt to cross with the loads on. A float was made by lashing two cart wheels together, and then lashing four popular poles on them in the form of a quadrangle, over which an oil-cloth is bound and after being in the water a little while this becomes quite water tight and will float a cart load at a time. A line fastened to the float is passed to either side of the stream by which it is drawn backward and forward, while one wading in the water guides the frail craft. It was 1 p.m. when the work of crossing began and the whole was on the opposite bank by 7 p.m. This morning the loads were made up afresh, and after taking dinner we started on our way again.

The party’s experiences on the trail were again described by Nisbet in a January 1867 letter to Sabbath School children in Ontario:

We had tents such as soldiers use, which we pitched every night, and in them we were generally very comfortable. The Sabbaths were delightful to us. Both men and animals were always prepared for a weekly rest. It was pleasant to see the poor oxen and horses evidently enjoying the rich pasture of the wilderness. We had Sabbath services... We passed over a great deal of beautiful country, with hills and valleys, streams and lakes and ponds. Hundreds of ducks were swimming about in the little lakes, and sometimes they furnished a dinner for us; cranes were also seen occasionally, and a few of them were shot for our Sabbath dinners. We did not see very many Indians on our way.

After crossing the Little Saskatchewan River, the party made good progress toward Fort Ellice, traveling at least ten hours each day. One ox became lame and the spare ox had to be used earlier than expected. Each of the three young men in the party became ill in turn, illustrating the need for a full complement of men and animals. No outside help was available.

On Monday, June 25, the party crossed the Assiniboine River at a spot just above the junction of the Qu’Appelle. A scow was constructed of a wood frame covered by six oxen hides sewn together; the seams smeared with fat. The hides had been used to cover their cart loads. It took them more than two days to get their carts across the river.

The party proceeded up the Qu’Appelle Valley and then headed toward the Touchwood Hills. They made good progress and were blessed with an abundance of water and wood. Nisbet commented on the beautiful, rolling country, and the fine valleys with good soil but no trees of any great size. They were able to cross all the creeks without unloading except one where they had to make a float with wheels.

The party arrived at the South Saskatchewan River on Friday July, 14. The crossing of this great river could have been a serious problem for the party, but they were in luck. A craft made of willows and buffalo hides was seen on the other side and fetched over by means of a small canoe that the party fashioned. This craft was capable of carrying one cart load across at a time, with three men paddling. By Saturday evening eight cart loads had been ferried across the river.

On Sunday, George Flett arrived from Fort Carlton. Flett, Black’s brother-in-law and a former employee of the Hudson’s Bay Company, had been prevailed upon to offer his services to the Presbyterian Church. His knowledge of the country and his ability to speak Cree made him an excellent guide for locating a suitable place for a mission. Flett became a valuable assistant to Nisbet. Later, he was ordained and founded a mission to the Akanase Indians, near Fort Pelly. Flett was accompanied by two others not named by Nisbet. These men were probably Adam Ibsbister and Olyph Olson who lived in the vicinity of the present site of the Prince Albert Penitentiary. Ibsbister and Olson invited Nisbet to settle near them on the North Saskatchewan River.

With Flett’s assistance, the remainder of the equipment and stock were taken across the river on the following day. The wheels of the carts were removed and made into a raft thirty-two feet by sixteen feet; the wheels were bound together with willows. The cart boxes were loaded onto the raft which was pulled and rowed across. The animals swam across, following two leaders that were led by lines behind the canoe. By evening, the raft was broken up and the carts reassembled and loaded.

Tuesday, the Nisbet and Flett went ahead to Fort Carlton leaving the remainder of the party to follow. A service was held that evening with Hudson’s Bay Company officials, with others who spoke English in
The following evening another service was held and an infant was baptized. And so the long trip from Kildonan on the Red River to Fort Carlton on the North Saskatchewan was completed.

Soon after the group’s arrival at Fort Carlton, Nisbet had to decide as quickly as possible on a site for the mission. The summer was well advanced, and the party had to be settled before winter. Flett, who knew the country well, had done considerable scouting to find a suitable site for the mission where it would not be opposed by the Indians. The response he had received from the Indians he visited was not encouraging. Some were hostile to the idea of a mission in their midst; others were merely indifferent. All, however, expected to be paid for the land on which the mission located.

Flett and Nisbet agreed about the function of a mission. They felt that it should be a secure base from which missionaries could travel to the Indian bands, which were quite mobile. In their view, the mission should be a training place where young Indians could learn how to farm and live a settled existence after the buffalo were gone. By the late 1860s, the buffalo, though still great in number, were in decline.

Flett had selected two possible sites for the mission. One of these sites was a place called White Fish Lake. While this location offered a number of advantages, a road would have to be cut to allow carts to reach the site. The other site was located about fifty miles down the North Saskatchewan River, near the spot where the Isbister had settled. Hudson’s Bay Company officials recommended the latter location and the choice was made.

On Tuesday July 24, McKay set out onto the plains to purchase supplies from Indian hunters. For a number of years McKay had “run” buffalo himself or bought from Indian hunters, bringing back pemmican, dried meat, fat, hides and sinew. The Prince Albert Mission was to depend heavily on buffalo provisions.

On the same day that McKay left, Flett began the livestock drive overland to the selected location. He arrived ahead of the party, which travelled down the river. This gave rise in later years to some claims that the Nisbet party came overland and not by water.

The Nisbet party travelled to the mission site by boat. Whether this was a York boat borrowed from the Hudson’s Bay Company or a barge is not known. The loading of the boat was not completed until late Tuesday night. The trip down the river took about fourteen hours since the river was low and the boat had to be pushed off several sandbars. The party arrived at the Isbister settlement at eight o’clock in the morning. Flett had just arrived with the cattle. There were eight Indian tents in the vicinity. Nisbet and Flett visited these Indians, informing them of the party’s intention to settle a short distance down the river. The Indians were encouraged to visit them.

The party then moved about two miles down the river to the site they finally selected for the Mission, very near the spot where the Prince Albert Historical Society erected a cairn in 1924 commemorating the arrival of the founding party. The date of the arrival was probably Thursday, 26 July 1866. It is difficult to confirm this date as Nisbet’s dated letters were frequently written over a period of several days.

In his letter to Reverend Burns on July 30, Nisbet describes the site as follows:

…the prospect up the river is beautiful, having a fine large island covered with pine trees in view, and a large bay immediately above us. Below, the view of the river is cut off by a bend that the channel takes to the east. Behind, we have open rolling prairie, of the best description of soil, covered with a most luxuriant growth of grass. On the opposite side of the river, and on the islands to the right and left, there is an abundance of pine and poplar. Mr. Flett had pitched upon this spot as a desirable place for our future residence, and I like it much.

Nisbet looked over the surrounding area carefully before deciding that their landing site was indeed the best location for the mission.

As the party was unloading the boat, eight Indians arrived on horseback, sat on driftwood, and watched the unloading with interest. Nisbet and Flett joined them and gave each a bit of tobacco. Nisbet then made a speech which was interpreted by Flett. He said that they had come to do the Indians good. They had come to teach them a way of life that would allow them to live comfortably after the buffalo were gone, and to prepare them for the life thereafter. The Mission had not come to trade, Nisbet stated. It had no desire to profit from the Indians; they would, however, buy articles from the Indians for their own use.

Flett spoke next, telling these Natives that Indians in other places had not invited them to settle with them, but that they had been invited to settle here by Isbister and Olson, who had extended the invitation when they met at the South Saskatchewan River. The headman of the Indian party stated that if he went to England he would have to pay for whatever he took, and it was only reasonable that the Mission should pay for Indian lands when it came to settle on them. Flett answered by saying that the land belonged to the entire Cree nation, and that if payment was made it would have to be made to all Crees. The Mission, he said, had no authority to buy land and nothing to buy it with.

