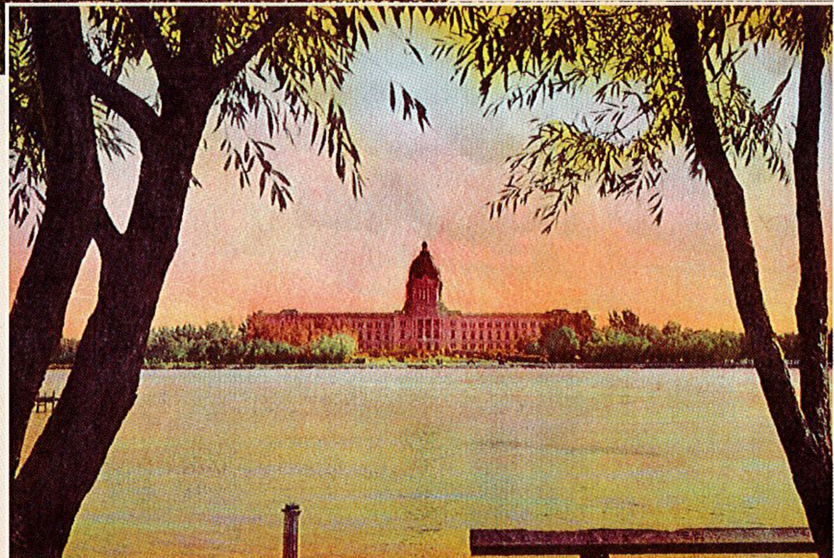
Saskatchewan History

VOLUME 51
NUMBER 1
SPRING 1999



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.

IN ADDITION, THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD HAS PRODUCED SEVERAL AUTHORITATIVE WORKS OVER THE YEARS ON PROVINCIAL HISTORY AND A NUMBER OF OTHER REFERENCES 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.

THE SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD:

Dr. Brett Fairbairn,
PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF CO-OPERATIVE STUDIES,
UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN (CHAIR)

Dr. Eber Hampton,
PRESIDENT, SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN FEDERATED COLLEGE,
UNIVERSITY OR REGINA

Mr. John Law,
PRESIDENT, SASKATCHEWAN PROPERTY MANAGEMENT CORPORATION

Dr. Brij Mathur,
ASSOCIATE DEPUTY MINISTER FOR MUNICIPAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICES,
DEPARTMENT OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS, CULTURE, AND HOUSING

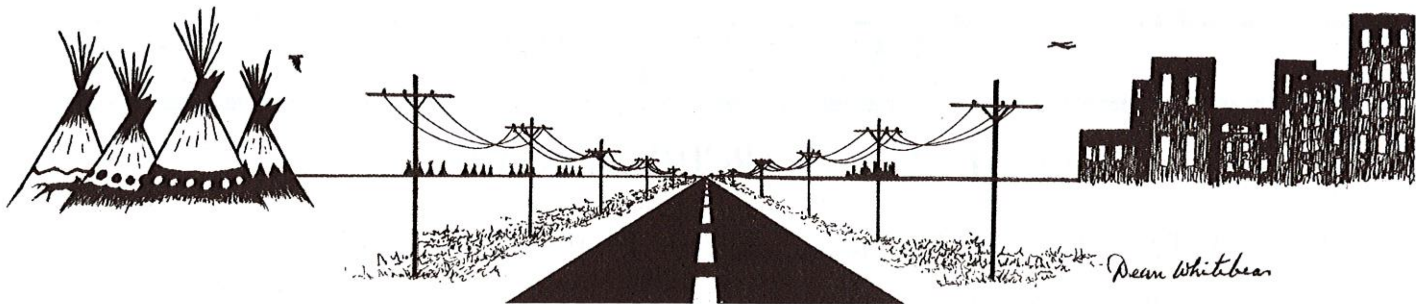
Mr. Lee McDonald,
ACTING NATIONAL ARCHIVIST, NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF CANADA

Dr. James Pitsula,
DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY, UNIVERSITY OF REGINA
(NOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA)

Ms. Gwenn Ronyk,
CLERK LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

Mr. Frank Winter,
UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN, UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN
(NOMINATED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN)

Mr. Trevor Powell,
PROVINCIAL ARCHIVIST (SECRETARY)



SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

VOLUME 51, NUMBER 1 SPRING 1999

EDITOR:
Georgina M. Taylor
GENERAL MANAGER:
D'Arcy Hande
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER:
Nadine Small
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT:
Ilene Youchezin

SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY ADVISORY BOARD:
James Pitsula, Professor of History, University of Regina (Chair)
J.W. Brennan, Professor of History, University of Regina
D'Arcy Hande, General Manager
Valerie Korinek, Professor of History, University of Saskatchewan
Nadine Small, Administrative Officer
D.S. Spafford, Professor of Political Studies, University of Saskatchewan
Georgina M. Taylor, Editor
Patricia Wagner, Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society

Saskatchewan History is published twice a year by the Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Saskatchewan, 3 Campus Drive, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7N 5A4.

Subscription rates are $15.00 per year or $7.50 per copy (Canadian residents please add GST).

The editor of *Saskatchewan History* welcomes the submission of articles relating to the history of the province. Manuscripts must be submitted in duplicate, typewritten, and double-spaced. The endnotes, prepared according to the Chicago Manual of Style, should also be double spaced. Authors should submit manuscripts on PC/DOS 360K floppy disk. The disk must be IBM compatible, in Word Perfect 6.0, 7 or 8 but Word 6.0 is also acceptable. Two hard copies are also required, and the print must be letter or near-letter quality. Manuscripts will be reviewed by qualified readers. The Saskatchewan Archives Board assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors. Dr. Taylor's e-mail address is taylorg@duke.usask.ca

Copyright 1999,
the Saskatchewan Archives Board.
ISSN 0036-4908

DESIGNED BY: Loreen Howarth
PRINTED BY: Apex Graphics

FEATURES

Saskatchewan Archives Board News 2
The Editor's Comments 4
Our Cover, Our Drawings, and Our Pictures 5
Correspondence, Notes, and Comments 6
The Peoples of Saskatchewan in Pictures: The First Nations *Introduced and selected by Georgina M. Taylor* 8
Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society 48
Saskatchewan History: Quotations from the First Fifty Years, *Selected by Joan Champ* 49

ARTICLES

"Little Saskatoon": An Experiment in Land Settlement during the Great Depression *by Dawn S. Bowen* 10
Indigenous Voices — "The Old Men of the Reserves" *by Edward Ahenakew* 29
History in the Community — Reflections on the Heritage Endeavour *by Sharon Butala* 32
Rogues, Heroes, Adventurers, and Trailblazers — Nellie Carson: A daring young woman in her flying machine *by Ruth Millar* 42