The headman then said that what he feared was that settlers would follow the Mission and that the Indians would lose their land and the buffalo. Flett countered that the mission had not invited settlers to come and it would not be the fault of the Mission if they did come.

Toward the end of the meeting, one of the Indian visitors said to Flett: “When you visit your friends don’t you sometimes get hungry?” The hint was
taken; tea and bread were offered and soon consumed by the guests.

The next morning, Isbister and Olson came and warned Nisbet that the whole camp of Indians were coming to visit. Flett recommended that it would be wise to offer a gift of tea and flour before they asked or hinted. When the Indians arrived, Flett and Nisbet placed, in the centre of a circle, a bag of flour and two pounds of tea, saying that because the Indians had received them so kindly the day before, and because the mission wished to settle peacefully among them, they wished to make them this gift.

The Indians seemed to be pleased with the gift and favourably disposed to the mission. An elder gave a lengthy speech stating that he thought they could live peacefully together, but that he feared the coming of more and more white men who would drive the buffalo farther and farther away, thus endangering the life of the Indians. Previously, Nisbet had mentioned that they might wish to buy fish from the Indians. The elder then mentioned an exorbitant price (one beaver pelt for every five fish) that they would expect to receive for fish.\footnote{15}

It seemed to Nisbet that the Indians were quite content to see the Mission come among them. Thus, he felt, one very important step for the Mission had been achieved.

On the following Sunday, two services were held: one in the home of one of the settlers, and the other in the Mission camp. Indians attended both services. That day the party gratefully received the first gift from the Indians: some deer meat. Nisbet in turn provided some medical treatment. “One of the Indians had fallen from his horse, and had hurt his back and knee,” Nisbet wrote to Burns, “so we had to doctor him a little.”\footnote{16}

While good relations with the Indians were being established, the men of the Nisbet party had been busy. A fence was built around the camp and a temporary shed was constructed to protect their goods from the weather. As well, a road was constructed up the riverbank.

McKay returned from his supply run with three full loads of dried buffalo meat, rendered tallow, sinew for sewing leather and a few skins. This was a very important addition to the food supply of the mission. He brought with him a family from Red River with two children that they wanted to be baptized. An elderly, Christian Indian who had a sore foot also accompanied McKay. He and all his friends thought he was not far from death, and he was so weak McKay refused to take him along. The old man said that he longed to see Flett and the missionary before he died and McKay could not refuse him. He was carried by cart to Fort Carlton where a canoe was obtained to take him to the Mission. There his foot was treated. He was established in his own small skin tent and given nourishing food. He showed considerable improvement and it was Nisbet’s hope that he would recover, not just for the sake of the man, but also because it would further pave the way to good relations with the Indians.

Work proceeded at the Mission. Sixty loads of good hay were secured. Logs for two houses were obtained, and one foundation was completed by September 7. On September 8, Nisbet and Flett journeyed to Fort Carlton to hold services. Since a number of Hudson’s Bay Company officials were there waiting for supplies to take to their various posts, the congregation was quite large. That afternoon, a service was held for the Indians of the area, and the Christian story was told to them.

In a letter dated 10 September 1866 to the Presbyterian missions authorities, written at Fort Carlton, Nisbet outlined his ideas on how the Mission could most effectively accomplish its purpose. Nisbet again commented on how pleased he was with the site they had chosen for the Mission. He continued:

My idea is that if we remain there we shall do the most good to the Indians, ultimately, by endeavouring to collect as many children as possible, and have industrial schools for them - teaching them the ordinary branches of common and Christian education, but also training them to farming, cattle-keeping, carpenter work, and whatever other branches of industry may be found convenient. The girls would be taught house work, needle work, etc. I would bring children from any quarter, who may be willing to come to us. The expense of keeping and clothing them would not be great if once farming operation were fully established. I think there would be no difficulty in producing potatoes and milk enough, at all events; and, an occasional trip to the plains might furnish flesh meat till stock increases. The boys I would clothe in moose leather, and canvas garments, and the girls in print frocks. We should take them at as early an age as possible - orphans, and such children as have none to care for them, should be sought after, as we may be more certain of their being allowed to remain than others. We shall do all we can to induce and encourage Indian families to settle around us; but it is up-hill work - they are so wedded to their roving mode of life.\footnote{17}

From Fort Carlton, Nisbet and Flett made the long journey up to Fort Edmonton. Nisbet begrudged the time spent away from the Mission because so much had to be done at the site. Nisbet was anxious, however, to definitely establish that the best site for the Mission was the one they had chosen. The trip to Fort Edmonton convinced him that they had chosen wisely, although he did not give his reasons for this opinion. He also investigated the possibility of establishing a Presbyterian Mission at Fort Edmonton. During the trip, Nisbet and Flett held church services where possible and talked to groups of Indian
about the Christian message.

In his book *A Century of Presbyterianism in Saskatchewan*, Robert Dunning, a Presbyterian Church historian, recounts the following incident:

On this trip, [Nisbet] saw for the first time Indians on the war path all painted up. He saw also for the first time a band of Indians who were going out to steal horses. As a matter of fact, the Indians called at their camp after supper. George Flett recognized them as a band that were intent on stealing horses wherever they could get them. As was the custom, Flett and Nisbet had to feed them their supper. After supper they talked for a time and the Indians decided to stay all night with them. Both Flett and Nisbet were afraid to go to sleep because they knew if they did, the Indians would steal their horses. So, George Flett carried on a conversation with them until every last one dropped off to sleep. Then, the two men got up and harnessed their horses and drove off in the early morning, before the Indians woke up.18

In the fall of 1866 work proceeded on the two houses already mentioned. More than a foot of snow fell, however, before they could move out of the tents and into the houses. During the late fall, a byre, or stable, twenty-two feet square, and a building twenty-four feet by twenty-two feet to house a storehouse and workshop were constructed. Logs for the Mission house, to be forty-eight feet by twenty-six feet, were cut and hauled. Materials for a fence to surround a ten-acre field were also prepared. In addition to these tasks, Nisbet made plans for an ice cellar, a root cellar and a meat storage facility.

Over the winter, McKay and Nisbet prepared a reading book in Cree characters. Two services were held every Sunday; prayer meetings were held on Wednesday evenings. At these services there were usually some Indians present, although at first none would come.19

It is interesting to note the way in which “Prince Albert” became the name of the Mission. In a letter to relatives in Oakville, Nisbet wrote:

> You see I have given a name to our new home. We could not find that the locality has any Indian name in particular, and as our people were always bothering me for a name to put on their letters - I bethought me when I was on my way to Victoria - that it would be very appropriate to have the name of the late illustrious prince along with that of our most gracious sovereign. I merely mentioned my notion to some of the friends at Edmonton and so next day Prince Albert Mission is set down in the books of the company - so we let the name stand and I think it will do very well.20

The party must have spent the first winter in some discomfort. While the spring undoubtedly brought relief, there was a tremendous amount of work to be done. To make matters worse, there was a shortage of labour at the Mission. Flett and his family along with Polson and William McBeath went back to Kildonan, leaving only one workman to assist Nisbet and McKay.21

McKay and an Indian youth set out for Fort à la Corne, an old, established Hudson's Bay Company post located on the Saskatchewan River some fifteen miles east of the junction of the north and south branches, with four carts and horses to get seed potatoes and barley. The trip down was completed without difficulty, but the spring thaw came on so rapidly that the ice was broken and they could not cross the river on the way back. This caused a delay of ten days. Nisbet had hoped to get the walls of the Mission house up before the departure of the workmen but there had been too much delay.

In early May McKay started cultivating, and, despite the presence of frost in some areas, ten acres were ploughed and seeded with only a single working of the land.

During the early spring, the number of Mission dependents increased. George, the elderly Indian with the mending foot, brought his fifteen-year-old son to stay at the Mission. He also brought a seven-year-old orphaned boy, and Nisbet felt that the Mission had to accept him. George also reported that fifteen tents of his relatives would be arriving in the fall and that they wanted to settle and become Christians.