BOOK REVIEWS

MARY POPP
A Century in the West: Life of a pioneer woman — Mary Popp's story *by Nanci Langford* 44
CHERIE SMITH
A Family Chronicle — Mendel's Children *by Anna Feldman* 45
DONALD C. STOREY AND R. BRUCE SHEPARD, eds.
The Diefenbaker Legacy: Canadian Politics, Law and Society since 1957 *by Alvin Finkel* 46

Canadian Publication Mail Product Sales Agreement No. 1252690

FEATURES

SASKATCHEWAN ARCHIVES BOARD NEWS

THE H. VERNON PETERS LETTERS

The Saskatchewan Archives Board is pleased to announce the acquisition of the H. Vernon Peters Letters for our permanent holdings. The arrangement and description of this series of 140 letters is nearing completion, and the records are now available for research use in our Regina Office. The Archives purchased these records from a manuscripts dealer in New Jersey in May 1998. Generous financial assistance was received from the Roland Groome Chapter of the Canadian Aviation Historical Society in Regina.

Herbert Vernon Peters was born on 9 October 1912 in Streatham, London, England. He worked for the Somerset County Council before joining the Royal Air Force in November 1940. Posted to Canada during the war, Peters served with No. 33 RAF Service Flying Training School (SFTS) in Caron, Saskatchewan and with No. 36 RAF SFTS in Penhold, Alberta. He began in the RAF as a Leading Air Craftman in 1941, was recommended for promotion in May 1942 (delayed by the transfer of the flying school to civilian operations), became a Corporal in June 1943, and a Pilot Officer later that month upon his transfer to Penhold. Following his return to England in late March 1944, Peters was posted to 180 RAF Squadron. This squadron became part of No. 139 Wing, RAF (day bomber wing) based in Dunsfold, Surrey, which was set up in December 1943. Peters was released from service in May 1946.

The letters of P/O Peters were written to his wife Vera who lived in Taunton, Somerset during the Second World War. The couple had married in Taunton on 6 September 1941. During the war years Vera worked for Air Raids Precautions, First Aid, and the local Council.

The records were created between 24 November 1941 during Peters' initial crossing of the Atlantic, and 27 November 1944, following Peter's return to England. The majority of the letters (1942-1943) document Peters' service at No. 33 RAF SFTS. in Caron. He describes the prairie climate, local entertainment, rates of pay, crop conditions, and the economic and social effect of the station on Moose Jaw. The letters also vividly depict the interruptive nature of war on the lives and plans of servicemen and their families.

These letters represent an important addition to the Archives' holdings complementing other wartime accounts on Saskatchewan air training bases. They will be of significant interest to researchers studying the British Commonwealth Air Training Plan and the Second World War effort in Saskatchewan.

THE CHARLES BEVERLEY KOESTER PAPERS

The Board is also pleased to announce the opening of the C.B. Koester diaries *From My Place at the Table*. The ten volumes of diaries are now available for research at the Archives, following the death of Koester in February 1998. Charles Beverley Koester was born on January 13, 1926 in Regina. He attended the naval college, Royal Roads in Victoria, graduating in 1944, and serving with the RCN and naval reserve until 1960. Returning to Saskatchewan, Koester headed the history department at Sheldon-Williams Collegiate from 1956 to 1959. He graduated with a Master of Arts (History) from the University of Saskatchewan in 1964. In 1959, Koester accepted the position of clerk assistant at the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. Becoming clerk of the Assembly in 1960, Koester held this post until 1969. He then returned to teaching as a professor of history at the University of Saskatchewan, Regina Campus between 1970 and 1975. Koester completed his Ph.D. in History from the University of Alberta in 1971. His thesis studied the life and parliamentary career of Nicholas Flood Davin.

In 1975, Koester accepted a posting in Ottawa as clerk assistant of the House of Commons in Ottawa. He served as Clerk of the Commons between 1980 and 1987. Koester also served on two occasions with the House of Commons in London, England as Senior

Clerk in 1967 and 1970. For his years of public service, Koester became an officer of the Order of Canada in 1989. He retired to Kingston, Ontario where he died on February 1st, 1998.

Koester was co-author, with John Archer, of the book, *Footprints in Time: A Sourcebook in the History of Saskatchewan* (1965), and author of *The Measure of a Man: Selected Speeches of Woodrow S. Lloyd* (1976), and *Mr. Davin, M.P., A Biography of Nicholas Flood Davin* (1980).

The hand-written Koester diaries, *From My Place at the Table*, span the period September 1959 to June 1987. They were donated to the Archives beginning in 1965, and periodically thereafter. Both professional and personal diaries, they document Koester's academic career, his role at the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, his university years, and his service as Clerk of the House of Commons in Ottawa and London. The volumes include letters, programmes, clippings, as well as poetry and sketches by Koester.

The records provide insight into procedural history, parliamentary democracy, and the role of the Clerk's office at the Legislative Assembly. They also document provincial and national political events including election campaigns, the Medicare Crisis, the Douglas, Thatcher, Lloyd and Blakeney years, Trudeau and the FLQ crisis, and the Mulroney years. For many researchers the diaries will provide a new source on traditional subjects of historical study. The diaries are now available as collection R-57. This collection complements other holdings at the Archives donated by Koester including research notes related to his research on Davin and Lloyd; materials related to Agnes Agatha Robinson, daughter of Kate Simpson-Hayes; records concerning the Electoral Boundaries Commission; records of a committee to study the role of the University of Saskatchewan within the community; and certificates and historical writings.

THE RECORDS OF THE CLAYBANK BRICK PLANT

The Board has also acquired the Claybank Brick Plant records from the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation for permanent preservation. The textual records, totalling 22 metres, will be arranged and described over the next year, and subsequently be made available for historical research. Numerous photographs and architectural drawings are also being donated by the Foundation in the near future.

The Claybank Brick Plant was built between 1912 and 1914. It manufactured face brick for buildings throughout the province, including many courthouses, and rare fire brick which was used to line building furnaces and locomotive boilers. A.P. Green Refractories Ltd. donated the Plant site to the Crown in 1992. As one of the best preserved examples of late 19th century industry in Canada, the brick plant received National Historic Site status in 1996.

The records of the plant date from its initial opening in 1914 through to its closure in June 1989. The administrative and operational records of the Plant through its successive owners, Saskatchewan Clay Products (1912-1916), Dominion Fire Brick and Pottery Company (1916-1954), Dominion Fire Brick and Clay Products (1954) Ltd., (1954-1971), and A.P. Green Refractories (Canada) Ltd., (1971-1989), are well documented in the collection. Records include brick orders, kiln operation reports, company directives, employment lists, payroll ledgers, union and labour material, project files, research notes and field survey diaries, and correspondence related to the history of refractory clay products and site development. This collection offers an extensive look at industrial development within the province and a fascinating examination of local labour history. They complement existing oral history interviews with plant managers and workers, as well as provincial government research studies of clay in South Saskatchewan.

The Archives Board wishes to thank the Heritage Branch, Municipal Government, the staff at the Claybank site, and the volunteers of the Claybank Brick Plant Historical Society for their assistance in the transfer of these records to our holdings.

Any questions with regard to the acquisition of the H. Vernon Peters Letters or the Records of the Claybrick Plant or questions with regard to the C.B. Koester papers should be directed to Linda Putz, Chief Archivist, Manuscripts, Maps & Architectural Drawings, Historical Records Branch, (306) 787-4736.

THE EDITOR'S COMMENTS

We want to keep in touch with our readers so I was pleased when readers wrote me in response to the last issue of *Saskatchewan History*. One reader summed up the responses to our new approach in the journal by saying it was "a delight to both the eye and the intellect." We continue our tradition of publishing book reviews and thoroughly researched articles, while at the same time we are placing new emphasis on the importance of history in the community and attempting to present a more critical and inclusive study of the history of Saskatchewan. We want to do so without deteriorating into the opaqueness that at times mars academic writing or the glibness that too often is the trait of popular histories.[1]

In this issue of *Saskatchewan History* we are retaining several features from our last issue that were well received by our readers and we have added new features. We are continuing our discussion of the primary sources that historians use. We are also continuing to include material from Aboriginal scholars, which as one reader observed is "overdue and welcome." In our last issue Cree historian Winona Stevenson critiqued previous approaches to Indigenous oral history and suggested new ways to use it to enrich our history. In this issue we turn the clock back to see what Edward Ahenakew said about the oral tradition in the 1923. Dawn Bowen's article "Little Saskatoon," which is part of the historical literature on back-to-the-land movements in North America, examines the courageous efforts of a group of poverty-stricken people from Saskatoon who moved north to Loon Lake to try to build a new life during the depths of the Great Depression.

Ruth Millar, who is in charge of the Local History Room of the Saskatoon Public Library, recently mounted a popular show in the picture gallery of the Frances Morrison Library, which focussed on several "Rogues, Heroes, Adventurers, and Trailblazers" from Saskatchewan.[2] Because people responded enthusiastically to the show and some of our readers have been asking for more short articles, I asked Ruth to write a series of vignettes about the fascinating, but little known, people who were in her show. In this issue she begins the series with the story of Nellie Carson, Saskatchewan's first woman aviator.[3]

Sharon Butala, an award-winning writer, was the keynote speaker at the Saskatchewan Heritage Association Forum last year. I asked permission to publish her thought-provoking speech in this issue, as a contribution to our series on "History in the Community". Her "Reflections on the Heritage Endeavour," which are rooted in the community, raise many questions about the ways in which we deal with our heritage. She brings together aspects of the preservation of Saskatchewan's history that are often separated, in part because we have created separate institutions run by experts who carefully guard their respective fields of expertise. Butala links the preservation of the old buildings and artifacts that are part of our inheritance with creative writing about our past, our natural heritage, the writing of the province's history, and other aspects of heritage preservation. Her "Reflections" thereby encourage us to think about our work on various aspects of our history as a "mutual endeavour."[4] The book reviews in this issue are by Nanci Langford, whose dissertation focussed on pioneer women in Alberta and Saskatchewan, Anna Feldman, a community historian who is the authority on the history of the Jews of Saskatchewan, and Alvin Finkel, a leading Canadian historian who has written extensively about prairie political history.

Georgina M. Taylor, Editor

NOTES:

1. I would like to thank Margaret Baldock, Sharon Butala, Stan Cuthand, Sophie Malinowki, Ruth Millar, Jacqueline Hutchings, James Pitsula, Jan Schmidt, Meg Smart, Duff Spafford, Maureen Taylor, and Donny White for their assistance as I edited this issue. D'Arcy Hande, Nadine Small, Brock Silversides, and other members of the staff of the Saskatchewan Archives Board were very helpful. I am also grateful to James Pitsula and the other members of the *Saskatchewan History* Advisory Board for their on-going support.
2. The show "Rogues, Heroes, Adventurers, and Trailblazers," which is now in the auditorium of the J.S. Wood Library in Saskatoon, will hang there until March of 2000.
3. For more information on the show see Sheila Robertson, "Ruth's Rogues," in *Western People*, a supplement to *The Western Producer*, 1 April 1999; and Ruth Millar, "Unsung Lives — The rogues and heroes exhibition in Saskatoon," *Briarpatch*, April 1999.
4. Sharon Butala's personal dedication in my copy of *Luna* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1988).

OUR COVER, OUR DRAWINGS, AND OUR PICTURES

isual images are an important part of history so I was pleased when "the new look," as a former editor referred to it, in the Fall 1998 issue of *Saskatchewan History* brought positive responses from our subscribers. Various subscribers reported that they "loved" it, were "delighted" with it, that it looked "very good," that it was "beautiful," or that it was "outstanding." They liked the new design of the pages and our emphasis on readability and they were especially impressed with the drawings by Dean Whitebear, a Cree artist from the Whitebear First Nation, and with our Art Nouveau cover. One subscriber said he appreciated the cover because he takes "particular delight in immigration pamphlets" and has a collection of them. Another said the cover with the Art Nouveau design from the 1905 Department of the Interior booklet, which we used on the cover of the last issue, was "an inspired choice."[1] In the light of these responses we are going to retain the new page design and we are going to continue to use Whitebear's drawings. In this issue we are still using the Art Nouveau design but we have changed the background colour and we are modifying the cover by using historical postcards within the design rather than the paintings on the original booklet, which we used last time.