Other new arrivals included a young Indian man who had lost his left hand, and a man with small twin daughters who wanted the mission to receive them. They were told that if they remained at the Mission they would be expected to hunt and, in time, to build homes for themselves and raise potatoes and vegetables for their own use.

Two men that Nisbet refers to as sawyers and their families were also at the Mission. These men were whip-sawing lumber for the Mission house. Nisbet hoped to dispense with their services in a short time.

With the growth of the Mission, Nisbet repeatedly asked the Mission Committee for a second missionary, a school teacher and additional funds and material for a school to teach Indian children. He also pointed out the need for a medical missionary to provide health care for the Natives. In his letters he also urged congregations and Sabbath schools in eastern Canada to send clothing and goods to trade for local materials that the Mission needed.

Since there were now Indians present at each service, McKay translated the proceedings. Because of the multitude of tasks confronting him, Nisbet found that he had little or no time to study the Cree language. His constant appeal to the Mission Committee for a second missionary was not granted until 1872. By that time, Nisbet was suffering from ill health and had become frustrated with the lack of support from the committee.

Nisbet's appeal for a teacher was granted, however,
and in the summer of 1867 Adam McBeath arrived at the Mission to begin his teaching duties. Two workmen, Selkirk Banmaner and William McDonald, arrived with McBeath and began the work of expanding the Mission's facilities. Nisbet, unhappy with the performance of the sawyers, complained that they were not accomplishing very much for the wages they were being paid. The workers left in disgust and the construction work was left to other Mission employees. The two original houses were improved and enlarged, with the addition of a kitchen, a bedroom for workmen, and a temporary schoolroom that also served as a bedroom for the boys attending school. Another building containing a workshop, meat store, and a milk house with an ice cellar, was constructed. The principal building, the Mission house, forty-eight feet by twenty-four feet, with walls fourteen feet high was completed. A well was dug in the center of the square formed by the buildings; water was reached at the depth of sixteen feet.

A fair crop was harvested from the ten acres that had been sown by McKay. Ten additional acres were broken during the summer so that twenty acres were available for 1868. A three acre pasture had been fenced for cattle.

McBeath started teaching school in August, with twenty-one children in attendance. By January, only eleven students remained: four Indian children left to accompany their parents on the winter hunt; six others, the children of settlers who lived nearly three miles from the Mission, found that the weather was too severe to attend classes. The remaining students were all Mission residents. Five of these were boarders whose education was being paid for by their families; the remaining six belonged either to Mission families or were children that the Mission had accepted as their responsibility. Nisbet had received no authorization from the Mission Committee to proceed with the education of Indian children. The few that the Mission had accepted were received without authorization. Nisbet repeatedly appealed to the missionary authorities of the church to support the education of Indian children. He did not receive this support. He was also frustrated by the intermittent attendance of the Indian children who, in accordance with their traditional, seasonal pattern, joined their parents at their winter hunting camps.

The Mission charged the amount of twenty pounds sterling for board and education. If the parents supplied provisions, the amount was reduced to twelve pounds ten shillings. Nisbet asked the committee's permission to charge a lower fee for children of company employees whose wages would not allow them to pay the full fee.

By the end of 1867, Nisbet reported that the people of the Mission were in good health, but that Mrs. Nisbet and Mrs. McKay were suffering from overexertion. Lawrence Clarke, Chief Factor at the Hudson's Bay Company post at Fort Carlton, had informed him that the Prince Albert Mission was spoken of highly in the councils of the company. Throughout the year, there were always Indians at the Mission, and Nisbet indicated that gradually they were overcoming their reluctance to attend religious services. On New Year's Day, 1868, fifty people attended the service; more than half were Indians. Nisbet had made nine trips to Fort Carlton during the year to hold services.

Nisbet made his first trip east in 1868. He spoke to church groups in Montreal and Toronto as well as other centers. He hoped to gain more support for the Mission by increasing awareness of the Mission's goals as well as of the difficulties it faced in accomplishing these goals. Nisbet urged the eastern congregations and the children in the Sabbath schools to support the operation of the Mission's school for Indian children by providing gifts of money, used and new clothing, school books and reading material. A system was devised for the collection and shipment of goods from Ontario to the Mission. The slow delivery of these donations of clothing and materials meant shortages of essentials at the Mission. For example, no boxes were delivered in 1870.

Nisbet returned from his trip in August and found that considerable progress had occurred in his absence. By the end of the year, the lower floor of the Mission house was occupied although the upper floor was not completed. A schoolroom, eighteen feet by fourteen feet, had been built which was also used for church services.

More land had been broken and the twenty acres under cultivation had produced remarkably well. This was fortunate because there had been crop difficulties at Red River and they were unable to obtain supplies of flour from there, as they had done the previous year. At this time, the Mission Committee allowed Nisbet to purchase a small, horse-powered grist mill so that the Mission was able to grind its own flour. A threshing machine was also obtained.

The Prince Albert Mission had another reason to be thankful for the abundant harvest that year. It was a "starvation" year for the Indians, probably due to a movement of the buffalo herds. The mission supplied about two hundred and fifty bushels of turnips in addition to large quantities of potatoes, barley and wheat to Indians in need. Nisbet made it clear in his reports that the Mission did not intend to gratuitously support any of the Indians but that, under the circumstances, it was unavoidable. In the spring of 1869 some two thousand pounds of dried meat were given to the starving Indians. The Indian men were expected to work hauling wood, haying, and performing other tasks for the Mission. A number of Indians also assisted in the harvesting of the crop. Indian women contributed by preparing leather and making moccasins and other leather articles.
In his report of December 1869 entitled “Three and a Half Years of an Indian Mission,” Nisbet stated that the flooring for the upper storey of the Mission house was nearly ready and that a kitchen, twenty-four feet by thirteen feet, had been added.25

In 1880 several North-West Mounted Policemen arrived at the Prince Albert Mission.26 One of these policemen, Harry Ross, later described the 1880 occupants of the Mission house:

Downstairs on the west side of the hall was the Mounted Police kitchen, dining room, store room and a small place nearly under the stairs where Sgt. Keenan slept. On the east side of the hall was a store operated by Herron and McBeth. There was a kitchen at the south which was occupied by James Payne, George Cooper and Fred Orr, who rented and farmed river lot 78. On the west side of the second floor there were three rooms occupied by the police as sleeping apartments, and a guard room for prisoners. There were two rooms and a portico on the north, occupied by the late Joseph and Mrs. Coombs. On the east were the rooms of Rev. Mr. Duncan, the Presbyterian minister, and two small rooms occupied by Lucy Baker.27

This gives us some idea of the utilization of building space in pioneer times.

In September 1869, the Nisbet's second daughter, Isabella Catherine was born. Two sons were born to the Nisbets: Thomas in December 1870 and Robert in 1873. The McKays had five children.

Adam McBeth's terms of engagement required him to oversee work on the farm in addition to performing his teaching duties. Since the paying pupils had all withdrawn, only one man had been hired for general work in order to keep costs down. This meant that McBeth had to spend much of his time on farm work and Nisbet had to take over some of the teaching duties.

Construction of facilities for the Mission continued throughout the year. A barn forty-eight feet by twenty-two feet, a stable with four stalls, and two additional byres were erected. The Mission's stock was increasing. Only working horses were kept in stalls and fed; the others were kept outside both summer and winter. A stockade six and a half feet high was started in 1869 which was planned to surround the entire Mission.