Like immigration pamphlets, old postcards can give us valuable information about the history of Saskatchewan. The tinted postcards on the cover of this issue tell us something of life in Regina and the surrounding area. The pictures show us the way some people wanted to portray Saskatchewan. The idealized image of the legislative building, which was completed in 1912, shows it in a pink glow against a sunset that casts a romantic rosy hue over the whole scene. The postcard shows the pride people took in their new government building and in Saskatchewan's beautiful prairie skies. In other words, this postcard not only romanticizes the power of the provincial government it was also an early version of Saskatchewan as the "land of the living skies," as the slogan on the province's motor vehicle licence plate now proclaims. This postcard, which was printed by the Photogelatine Engraving Co. of Ottawa, has no greeting on the back.[2]

The postcard of farm operations in a wheat field near Regina, likely produced around the turn of the century, shows another Saskatchewan sky and another idealized scene. This time it depicts a bumper crop, hence advertising the productivity of the land. Whoever tinted this postcard was unaware of the golden colour of a wheat field in the fall. The focus in this picture is not on the sky and the light's effect on the scene; instead it is on the crop of wheat and the work in the field. Perhaps that is why it appealed to a member of Mrs. Elizabeth Chapman's family. There is a hand-written message on the back of this postcard, which is addressed to her, in care of William Hamilton of Listowel in southern Ontario. Written in small lettering, with no punctuation, and squeezed onto the card, the message gives us some hints about daily life on the Chapman farm in southern Saskatchewan during the period of team-haul agriculture. "Well Mother," the sender wrote,

> we have been looking for word from you about the baby how is she anyway I got a card from Dodie She got to the city alright the boy[s] are getting along fine they will soon be done haying if the weather keeps fine well Mother we got home fine Sunday evening was home had chores done before dark be sure and let us know when you arrive.[3]

The signature image at the top of the first page of Ruth Millar's series "Rogues, Heroes, Adventurers, and Trailblazers" looks a bit like a drawing. We achieved this effect by using a computer-enhanced, high-contrast reproduction of a picture of Charlie Parmer, one of "Ruth's Rogues." Millar will tell Parmer's story in the next issue of *Saskatchewan History* and we will include a copy of Charlie's photograph as it was originally developed.[4] The signature drawing of prairie lilies, Saskatchewan's official flower, at the top of "The Peoples of Saskatchewan"was originally used in *Saskatchewan History* in 1948 on the back cover of our first issue.

Georgina M. Taylor, Editor

NOTES:

1. For the historical background of the Art Nouveau design on the cover and a photograph of the cover of the 1905 Department of the Interior booklet see Georgina M. Taylor, "Art Nouveau, Immigration Propaganda, and the Peoples of Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History*, 50(2) (Fall 1998): 31-44.
2. Special Collections Department of the University of Saskatchewan Library, postcard LXX-542.
3. Special Collections Department of the University of Saskatchewan Library, postcard LXX-744.
4. Shelia Robertson, "Ruth's Rogues," in *Western People*, a supplement to *The Western Producer*, 1 April 1999. Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, photograph LH 3581.

CORRESPONDENCE, NOTES, AND COMMENTS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

"I just received the Fall/98 Saskatchewan History. Every aspect of it looks very good.... I've been a subscriber and contributor since my undergraduate days (1960s!) and *Saskatchewan History's* survival and growth means a great deal to me."

George Hoffman, Weyburn

"Congratulations on your first issue of *Saskatchewan History*. I love the new look — the Art Nouveau cover design and the illustrations by Dean Whitebear.... There has been such a richness in this journal over the years. I'm glad to see it continue."

Joan Champ, Saskatoon

"Just a note to say how much I appreciated *Saskatchewan History* Vol. 50 No.2.... Inside the back cover ... is the Wallace Stegner quotation. I think you only have to read *Wolf Willow* to be hooked on Stegner. I particularly enjoy the following in his essay "Living Dry" in the book *Where the Bluebird Sings to the Lemonade Springs — Living and Writing in the West:*

> A deficiency, even a slight distortion of the season in which the rain falls makes all the difference. My family homesteaded on the Montana Saskatchewan border in 1915, and burned out by 1920, after laying the foundation for a little dust bowl by plowing up a lot of buffalo grass. If the rains had been kind, my father would have proved up on that land and become a naturalized Canadian. I estimate that I missed becoming Canadian by no more than an inch of rain; but that same deficiency confirmed me as a citizen of the West.

I have in my collection a complete set of *Saskatchewan History*.... [You] know how to produce a winning publication.... Keep up the good work!

Michael Lambert, Victoria

EDITOR'S NOTE: Wallace Stegner, a renowned American scholar and Pulitzer Prize winning writer, was born in Iowa in 1909. In 1915 he moved with his family to Saskatchewan where they lived for four years on his father's homestead during the summers and they wintered in the village of Eastend. *Wolf Willow — A History, a Story and a Memory of the Last Prairie Frontier*, which was published in 1955, is a memoir of those years. It also discussed the history of the hilly area around Eastend, "the block of country between the Milk River, and the main line of the Canadian Pacific, and between approximately the Saskatchewan Alberta line and Wood Mountain."[1] This block of land includes the Old Man on His Back Hills where Sharon and Peter Butala ranch. For details about the Wallace Stegner House in Eastend see the "Editor's Introduction" to Sharon Butala's speech in this issue.[2]

COMMENTS AND NOTES:

"ARCHIVIST SAYS RECORDS LACK REALITY OF ORDINARY CANADIANS - Archivists bent on preserving the records of their 'sponsor' governments and corporations will lose the voices of ordinary people to history, charges [Terry Cook], a retired National Archives archivist.

Diaries of pioneers and photographs of backwoods settlements are mouldering in attics and barns while formal transactions of governments, associations, churches, businesses and unions are being preserved by cash-strapped archives eager to please the institutions who pay their bills.

'The story of Canada is going to be primarily the story of institutions and the powerful in society, and less the story of average Canadians,' said Terry Cook, now a professor in the graduate archival studies program at the University of Manitoba.

'It will be lacking in the colour and reality of Canadian lives,' he said. 'If you feel your story isn't there, then the history doesn't speak to you. Then you get people talking about the Death of Canadian History....'

For much of the latter part of this century, archivists have been collecting the memories, photographs, and records of ordinary people. But that has shifted in the past ten years with changes in technology and budget cuts, said Cook. The balance of institution records and personal records used to be half-and-half. But [now] it's more like 75 per cent to 25 per cent....

Archivists now get most of their training in documents management, said Cook. 'If you don't know the history of the country, it's hard to collect the history of the country,' he said."

Joanne Laucius, *Calgary Herald,*
26 February 1999

The Women's History Month Collective in Saskatoon organizes, co-ordinates, and publicizes events to celebrate the history of women each October for Women's Month. This year its annual Opening Event will be held at 2:30 PM on October 3, 1999 at the W.A. Edwards Family Centre, 333 Fourth Avenue North, Saskatoon. Everyone is welcome and admission is free. The Collective would like to hear from other groups elsewhere in the province that are organizing events for Women's History Month. Call the Collective at 306-384-7477, send a message to <wom_hist@hotmail.com> or write to 3017 Taylor Street East, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, S7H 1X4.