Despite adverse weather conditions and a delay in the sowing of the crops, the harvest of 1869 was remarkably good. Reaping was completed by September 19 and the yield was in the neighbourhood of 600 bushels of wheat, 200 bushels of barley, more than 100 of oats, and 400 or more of potatoes. Nisbet also reported:

The turnips will not be much as the Indians have been taking them as fast as they reach any size. We have a good stock of pemmican. If the buffalo stay near, we will be sending out soon for a stock of green meat, which we will keep frozen all winter. Last winter we used the meat of 24 buffalo cows, each animal would weigh about 300 pounds, all used within six months, 40 pounds a day. Of course that included all we gave away to starving Indians which was not a little.28

That year the Mission had loaned carts to the Indians, urging them to go to the plains and gather buffalo provisions for the coming winter. This had worked reasonably well; the Indians stored about 3,600 pounds of pemmican at the Mission. “This I suppose was their first attempt at laying up anything against a time of scarcity,” Nisbet commented, “and may be regarded as no inconsiderable step toward civilization.” The Indians had also been encouraged to do some planting and the Mission had assisted them by furnishing seed. Not too much, however, had been accomplished this way, Nisbet reported. In 1868 and 1869, however, some Indian men and women had assisted with the harvest at the Mission.

By the summer of 1869, there were seven families settled in the neighbourhood of the Prince Albert Mission, exclusive of the families connected with it. There were also three young men employed at the Hudson’s Bay Company farm located west of the settlement,29 for a total population of seventy-five, including twenty-eight adults and young people living at the Mission. Usually there were varying numbers of Indians camping near the Mission. The attendance at Sabbath services ranged between thirty and forty-five.

The Prince Albert Mission house and small school building, 1860's.

Courtesy of the Prince Albert Historical Society, N 434.
Seventeen children were attending the day school, and thirteen the Sabbath school.

Reporting on the results of missionary work, Nisbet stated that six adult Indians and thirty-six children had been baptized. Five Indians had been “admitted to the table of the Lord,” and on the Communion roll there were twenty-three names: eight Indians, ten half-breeds and five Scots.

Nisbet explained that getting Indians to accept Christianity was very difficult. He cited liquor as a major problem and hoped that the Canadian government would soon take steps to abolish the trade. He commented that Indian children “are for the most part quick tempered and impatient of correction: at home they are under no control for Indians think it is the height of cruelty to correct a child.”

Nisbet indicated that he had not been able to make trips to the plains to spread the gospel because he and his interpreter could not be away from the Mission at the same time. McKay, on his trips to the plains to hunt buffalo and secure supplies, had taken every opportunity offered to tell the Christian story to the Indians that he met. He must have been fairly successful because there was increased interest in the mission on the part of the Plains Cree.

Nisbet could not communicate with the Indians on any complicated level except through an interpreter and even this was not always fluent or exact. Nisbet had the typical nineteenth-century missionary’s attitude toward the “heathen.” He considered Indians to be savages that should be Christianized. He deplored the Indians’ tendency to return to what he referred to as their superstitions; he had no realization that their dances and ceremonies held spiritual significance for them.

At the end of his 1869 report, Nisbet again stressed the need for another missionary who could carry the gospel to the various Indian camps. He pointed out, as he had done repeatedly, that it was impossible for him to look after the Prince Albert Mission and at the same time travel widely. He had not been able to find time in the midst of so many tasks to master the Cree language. Young Catholic missionaries who were sent to work with the Indians were expected to do little else for the first three years than learn their language, Nisbet observed.

Nisbet was becoming increasingly frustrated with the lack of support from the Mission Committee. He felt that the Mission had received little recognition for what it had accomplished, and no direction on how it should operate in the future. He had a feeling that the committee might feel that too little had been accomplished in Christianizing the Indians in return for what it had spent. In church reports, the treasurer stated that $12,893.93 had been expended on the Mission from its beginnings to 1 September 1869. The report neglected to mention, however, that the property of the Mission, at a moderate valuation, amounted to $8,903.00—two thirds of the total spent. Nisbet stated that the work of the Mission could continue successfully if there were a second missionary, a simple log building to serve for a church and school house, some additional housing for school children, and a Cree-speaking teacher to oversee children both in and out of school.

The year 1870—a momentous one for the West—passed rather quietly at the Mission. The smallpox epidemic that ravaged the Indians of the plains was a scourge that the Mission managed to avoid. In the fall of 1869, as soon as the word arrived that the disease was spreading, Nisbet vaccinated all the people in the vicinity of the Mission—some 150 people—none of whom subsequently contracted the disease. This in itself was a major achievement as the death toll among the plains Indians was terrible. The epidemic affected the Mission because the Indians dispersed into small camps in the effort to avoid the smallpox, and consequently there were few people around.

Mission personnel was reduced by other forms of illness. Mrs. McKay became ill in 1869 and returned to Kildonan for treatment. The sickness reappeared in 1870 and Mrs. McBeath also became ill. McKay, with his children, took the two women on the long trip back to Red River in June. This meant that there was no interpreter and the Mission was short of help.

Late in July, Nisbet made one of his regular visits to Fort Carlton to hold services there. (He endeavoured to go there about six times a year.) While he was there, a smallpox case came in and eventually one of the clerks, a favourite of Nisbet, came down with the disease. Back at the Mission, Nisbet was told by the Indians that if he went to Carlton again he would not be allowed to return because they feared he would bring the disease with him. Nisbet was deeply grieved that he could not visit his friends at Fort Carlton when they were in danger.

Although the Mission’s work with the Indians was reduced because of their dispersal due to the epidemic, its work with settlers was increasing. By the summer of 1870 there were fourteen families living in the neighbourhood of the Mission. There were twenty-two children in more or less regular attendance at the school. Nisbet gave the population of Prince Albert at 106 but a considerable increase was expected next year.

Nisbet devoted five mornings a week to teaching the children as McBeath was needed to look after the farm. At that time McBeath was suffering from a chest condition; by October he had to return to Red River for medical treatment. In a letter to the editor of the Home and Foreign Record on 13 September 1870, Nisbet stated: “We have appointed Wednesday next, as a day of special thanksgiving to God for His continued mercy and of prayer for those who are suffering from the prevailing disease. We have cause to give thanks that our fields have yielded their increase.”
Actually, the grain crop had not been successful due to drought in June and to great flocks of black birds in the fall when the grain remained in stalks for three weeks due to heavy rains. The root crops, however, had been good. It was a blessing that they were because no provisions had been brought from the plains due to the smallpox epidemic and the absence of McKay.

The spiritual work of the Mission proceeded slowly in 1870 for the same reasons. However, four adults, two youths and eleven infants were baptized. Three persons were added to the Communion rolls, bringing the total to twenty-six persons.

The Mission was gladdened in 1871 by the return of Mrs. McKay and Mrs. McBeath, improved in health but not totally recovered. Nisbet mentions that they both benefited from the treatment given them by “the French doctor, who is now among the French half-breeds who winter at the south branch of the Saskatchewan.”

1871 saw more settlers arriving in the region. Nine new homes were built and the population reached 166 persons, including twenty Europeans.

The work among the Indians did not progress during the year. Nisbet optimistically hoped that the epidemic would have made the Indians more receptive to the Christian message, but in this he was disappointed. During the summer numerous Indians had camped in the vicinity of the Mission, but Nisbet feared that they had been lured by the expectation of the harvest rather than a desire to receive religious instruction.

About half of the boxes of goods from contributing parishes in Ontario were received, much to the relief of the Mission since none had been received the previous year. Some of the boxes had been dispatched in April 1870, indicating the slow movement of goods from the East to the West. The Mission depended upon the donated materials to clothe its charges and to pay others for goods and services that the Mission received. The remainder of the materials were sold to the settlers; it was the Mission’s policy not to give to those who could afford to pay.

As the region’s population increased, attendance at church services also increased considerably. Sunday morning services were held in English, with as many as seventy in the congregation; the afternoon service was held in Cree, with fifty people usually in attendance. Nisbet had for some time been stressing the need for a separate church building. The original, small school building could not accommodate larger gatherings, and services had to be held in the Mission house where the congregations were crammed into two adjoining rooms. Nisbet was happy to announce that building materials had been prepared for a church that he hoped would be constructed next year.

Nisbet was delighted to read in the Home and Foreign Record that it had at last been decided to send a second missionary to the Mission, and he was hopeful that a suitable person could soon be found.

Early the following year, on 19 January 1872, Nisbet wrote a letter to “all Sabbath Schools of Canada Presbyterian Church,” to be published in the Home and Foreign Record, suggesting to the young people that now that the West was part of Canada, some of them might be interested in settling in this new land. He mentioned the advantages of starting farms on open country where there was no need for the laborious task of clearing the forest. He assured them that they did not need to fear the Indians because if they were friendly to the Indians, they would become friends.

Nisbet concluded his letter with excerpts from his report for 1871 which mentioned some changes in the West. He indicated that Governor Archibald’s reply to an Indian enquiry about the Canadian government’s intention to open the country for white settlement assured the Indians that the government would make treaty with them for some portion of the land and that they would be fairly and liberally dealt with. Nisbet also understood that the Hudson’s Bay Company would operate a steamboat service between Prince Albert and Edmonton.

Over the years, the Mission buildings were frequently visited by some of the Indians who did not hesitate to wander in quite freely. Nisbet had complained about the evils of the liquor trade and had expressed the hope that the Canadian government would end the trade. He did say that luckily, when Indians had been drinking, they usually avoided the Mission. One winter, when Nisbet was giving some lessons, a number of Indian youths regularly came and stood around in the Mission house and made enough noise to interfere with the work going on. Nisbet seized the opportunity and included the youths in a night school which operated with some success.

In the early months of 1872, a letter written by a Mr. Bell, a correspondent to the Western Advertiser of Winnipeg, appeared in that paper giving a very unfavourable picture of the work being done at the Prince Albert Mission. Bell based his observations on casual remarks made by Alex Polson, William McBeath, Selkirk Bannerman, and a Mr. Goldie. Bell expanded upon these casual remarks, turning them into a major condemnation of the Mission, accusing it of “too much farming, too little preaching. A great deal of money spent, and not one Indian converted.” He also stated that the Mission was trading with the Indians for the profit of the Mission personnel. The Mission Committee, which originally seemed to have paid scant attention to the problems and needs of the Prince Albert Mission, now reacted energetically and appointed the Reverend William Moore to go and investigate Bell’s claims.

In the meantime, in July of that year, Nisbet wrote to the Mission Committee stating that he had
received no news of when he could expect the arrival of Mr. Vincent, the second missionary finally appointed by the committee. Because of the condition of Mrs. Nisbet's health, it was imperative that they leave for Kildonan by the end of August. He reported that church services had been held in the new church constructed in the winter and early summer. There had been considerable volunteer help in the construction but most of the work had been done by himself and Adam McBeath. This had limited their work on the farm. The little church, which had a small steeple, seated 120 people, but they must have been packed to accommodate that number. Nisbet was also happy to report that a small number of Indians seemed to be attracted to Christianity.38

Nisbet, his wife and children left Prince Albert at the beginning of September. Mrs. Nisbet, two-year-old Thomas, and Robert, still an infant, were returning to Kildonan. The girls, Mary Jane and Isabella Katherine, were left in Oakville, Ontario with their aunt. The Nisbets spent the winter of 1872-1873 in Ontario and returned to Prince Albert in the spring of 1873. Mrs. Nisbet did not see her daughters again.

After only a few days on the road to Kildonan, the Nisbets met Moore and Vincent, who were heading for Prince Albert. Nisbet arranged for his family to continue to Kildonan, and returned with the two clergymen to the Mission. That winter, while the Nisbet family was in Ontario, Vincent took charge of the Mission.

Moore had arrived in Winnipeg on July 15 and had immediately begun his investigations, which were recorded in a report to the Mission Committee in January 1873. Moore was an efficient and fair-minded investigator and his report gives valuable information about the operation of the Mission up to 1872.

Before leaving Manitoba, he had been able to interview Polson, McBeath and Bannerman, the three men that Bell had quoted in his letter to the Western Advertiser. McBeath completely repudiated Bell's statements. Polson and Bannerman, on the other hand, did not seem well disposed toward the Mission. They admitted, however, that the only trading with the Indians that they knew of was that done by themselves. When Moore investigated the trading charge, he found that only a few furs had been traded in the winter of 1866-67 by Polson and Bannerman. He also discovered that when Nisbet had learned of this trading, he ordered that it stop, telling the men that if they were dissatisfied with their wages he would supplement them from his own salary. Bell had also stated that the Hudson's Bay Company had issued an order prohibiting the Mission personnel from trading. This statement also proved to be false; no such order had ever been issued. The relations between the fur trading company and the Mission had always been good. The Mr. Gold who had been quoted in Bell's letter was not to be found. Moore did learn, however, that Gold had spent only one night at the Mission, therefore his opinions did not have much credibility.39

Once at Prince Albert, Moore continued with his investigation of the work of the Mission. In his report, Moore spoke highly of Nisbet's dedication and hard work in establishing the Mission on a sound economic base. He also gave Nisbet credit for his evangelical work, limited as it was by the amount of work and supervision that he was required to do at the Mission and the farm. He also credited Nisbet with establishing good relations with the Indians who regarded him as a friend. This would, Moore observed, make the work of those that followed Nisbet easier.

Moore also spoke very favourably of John McKay and Adam McBeath. McKay had proved to be an excellent interpreter and a hard worker who had taken a lively interest in the Mission. McBeath had been an able and efficient farm manager.

Statistics from Moore's report provide some insights into life at the Prince Albert Mission. The settlement around the Mission had thirty-two families; with few exceptions they were half-breeds or Indians. Of the forty school-age children, twenty-six were attending school. There were thirty children below school age, and eight children resided at the Mission.

Mission personnel at the time of Moore's investigation included Nisbet, his wife and four children; McKay, his wife and five children; McBeath, his wife and child; William Bruce and his wife. An "occasional servant," Joseph Bear, had been engaged for three months, beginning July 15. There were several domestic servants not paid by the Mission, including Mrs. Bruce, in the service of the Nisbet family; Christina R. Anderson, working for Mrs. McBeath and Sarah Badger, paid by Nisbet out of an allowance granted by the Mission Committee for the purpose of caring for the children living at the Mission.40

Nisbet was paid $860 per year. Out of this, he paid Sarah Badger, and, from 1862 until his death in 1871, an allowance to his father of $65.00 per quarter. McKay was paid $375 per annum plus $75 for groceries. McBeath was compensated $375, plus board for himself and family. William Bruce made $200, plus board.

In addition to the services held at the Mission, one service a month was held at Fort Carlton. In the winter, a weekly service was held in one of the houses in the west end of the settlement.

During the three preceding years, no fewer than 500 Indians had visited the Mission each year. The largest number of Indians at the Mission at one time was about 250. Frequently, there were as many as 120 Natives encamped at the Mission. Ten adults had been baptized, although many applicants had been refusal baptized, Nisbet told Moore, "on account of ignorance and unchristian conduct."41 Nisbet reported, however, that at least sixteen Indians were favourably disposed toward Christianity. The number of communicants
included thirty-three to thirty-six whites, fifteen half-breeds and twelve Indians.

A total of twenty-one Indian children had been received by the Mission. Seven of these children were still at the Mission in 1872. The others had stayed from a few months to two years.42

In 1872, forty acres of Mission lands were cultivated: fifteen acres of wheat, twelve acres of barley, half an acre of turnips, and the remainder in potatoes. Hay was cut within a mile and a half of the Mission house.