The Women's History Month Collective, Saskatoon

McNally Robinson Book Dealers will hold a history seminar at their store at Circle and 8th Street in Saskatoon at 7:30 PM on Wednesday the 29th of September. The seminar, which will focus on "The New Saskatchewan History," will be conducted by Georgina Taylor , the Editor, and by recent contributors. Everyone is welcome and admission is free. For more information contact Sylvia Martini, McNally Robinson's events co-ordinator, at 3130 - 8th Street, Saskatoon, S7H 0W2 (306-955-3599) or send an e-mail message to her at <sylvia@saskatoon.mcnally-robinson.ca>.

The Editor

NOTES:

1. Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow – A History, a Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1955), 3.
2. Editor's "Introduction" to Wallace Stegner, "Quiet Earth, Big Sky," *Saskatchewan History*, 9(3) (Summer 1956): 102.

THE PEOPLES OF SASKATCHEWAN IN PICTURES: The First Nations

Introduced and selected by Georgina M. Taylor

Part of the richness of the history of Saskatchewan is its diverse peoples.[1] There is currently a debate among Canadian historians about the value of focussing on the various peoples of Canada. Social historians, such as Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, whose two volume *History of the Canadian Peoples* is very popular, stress the importance of the lives of ordinary Canadians and the diversity of the population. On the other hand, political historians, such as J.L. Granatstein, lament the lack of emphasis on national political figures, most of whom were white, male, and members of the elites. Granatstein claims that the social historians, like Conrad and Finkel, are indulging in "multicultural mania.".[2] Visual images of the diversity in Saskatchewan's population can be seen in the many excellent historical photographs available of the peoples in Saskatchewan. In this issue we are featuring pictures of the peoples of the First Nations and in subsequent issues we will use pictures of the Métis and the peoples of the ethnic and racial groups who came to the area of present-day Saskatchewan from the seventeenth century onward. This particular series, with its emphasis on racial and ethnic diversity, is clearly from the perspective of social historians who stress inclusion.

The pictures in this selection and in future issues were taken during the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century when photographs were available and there was a big shift taking place in the composition of the population of Saskatchewan.

Thousands of peoples from elsewhere in Canada and from many others nations were arriving to join the peoples of the First Nations in the area of present-day Saskatchewan. In short, our emphasis will be on the peoples of the area during the period in which the present province began to take shape. The photographs begin here and continue on subsequent pages in this issue.

Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery, PC696.1, photographer Geraldine Moodie.

Four generations of a Cree family attending a sun dance in the Battleford area. Askachas, his daughter, granddaughter, and great-grandson were photographed in June 1895.

The technology for taking photographs with images that would last was invented in 1827 in England and France.[3] By 1858 photographers were arriving on the Canadian prairies and the first photographs of the people of the First Nations in present-day Alberta and Saskatchewan were first taken in 1871. The first photographer to live in present-day Saskatchewan and to photograph Indians was George Anderton. A Mounted Policeman stationed at Fort Walsh between 1876 and 1897, he established his reputation as a photographer by photographing Sitting Bull, the Lakota leader, when he and his followers sought in Canada following their victory in 1876 in the Battle of Greasy Grass Creek, commonly called the Battle of Little Big Horn.[4]

Brock Silversides points out in *Face Pullers*, a collection of photographs taken between 1871 and 1939, that photographic images of Indians have been in demand since colonization began in the old North-West. However their popularity waxed and waned depending on how relevant Euro-Canadians felt Indians were in any given period of history. Although it is generally believed that pictures do not lie, photographs can be as biased as their creators want them to be.[5] As Lewis Hine, an American photographer, put it, "Photographers may not lie," but "liars may photograph."[6] As Silversides points out, photographs can be "read in any way the viewer chooses." Euro-Canadians' perceptions of the First Nations changed over the decades and this affected the way they interpreted pictures of Indians.[7] What the peoples of the First Nations thought of these pictures at the time is not known, but many now pore over historical pictures of their peoples with great interest.[8]

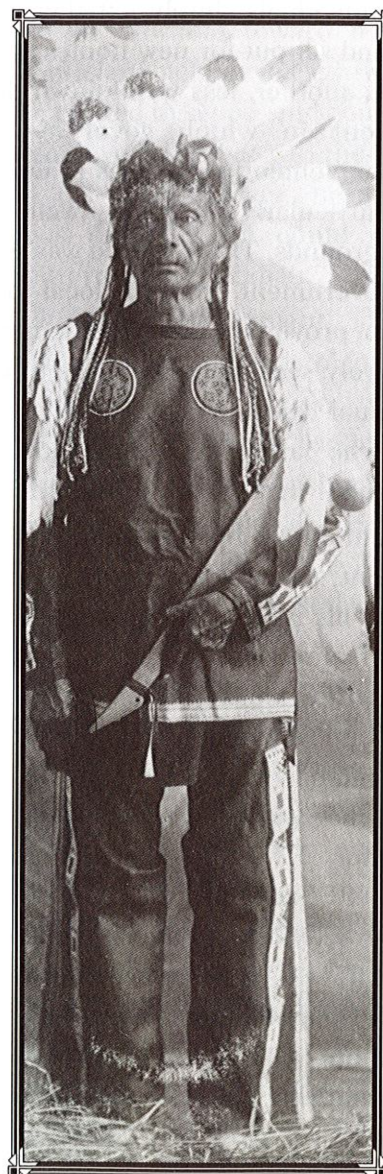
Several of the photographs in this selection are taken from the Saskatchewan Archives Board collection and have, as far as we know, never been published before. The pictures were taken by several photographers, some of whom are unknown. The photograph of Chief Star Blanket was taken in 1895 by William Montgomery Tegart who was based in Lumsden until the 1920s. He apparently had a satellite studio in Indian Head close to the Star Blanket Reserve for several years.[9] Another early photographer who used her considerable skills to photograph the peoples of the First Nations in present-day Saskatchewan was Geraldine Moodie. Between 1891 and 1896, while her husband was stationed with the Mounted Police at Battleford, she took numerous photographs of the Cree in the area, including the picture of Askachas and his family taken in 1895 on this page.[10] The photographs by Theodore Charmbury were taken when he was in Prince Albert between 1904 and 1918. One of the Charmbury photographs is of a young chap who, like many young Indians, was a cowboy. Morgan Baillargeon and Leslie Tepper argue in *Legends of Our Times: Native Cowboy Life* that cowboys and cowgirls from the First Nations contributed to the ranching and rodeo life in the American and Canadian West.[11]