Implements utilized on the Mission farm included a threshing machine, a grist mill (small iron mill), a fanning mill, three ploughs, scythes, spades and hayforks.43

Moore's report indicated that he was appreciative of the work Nisbet and his helpers had done. Nevertheless, he felt that more needed to be done in the way of evangelical work. Moore understood the need for establishing a secure base at the lowest possible cost. He also realized that that necessity had made missionary work difficult, particularly because the Mission Committee had failed to provide a second missionary until 1872. He recommended that the farming operation be separated from the Mission, and that the missionaries devote themselves entirely to evangelical work. When the Prince Albert Mission was founded, Moore acknowledged, the farm operation had been essential due to the high cost of hauling food supplies from the Red River. He noted, however, that in 1872, because there was successful farming at the settlement, the Mission would no longer be completely dependent on its own farm. He recommended that the two missionaries divide their work, one looking after the growing population at the mission and the other doing itinerant work among the Indian camps. While Moore recommended that a school be established for Indian children and youths where they could learn to read and write in their own language, he made no mention of the type of industrial, residential school for Indians that had always been one of Nisbet's objectives.

Moore further recommended that a second interpreter be obtained until Vincent had time to learn the Cree language. Moore himself had preached at the Mission with McKay interpreting, and he had found it difficult. He also suggested that a small build-
ing be erected on the north shore of the river across from the Mission. This would give the Mission rights to the land when a survey was made. He mentioned that, in time, the land on which the Mission was located would probably have considerable value.

Moore's report on the conditions and operations of the Prince Albert Mission was submitted to the Mission Committee in January 1873. Nisbet and the Prince Albert Mission were cleared of the allegations made by Bell in the *Western Advertiser*, and Nisbet remained at his post. None of Moore's recommendations for improvements, however, were acted upon for the remainder of Nisbet's tenure. He gradually became discouraged by the lack of direction he received from the Mission Committee.

In a letter to the *Home and Foreign Record* on 28 January 1873, Nisbet solicited funds for the purchase of a bell for the church, stating that the newly erected church had a small belfry. Previously, services had been announced by the flying of a flag; by 1873, however, the settlement was too large to make this practice effective. Nisbet also suggested that gifts of books would be welcomed for a small congregation library. Friends in Montreal had given a magic lantern and slides to the Mission. These had been found to be "an excellent means of bringing truth to the minds of many Indians who will not be induced to attend the ordinary means of instruction." He appealed for more scripture slides as well as a few on other subjects.

The Nisbet returned to Prince Albert with their two sons in the early summer of 1873. The work of the Mission continued, however Nisbet and Vincent did not work well together. The reasons for the difficulties are not clear. In a letter to his sister in Oakville, Nisbet stated that the Mission had gone downhill in his absence. Showing his usual restraint in comments about personnel, Nisbet revealed little about what was apparently a bad situation. Vincent stayed at the Mission until May 1874, leaving Nisbet, again, the only missionary.

The population of the Prince Albert settlement was increasing. By April 1874, Nisbet reported to the *Home and Foreign Record* that there were now forty-four families in the settlement; there were forty-four communicants. Nisbet's work with the people of the settlement had become his major concern. There are no reports of farming operations or further building at the Mission.

The health of both James and Mary Nisbet was failing. As well, Nisbet's frustration increased. Supplies were not being sent. McKay went off on a six week break to get his own supplies. Nisbet despaired of getting more support from the Mission Committee. In a letter to his sister on 22 April 1874 he wrote: "Not a word from the Committee since I left you (spring 1873). What will the Presbytery of Manitoba do for us? I rather fear nothing. What will the Committee do? Perhaps talk and stave off action for a year or two."46

In another letter to his sister that year, Nisbet began to question the value of his work in Prince Albert. So many white settlers had started to come in that it "will almost exclusively be for English work if he stays. Why should his family be separated for work any minister could do, he asks."46

By May of 1874, Mary Nisbet was far from well. Her illness is never identified in any of the reports or letters. Nisbet, too, complained of lack of energy. In late August, the Nisbet began the long, wearisome trip back to the Red River, very much in need of medical attention and careful nursing. It was too late. Mary Nisbet died on 19 September 1874; James survived her by only eleven days. He had hoped to regain his health to an extent that would have enabled him to take his two sons to Ontario.

Upon Nisbet's death, the following tribute to him was included in the minutes of a meeting of the Fifth General Assembly of the Canada Presbyterian Church:

*In 1924 the Prince Albert Historical Society erected a cairn on the riverbank commemorating the founding of Prince Albert. The cairn reads: "At or near this spot in August 1866, 66 days after leaving the Lord Selkirk Colony on the Red River, the founders of Prince Albert made their first camp within what is now the city limits. The members of the party were Rev. James Nisbet, Mrs. Nisbet, Mary Nisbet child, John McKay, Mrs. McKay, Mary M. McKay child, C'tina McKay child, George Flett, Mrs. Flett, Wm. McBeth, Alex Polson."

In 1864, Mr. Nisbet was designated as a missionary to the Indians of the Saskatchewan and founded the Prince Albert Mission. For the past ten years he has laboured there with unflagging zeal and self-denying devotedness amid many difficulties and discouragements. The General Assembly would place on
record their highest estimate of his worth as a man, and his faithfulness as a missionary.47

His obituary notice in the Home and Foreign Record of November 1874 stated:

We do not mean to trace the history of the Mission at Prince Albert although, so far as it has succeeded (and we believe its success has been quite equal to that of other missions to the American Indian), it was owing mainly to the painstaking, persevering efforts of Mr. Nisbet. Differences of opinion may be entertained as to the best mode of carrying on missionary work among the American Indians. All churches that have established such missions have found them difficult and expensive. But no one could doubt the wholeheartedness of Mr. Nisbet in his missionary work. His labours both mental and manual were arduous and we believe the arduousness of his labours, and his anxiety as to his work, were not remotely connected with his comparatively early death. Mr. Nisbet was greatly beloved by those who were acquainted with him. His earnestness and devotion, his Christian humility and gentleness, his methodical punctuality and fidelity gained for him the respect and affection of his brethren.48

Mary and James Nisbet are at rest in the Kildonan churchyard beneath a fine monument. An elder from Kildonan recently told a visitor: “If you wish to see Mr. Nisbet’s monument, go to Prince Albert on the Saskatchewan and see the Mission there which he founded.”

What was the significance of Nisbet’s missionary work among the Indians and for the future of Prince Albert? The Prince Albert settlement continued to grow steadily, experiencing its first real estate boom in 1881. The Presbyterian Mission, under the leadership of Reverend James Sieveright, sold river lots within the Mission’s property at very reasonable rates, thus drawing the settlement into the Mission area. The Mission House at the corner of River Street and Central Avenue was the center of Prince Albert’s growing business section.

With the growth of the settlement, the Indians withdrew, and the Mission worked almost entirely with the settlers. However, Mistawasis, an important Cree chief, had been so impressed by Nisbet’s work that he requested that a mission be established on his reserve about sixty miles west of Prince Albert. In 1878, John McKay became an ordained minister and set up a successful mission on the Mistawasis Indian Reserve.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This article is based upon a booklet originally published by the Prince Albert Historical Society in 1993.

ENDNOTES

1 Rudy Platiel and Helen Goggin, A Goodly Heritage; A History of Knox Presbyterian Church, 1833-1933 (Oakville, Ont.: Knox Presbyterian Church, 1984), 43.
2 Ibid., 43.
3 Ibid., 44.
4 The Home and Foreign Record of the Canada Presbyterian Church, November 1874, Vol. XIII.
5 Saskatchewan Archives Board (SAB), Nisbet Family Papers, James Nisbet to R. F. Burns, 20 June 1866, 2.
6 Ibid., 3.
7 Ibid., 5.
8 Home and Foreign Record, 18 July 1867, 229.
9 The Carlton Trail crossed the South Saskatchewan River in the neighbourhood of Batoche, but the Nisbet party may have crossed the river at Gabriel’s Landing. Neither location was well marked at that time. While some buffalo hunters wintered in that area, Nisbet makes no mention of signs of habitation apart from the canoe.
10 James Isbister, Adam Isbister and Oliph Olson, with their families, settled at what was to become Prince Albert in 1862. James Isbister had been employed by the Hudson’s Bay Company and was encouraged by Lawrence Clarke, the chief factor for the Carlton area, to attempt farming. James located on what was to become River Lot 62. In 1864, he returned to the employ of the company; the other two families remained and were at the site when the Nisbet party arrived. Gary Abrams, Prince Albert: The First Century, 1866-1966 (Saskatoon: Modern Press, 1966), 1-2.