The photographs and the lives of the peoples in this selection require interpretation in order to fully understood their place in the history of the province.[12] There has been a great deal of research done about the history of the First Nations in Saskatchewan by community and academic historians among the Aboriginal Peoples themselves and by Euro-Canadian academic historians. These histories give background for these pictures.[13] Stan Cuthand and other First Nations scholars bring rich cultural and linguistic insights to

the understanding of pictures such as those in this selection. The photographs reproduced here are intended simply as the first selection in a photographic introduction to Saskatchewan's ethnic and racial diversity. These photographs were taken during a period when the peoples of the First Nations were dealing with colonization, trying to survive under adverse conditions, and attempting to keep their traditions alive. The people in these pictures show a quiet dignity as they coped with colonization.[14]

NOTES:

1. I would like to thank Stan Cuthand, a First Nations elder and scholar, for discussing the pictures in this selection with me and for reading an earlier draft of this introduction. His insights and his linguistic skills were very helpful. I would also like to thank Margaret Baldock, D'Arcy Hande, James Pitsula, and Brock Silversides for reading earlier drafts of this introduction and making helpful comments. I am also grateful to Maureen Taylor for sharing her knowledge of the history of the First Nations with me, Brock Silversides of the Saskatchewan Archives Board for searching for and finding most of the photographs in this selection, and Sophie Malinowski of the Saskatchewan Indian Federated College Library for her assistance.
2. For examples of the work of social historians who stress ethnic and racial diversity in Canada and Saskatchewan see Alvin Finkel and Margaret Conrad, *History of the Canadian Peoples 1867 to the Present* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, Ltd., 1998) and Georgina M. Taylor, "Art Nouveau, Immigration Propaganda, and the Peoples of Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History*, 50(2) (Fall 1998): 31-44. See Granatstein's critique of this approach in J.L. Granatstein, *Who Killed Canadian History?* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1998), 79-108.
3. Leon L. Bram and Norma H. Dickey, eds. *Funk & Wagnalls New Encyclopedia*, vol. 20 (Clifton, New Jersey: Funk and Wagnalls, Inc. 1992), 397.
4. Brock Silversides, *The Face Pullers – Photographing Native Canadians 1871 - 1939* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1994), 2. For more historical photographs of people of the First Nations on the prairies see Silverside's book. Peter Matthiesen, *Indian Country* (1979; reprint, New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 229. Alan D. McMillan, *Native Peoples and Cultures of Canada* (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre Ltd., 1995), 155. Robert M. Utley, *The Lance and The Shield — The Life and Times of Sitting Bull* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1993), 183-222.
5. Silversides, *The Face Pullers*, 1.
6. Quoted in John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1998), x.
7. For an overview of the way Euro-Canadians perceptions of the people of the First Nations evolved see Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian — The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992). See also J.R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens — A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1989), 170-207.
8. For details about the ways in which the voices of the peoples of the First Nations have been discounted by Euro-Canadian historians see Winona Stevenson, "Indigenous Voices, Indigenous Histories — Part I: The Othering of Indigenous History," *Saskatchewan History* 50(2) (Fall 1998): 24-27.
9. Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 4270, notes on the back of the photograph of Chief Star Blanket. J.H. Richards and K.I. Fung, *Atlas of Saskatchewan* (Saskatoon: University of Saskatchewan, 1969), 194.
10. Donny White, *In Search of Geraldine Moodie* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center University of Regina, 1998), 10-52. This photograph and many of Moodie's other pictures of the people of the First Nations are reproduced in Whites' book. Although Askachas's name is spelled 'Skowchas' in White's book, Stan Cuthand, a Cree linguist, says the correct spelling is 'Askachas.'
11. Morgan Baillargeon and Leslie Tepper, *Legends in Our Times: Native Cowboy Life* (Vancouver and Seattle: UBC Press and University of Washington Press, 1998), 1. For stories and a song by and about First Nations people from Saskatchewan in this volume see 51-53, 116-119, 219-220.
12. For a discussion of the interpretation of visual images of the prairies see Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West*, x-xii.
13. For surveys of the history of the peoples of the First Nations by academic historians see Olive Dickason, *Canada's First Nations — A History of Founding Peoples from Earliest Times* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1992); Olive Dickason, "A Historical Reconstruction for the Northwestern Plains," in *Readings in Canadian History — Post-confederation*, ed. R. Douglas Francis and Donald R. Smith, 3rd ed., (Toronto: Holt, Rinehart and Winston of Canada, Limited, 1990), 47-67; Arthur Ray, *I Have Lived Here Since the World Began - An Illustrated History of Canada's Native People* (Toronto: Lester Publishing, 1996), 260.
14. For an overview of the history of Saskatchewan in this time period see John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), 52-166. For an historical interpretation of other visual images of the prairies in this period see Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West*, 43-103.


Saskatchewan Archives Board, Chambury Collection, #S90-51/51, photograher Theodore Charmbury.

This unknown man lived in the Prince Albert area. The picture was taken between 1904 to 1918.

.... to be continued on page 28

ARTICLES

"Little Saskatoon": An Experiment in Land Settlement during the Great Depression

by Dawn S. Bowen

Canada experienced a large scale back-to-the-land movement during the Depression of the 1930s. Countless thousands of individuals simply left the cities of their own accord and set out for new homes in rural areas. But there was another, less well-known dimension of this movement in which governments assisted migrants by implementing policies to encourage land settlement, particularly by urban dwellers with agricultural backgrounds. This practice was carried out at all levels of government, from the local to the federal. In a number of provinces, the movement was initiated by cities actively seeking alternatives to direct relief. While individual decisions certainly played a role in determining who participated in the movement, it was often government that set the process in motion.[1]

Little attention has been given to this back-to-the-land movement, particularly at the local scale. John McDonald, in his article on settlement in northern Saskatchewan, provides a broad overview of homesteading activities during the Depression, but he emphasizes the movement of farmers from the drought areas to new homes in the north, making only passing reference to the assisted settlement plans.[1] Another author, T.J.D. Powell, provides a detailed examination of Saskatchewan's relief settlement program, but correctly asserts that it is difficult to judge these government schemes because newspaper stories, the financial statements of government departments, and even the reports of those agencies specifically charged with overseeing the settlement scheme are often contradictory and, at times, misleading.[2]

Dawn S. Bowen is in the Department of Geography at the Mary Washington College in Fredericksburg Virginia.

Because both articles discuss the larger issue of settlement in the Saskatchewan's north, neither author is able to examine the impact of these programs at the local level, or to focus on the settlements that were established and the individuals who participated in the plans. This article explores the establishment of one relief settlement, examines settlers' attempts to develop homesteads, and identifies some of the problems encountered by these pioneers. It also analyzes their efforts to create a social infrastructure and to form a community. These dimensions are particularly important, for settlers' success should be measured not only by economic factors but by social achievements as well. Consideration of each of these also provides a baseline against which other settlements created by relief recipients at this time can be evaluated.