11 Home and Foreign Record, November 1866, 12.
12 The Carlton Trail that the party travelled had been in use for a number of years by freighters carrying goods to fur trading company posts on the North Saskatchewan. It cannot be described as a road. The freighting vehicles were the Red River carts built entirely of wood. The rims of the wheels were bound with shaganape, dried strips of buffalo hide, that were then soaked to make them hard and tight. Each cart would be pulled by an ox or pony, and could carry a load of 800 to 1000 pounds. The load would be protected from the elements by buffalo hides that had been oiled to make them water proof. The freighters used train of these carts. When ruts formed by the carts proved to be too deep, the trail would simply move to one side or the other. There were no bridges. In the fifteen years following the Nisbet’s journey, most of Prince Albert’s early settlers made the trek across the Carlton Trail.
13 Home and Foreign Record, January 1867, 73.
14 Ibid., 17.
15 Ibid., 20.
16 Ibid., 73.
18 Prince Albert Historical Society Archives (PASHA), James Nisbet, Three and a Half Years of an Indian Mission, 3.
19 As quoted in Platiel and Goggin, A Goodly Heritage, 49.
20 Flett had only offered his services to the Church to assist in the selection of a site for the mission. Polson’s and McBeth’s one year term of employment had terminated.
22 PAHSA, James Nisbet, *Three and a Half Years of an Indian Mission*, 5.
23 Ibid., 4.
24 A detachment of eight Mounted Police from "D" Division had been established at Prince Albert in 1878. In 1880, a Mounted Police escort, which included Harry Ross, arrived in the settlement with four Indian chiefs who were to stand trial for killing government cattle.
25 PAHSA, Papers of Reverend James Nisbet, 76/98, Harry Ross, "Recollections of Prince Albert, and Events in 1880 and 1881."
26 Ibid., 3.
28 In 1866 the Hudson's Bay Company build a small post named Fort Albert about two miles west of the Mission. William Traill began farming operations for the Hudson's Bay Company on River Lots 42 and 43 about a mile west of the Prince Albert settlement in 1871. This became known as the Carlton Farm. Later the farm was moved to the Hudson's Bay Company reserve in east Prince Albert. Abrams, *Prince Albert: The First Century*, 16-17.
29 Ibid., 9.
30 Ibid., 10.
31 Home and Foreign Record, 19 January 1871, 102.
32 Ibid., 100.
33 Ibid., 8 July 1872, 101.
34 Ibid., January 1871, Vol. 10.
36 Ibid.
37 Ibid. (letter dated 8 July 1872), 261.
40 Ibid., 28.
41 Ibid., 30.
42 Ibid., 43-44.
43 Home and Foreign Record, 28 January 1873, Vol. 12.
44 SAB, Nisbet Family Papers, James Nisbet to Isabella Nisbet, 22 April 1874.
46 Home and Foreign Record, December 1874, Vol. XIII.
47 Home and Foreign Record, November 1874, Vol. XIII.

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SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY • FALL 1994
Book Reviews


THIS BOOK DOCUMENTS the attempts of individuals and companies to manufacture agricultural implements in the prairie provinces—Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta—from the 1880s to the 1980s. This area depended on agriculture; why should the tools and equipment needed by farmers and the agricultural industry be built here?

Donald Wetherell's answer is that the full line companies such as Deere and International Harvester from the United States, and Massey-Harris from eastern Canada, dominated the market. The prairie farm implement manufacturing industry began in the 1880s, but up until World War II it remained small, with few successes. Most equipment came from foundries and blacksmith shops, which produced some agricultural equipment among other activities. Prairie implement manufacturing suffered from an unreliable power supply, distance from raw materials (especially steel), a shortage of capital, and few dealers to handle its products.

After World War II, prairie short line companies—companies that produced farm equipment exclusively—achieved more success. Steel became available locally in the prairie provinces and some full line companies hired short line ones to build part of their product line. For example, Massey-Harris hired MacDon Industries of Winnipeg to build Massey-Harris swathers. Electrical grids spread throughout the prairies and made power supply reliable. Using component parts made manufacturing easier, for a manufacturer did not have to produce all his own parts.

In 1970, prairie companies formed the Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association (PIMA) to be the voice of the short line manufacturers and to share information between themselves. Wetherell credits PIMA with contributing greatly to the success of the industry. PIMA's role may be as valuable as the author suggests, but further studies will be required to prove this point. PIMA commissioned this book in 1990 to celebrate its 20th anniversary. The reader may want to consult other studies for different views on PIMA's role.

Of all the factors which contributed to the success of the short line companies on the Canadian prairies after World War II, Wetherell credits technological innovation as the most important. The physical devastation of prairie land during the Depression led scientists and farmers to recognize the need to conserve moisture and disturb the soil as little as possible. The short line companies concentrated on meeting these needs by designing and building tillage and seeding equipment such as the discer, the heavy duty cultivator and the air seeder. The value of Breaking New Ground lies in this analysis of the industry's strength and the products made by the companies in the post-war period.

Wetherell presents an excellent study of prairie farm equipment manufacturing from World War II to the 1980s. People involved in the development of new equipment have recorded their involvement; as well, many companies still exist and were able to provide their histories. In addition, since 1970, PIMA has been preserving the industry's history.

The analysis of the companies before World War II is another matter. So many companies existed, and many for a short time, that it is impossible to uncover much information about them. Their records are scant. Little evidence—photographs, objects, literature—of the companies and the products they made survives. The researcher, Elise Corbet, and Wetherell have attempted to fill in the gaps, but, in at least one case, they made some mistakes.

Nelson Jackson organized or was associated with four companies, including the Jackson Combination Sheaf Loader and Carrier Company, Farm Machinery Manufacturers Limited (which became Jackson Machines Limited), and Jackson Harvesters Limited. The book mentions only the first. Jackson achieved his greatest commercial success with Jackson Machines in Saskatoon from 1919 to 1923. He invented a low-down thrasher and received a patent for it (#211,792) in May 1921. This thrasher had the feeder mentioned by Wetherell on page 163. He credits the Nelson Jackson Company with its production; this reviewer, however, has not discovered this company in his research at the Western Development Museum.

The book's strengths include the table of contents, the illustrations and the index. Wetherell provides an annotated biography of PIMA members (1979-1982) and of companies that completed questionnaires on their histories. A useful addition would have been an annotated list of all the farm equipment manufacturers mentioned, since many predate PIMA's formation.

Wetherell writes clearly and concisely, a formidable challenge given the many companies examined. Despite some flaws, Breaking New Ground is a
good work—one that should be in every library and museum concerned with agricultural, manufacturing or prairie history.

Warren Clubb
Western Development Museum, Saskatoon

The Records of the Department of the Interior and Research Concerning Canada's Western Settlement.


All historical researchers understand the need for effective finding aids. Such aids can save weeks if not months of work by simplifying and explaining otherwise conflicting or confusing information. The Records of the Department of the Interior (RG 15) housed in federal and provincial archives is clearly one of those complicated record sets. With the exception of the records relating to Indian affairs and those relating to national defense, no other federal collection is so diverse and complex. In this book, Irene Spry and Bennett McCardle have produced a practical guide to research in western Canadian history.

The first segment of this work deals with existing research. Essentially an historiographical overview of the last fifty years of scholarly investigation concerning the prairie west, Spry and McCardle outline significant advances in the field and suggest some directions for future study. This section is one of the best historiographical overviews of settlement research and publications to come along in the last thirty years. The authors make clear the complex nature of settlement and historical land management. The extent to which homesteading and settlement were based on the prior American example, and the fact that there was no identifiable line of settlement is also made clear in this overview. The nature and extent of block settlement, however, is not adequately discussed in this section. Block settlement is one of the features which differentiated the Canadian experience from the American example. Despite this minor deficiency, this section will easily find its way onto any reading list for western Canadian history. It is hoped that, if scholars heed the suggestions made by Spry and McCordle for future study, new works on western Canadian settlement will lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the field.