During the 1930s, a number of observers concluded that full employment in the nations' industrial plants would never be possible, and that some alternative means of subsistence had to be provided for the working class.[3] To this end, various suggestions were made to resolve the problem of unemployment and economic dislocation. One option which was consistently advocated by business leaders, politicians, and reformers was land settlement. Despite increased industrialization and urbanization, Canada still had strong agrarian roots, and calls for a return to the soil were widely heralded as positive steps. With unemployment reaching epidemic proportions, the land offered hope to people who had exhausted their own resources and recognized that the bleak economic situation would not soon improve. As government offi-

cials looked in vain for new strategies to cope with the escalating crisis, relief settlement appeared to be the one way that would enable citizens to become self-supporting once again.[4]

The economic and social crisis triggered by the Depression was severe throughout Canada, but the western provinces, Saskatchewan in particular, suffered the greatest deprivation. Having already experienced a decade-long agricultural depression, the province had few resources at its disposal. Farmers driven out by drought and unemployed farm laborers migrated to cities in search of work and added to an already overburdened relief system. Saskatchewan faced a two-fold problem. The first resulted from the profound drought that had affected

Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 8545.

A wagon train of settlers going north during the 1930s.

much of province's land and the farmers who were its guardians. The second involved a rising number of unemployed workers in the cities. The provincial government, burdened with greater numbers of destitute citizens and an empty treasury, sought ways to alleviate the economic crisis.[5] Public works were proving to be too costly and direct relief, the "dole," was demeaning and, many feared, provided no incentive for those without work to help themselves. In March of 1931, Saskatoon's mayor, John W. Hair, announced his support for a plan to place 500 unemployed city men and their families on farms, where they could grow sufficient produce to meet their own needs. The objective of the plan was not to expend vast amounts of money to establish families, but rather to provide sufficient assistance so that these people could help themselves.[6]

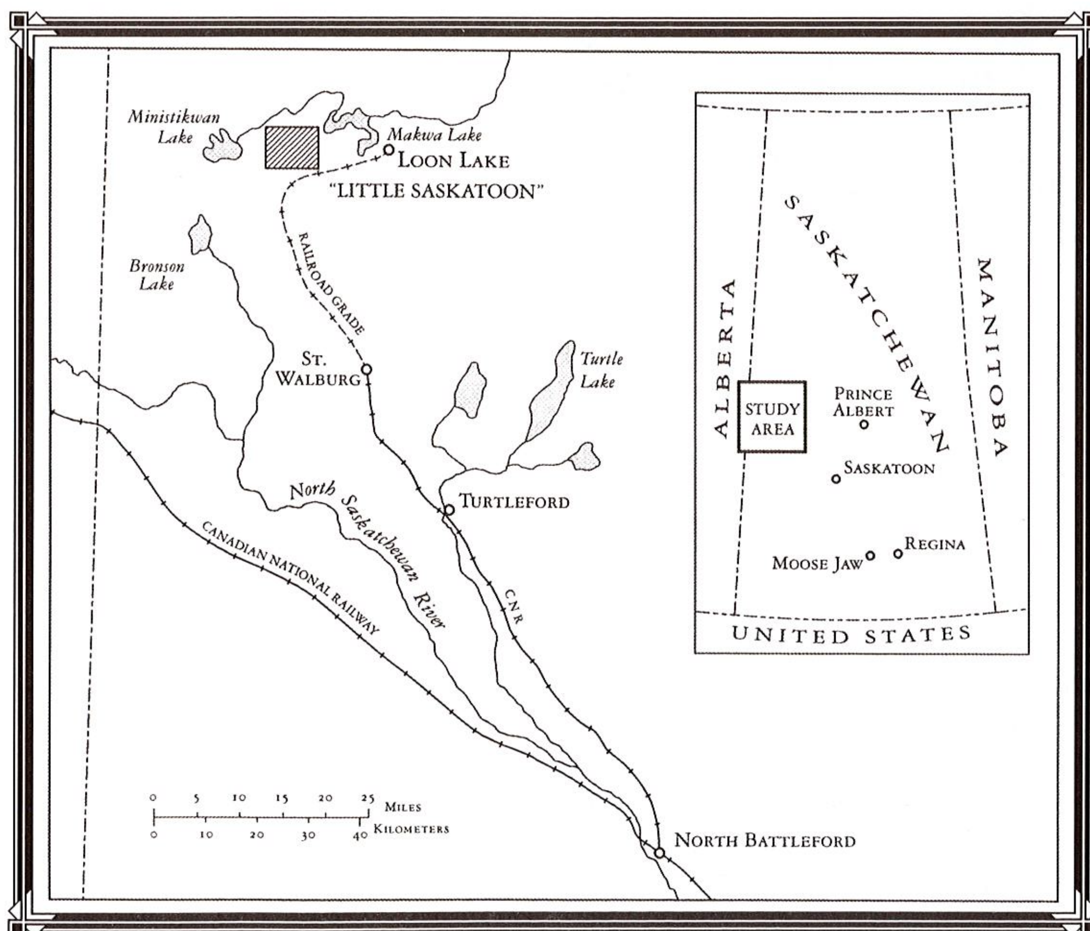
With its vast northern frontier largely unsettled, provincial officials believed that plans such as the one noted above would encourage farmers and agricultural workers who had migrated to the city to return to the farm. Government officials and the public both favoured back-to-the-land schemes as a means of providing relief. Unemployed workers' associations were also interested in the idea and lobbied local authorities to adopt a back-to-the-land program for the urban poor.[7] City officials in Saskatoon, facing a crisis in the relief system, recognized that a back-to-the-land movement had some genuine advantages. Not only would a number of families be removed from the city and its relief rolls, but, they reasoned, those same families would be working toward a goal of self-sufficiency. Politicians acknowledged that the movement would be limited in scope, and could not include all of the unemployed, but back-to-the-land held out the possibility of "independence, health and happiness," whereas direct relief could only lead to "discontent, bitterness and despair."[8]