The second part of this work is essentially a finding aid for most RG 15 material. The real value of the second part, however, is that it goes well beyond the formal Department of the Interior information to include associated references from many other federal, provincial and tangentially related record groups. The authors have taken the time not only to trace these records, but also to identify where the myriad pieces of information concerning prairie settlement are located. This portion of the book is essentially a handy index to the location, availability and condition of records sets from Ottawa to Edmonton and almost every archival location in between.1

The Records of the Department of the Interior also includes three helpful appendices. The first appendix is nothing less than a splendid chronicle of the transfer of documents from the department to the provinces following the transfer of public lands and natural resources after 1930. The second appendix traces the various lands and resource managing agencies during much of the tenure of the Department of the Interior. The last outlines significant legislation which affected the management of settlement in the prairie west from 1870 to 1950.

It is clear that years of research and effort went into the publication of this work. Scholars will undoubtedly find it one of the most valuable guides to come along in years. Perhaps the most striking feature of this work is that it indicates the willingness and interest of senior western Canadian historians to provide assistance to newer researchers in the field. This attractive and well organized work shows that, while many other fields suffer from researchers who are unwilling to help one another, this is not always the case in western Canadian history. Historians must continue to make public (and make interesting) the fruits of their labor. Not only is this guide invaluable as it stands, it also indicates the authors’ desire to make future research more efficient and effective.

Anthony G. Gulig
University of Saskatchewan

Three Hundred Prairie Years: Henry Kelsey’s “Inland Country of Good Report.”


Saskatchewan’s recorded history began in 1690 and 1691 when Henry Kelsey, a Hudson’s Bay Company employee, journeyed through the Canadian prairies.

1 Incidentally, the University of Saskatchewan holds a significant collection of RG 10 (Records of the Department of Indian Affairs) on microfilm, although these holdings are not identified in The Records of the Department of the Interior.
Kelsey's journey was unique not because he discovered new lands or explored new routes but because he made observations and recorded what he saw. His journal, while limited, provides baseline information from which today's historians can relate the rapid changes of the past 300 years.

As Henry Epp describes in this book, the 300 year anniversary of Saskatchewan's recorded history became an event to celebrate. Through the work of a few dedicated people, the Kelsey Tri-Centennial Conference was organized and held on 22 and 23 November 1991 in Saskatoon. Epp's book is, for the most part, a compilation of the proceedings from this conference. It presents a multidisciplinary view of Saskatchewan, and provides the reader with a view of the province from Kelsey's time through to present day, with speculation on the future.

The book is divided into seven parts which take the reader through a variety of time periods and events. In Part II, for example, the prairies, as likely seen by Kelsey, are described including the landscape, vegetation, fish, water, birds, and the human use of these resources. Part III describes the natural processes which created the prairie landscape. Part IV examines Kelsey's journey, the circumstances surrounding the journey, and the very interesting and puzzling aspects of some of the sites he visited. Parts V and VI take the reader to present day and project into the future. Of particular interest in this section is the First Nations' viewpoint. Part VII provides sections of Kelsey's journal.

On the whole, Three Hundred Prairie Years is very interesting, although at times the reader wonders why a particular chapter is included. This is not really a result of Epp's editing but is an inherent problem with many conference proceedings. Some of the chapters represent edited versions of papers presented by various speakers. Other chapters, however, have been written with this book in mind. This latter group is more consistent in terms of describing historic change from Kelsey's visit to the 1990s and in meeting the objectives outlined by Epp in his introduction.

I found several chapters particularly absorbing, including John Storer's "Life and Landscape: Origins and History;" David Meyer's "People Before Kelsey: An Overview of Cultural Developments;" Dale Russell's "The Puzzle of Henry Kelsey and His Journey to the West;" and Tim Jones' chapter on protecting and preserving our land heritage. Part VII, while at times difficult, is also worth reading. This multidisciplinary book will appeal to a wide audience; it has something for everyone interested in Henry Kelsey's "Inland Country of Good Report."

Peter Goode
SENTAR Consultants Ltd., Saskatoon

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GRANTS RECEIVED

The Advisory Board of Saskatchewan History acknowledges with thanks generous grants received in 1994 from the NeWest Institute for Western Canadian Studies and the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society.

Through the generosity of our readers, who made donations to the NeWest Institute for Western Canadian Studies designated to Saskatchewan History, we have received to date financial assistance in the amount of $1,016.50.

The Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society provided $1,000 to assist with the production of the journal.
Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society

SHFS Touches Communities, Individuals

While the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society’s profile programs are Folklore magazine and summer motorcoach tours, other programs also contribute significantly to the Society’s total history preservation and awareness efforts.

LOCAL HISTORY MARKERS

SHFS took over this program from the Heritage Branch of Saskatchewan Municipal Government in 1989. It offers communities a vehicle for commemorating places and people of local historic significance, and provides the Society with good visibility.

Standard markers produced are in the form of eighteen by twenty-four-inch cast aluminum plaques, suitable for mounting on a cairn, a sign post or a building. SHFS and the local organization share the costs of the plaque, approximately equally. The applicant is responsible for the cost and construction of a cairn.

To date SHFS has granted financial and administrative assistance to the production of ninety-five plaques. An additional thirty-one have been purchased through SHFS by organizations at full price, without benefit of grant assistance. Currently, the Society’s budget provides for assistance for fifteen plaques per year.

Plaques produced in the past six years now commemorate cemeteries, churches, communities, events, museums, houses, banks, individuals, post offices, schools, sports, trails, and world wars.

The program is promoted through Rural Municipality and MLA offices, the Heritage Branch, SHFS mailouts, and especially through the plaques themselves. Applicants must demonstrate the project’s value to the community and provide research to prove historical accuracy.

SASKATCHEWAN HISTORICAL RECOGNITION REGISTRY (SHRR)

This program awards certificates to recognize any business or farm operated, or residence lived in, by members of the same family for eighty years or more. Launched in 1985—the year of the province’s 80th anniversary—over 900 certificates to date have been awarded.

Certificates are free to recipients and inquiries are welcomed; information on how to obtain the necessary documentation will be supplied. This recognition is not heritage property designation and does not restrict property alterations. Promotion is aided by past recipients through word of mouth. SHFS also promotes the registry program through RM offices and occasional media advertising and publicity.

MEMBER FUNDING

Community organizations and individuals doing appropriate heritage preservation and awareness projects are invited by SHFS to apply for Member Funding grants of up to $2,000 each.

Program criteria require that the applicant and (in the case of an organization) a certain number of its members be members of SHFS. Interested parties will be provided with copies of criteria and application forms.

Since 1988 more than forty projects have been assisted by this program. The wide range of activities supported include: community history books; histories of dioceses, regiments, organizations, and ethnic groups; a cenotaph-park-publication project; a book of short stories about prairie life; and a book documenting folk arts and crafts.

The Member Funding program has provided support for the development of an historical drama and the documentation of railway history at the Station Arts Centre in Rosthorn. It has assisted the creation of interpretive signage in Moose Jaw; local, oral history projects in two other communities—one rural, the other urban; restoration of the Stegner House in Eastend; an archives room for the Soo Line Historical Society in Weyburn; “living history” reenactments of 1880s military events; and the publication of Saskatchewan History.

All of these programs and projects are supported by SHFS through funding from Saskatchewan Lotteries and from self-generated funds. For further information, contact the SHFS office at 1860 Lorne Street, Regina, S4P 2L7. Telephone: 1-306-780-9204. Fax: 1-306-781-6021

Richard J. Wood
Acting Executive Director, SHFS
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