The Saskatchewan government, in conjunction with local municipalities, agreed to fund the placement of unemployed city people on the land in the spring of 1931.[9] The Province established a loan program for qualified persons wishing to settle on provincial lands. Applicants were required to be British subjects, to have lived in the Province for at least five years and to possess livestock or equipment valued at $250. Loans not to exceed $500 were granted for the sole purpose of providing "housing material and fuel, and for land clearing, ploughing and fencing."[10] This relief settlement scheme was intended as a means to enable families living on relief in the city to become self-supporting, if only on a temporary basis, through the establishment of homesteads. Funds would not be spent to develop infrastructure nor was its purpose to increase agricultural production.[11] Relief would still be given to families as they worked toward self-sufficiency, but that cost would be less than maintaining those same families in the city. The savings in relief payments to the city were no doubt an important consideration, as newspaper reporters frequently mentioned in their columns.[12] The mayor of Saskatoon declared that large numbers of the city's residents "realize that they would be

better off on a farm of their own than trying to make their way in the city under present conditions."[13] He repeatedly stated that any effort to place families on the land was simply a way "to assist the families to assist themselves," and added that this plan offered "a means whereby a man ... could get a start."[14] Commenting on the large number of inquiries, the city employment officer observed that of those people from whom he had received applications, "the majority seem[ed] very anxious to take part in the scheme."[15] There was no illusion that they would become commercial grain farmers, but it was thought that through hard work they could feed their families and perhaps have a small surplus to barter for the items that they could not produce.

In the late spring of 1931, three dozen families from the city of Saskatoon packed up their belongings, bade farewell to family and friends, and made their way to new homes on Saskatchewan's northern frontier. They loaded their possessions onto a train bound for St. Walburg, a small community at the end of steel some forty miles short of their final destination. There, they transferred their belongings to wagons and followed a newly completed railroad grade north toward Loon Lake. (See Map 1.) After a slow and often harrowing journey, the families reached their homesteads, and began the arduous task of constructing shelters, clearing land and building a community. They were neither the first nor the last in a long line of families who trekked north during the Depression years in search of a better life. Their story, however, is one that is worth telling.

These settlers represent only a trickle of the vast stream of people from urban areas who made their way back to the land during the Depression. The community established by these families, commonly known as "Little Saskatoon," is not necessarily representative of all those where former city residents settled, nor are the particular experiences of its homesteaders likely to have been shared by everyone who went back to the land. The development of this community does, however, shed light on the relief set-



Map 1

tlement program that was carried out by the Saskatchewan government in the early years of the Depression, and how it was implemented. The fact that the settlers here were reasonably successful suggests that there may be valuable lessons to be learned from careful analysis of this community.

THE SETTLEMENT PROCESS

As economic conditions deteriorated in Saskatoon, people responded eagerly to proposals that might enable them to improve their circumstances. In March, 1931, several Saskatoon families agreed to join forces in an effort to obtain land. The leaders of this group were Ray Gearhart and Stanley Sly, who had resided on neighboring farms near Donavon, a hamlet twenty miles southwest of Saskatoon, before moving to the city a few years earlier. The group's nucleus also included Gearhart's sister and brother-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Watts, and Norman "Chub" Walper, another friend from the Donavon district. Other Saskatoon residents, recognizing the benefits of banding together in this venture, allied themselves with Gearhart and Sly. A small number of these people had no connection with other members of the group, but most were friends or relatives of one another. The Charles Fowler and Richard Sipes families, for example, were related by marriage, as were the George Skuce and Albert Neilly families. Alex McLean and Charlie Trask were both carpenters who had known each other and worked together for many years before making the decision to move north. Still others were connected with one another through their lives in rural areas before moving to Saskatoon. Tom Arnold, a railway fireman, formerly lived in Kelfield, where he knew the Heimbeckers, who moved directly to "Little Saskatoon." Cecile and Sam Lunt, Arnold's sister and brother-in-law, also left Kelfield and took a homestead in the settlement in 1932. Arnold also knew Charlie Trask, who had lived in Springwater, Saskatchewan, a short distance from Kelfield, before he moved to Saskatoon in the late 1920s.[16] The ties of family and friendship shared by these people provided a foundation for cooperation that would prove necessary for the success of this endeavor, and made "Little Saskatoon" somewhat different from most relief settlements on the northern frontier.

The process of land acquisition began in April when Gearhart and some of the others visited the Canadian National Railway Colonization office in Saskatoon to learn more about the settlement plan. During this meeting, CNR agents encouraged them to apply for homestead land. With this idea in mind, several members of the group met with Mayor Hair to determine whether the city would provide assistance if they moved onto homestead lands. Hair, in turn, sent them to Major John Barnett, the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, for advice. Barnett informed the men that if they secured equipment and filed on homestead lands, they would be eligible for provincial land settlement loans that were to become available on May the first. The group decided to follow Barnett's suggestion, and selected four representatives to accompany a pair of CNR agents on a trip to the north to select a suitable block of land that was available for homestead entry. Within days, the party found a promising tract west of Loon Lake. Although it was located some 175 miles northwest of Saskatoon, the land was not considered exceptionally isolated, for no prospective homestead site was more than ten miles from a branch line that the CNR was planning to build from St. Walburg to Loon Lake and beyond. The men could see that the grade had already been completed to the outskirts of Loon Lake, and believed that it would be only a matter of time before tracks were laid, bringing the settlement within easy reach of Saskatoon and other settled parts of the province.[17]

Upon their return, the delegation conferred with the other family heads who had expressed an interest in moving to the north. Most agreed that living near Loon Lake promised more than spending another year on relief in Saskatoon, and filed claims on the land recommended by their representatives.[18] Once they had applied for homesteads, most families submitted requests to the province for settlement loans. The application inquired extensively into the men's personal backgrounds, their occupations and training, and, most importantly, their farming experience. Questions included where this experience had been obtained (i.e., prairies or bush country), and what type of farming had been practiced (i.e., grain, livestock, or mixed farming). Although it believed that farming skills were the most essential ingredients for success, the Province also wanted to know what other

skills a man might have which could help him secure additional funds when necessary.

Relief officials believed that selection of men with the potential to succeed was necessary, but the willingness of their wives to cooperate was also essential. "Fully 50 percent of the success of such a venture," a reporter remarked, "depended upon the women."[19] Women were active participants in the application process, and were questioned about their farming experience and whether they were "fully conversant with the conditions of life on a pioneer farm." Officials also asked whether they approved of their husbands' applications, and if they "willingly joined" them in taking up land. A report of the interview with the William Taylor family illustrates the perceived importance of women to the success of the effort: Mrs. Taylor was, in the words of the investigator, "a real Scotch homemaker, [who was] fully experienced, able and willing to do her bit to make a success of farming with her husband."[20]

Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 8558.

Oxen pulling stumps as land is cleared in the north during the 1930s.

Who were the Saskatoon citizens who participated in this venture? Personal information has been collected for twenty-four of the families who settled at "Little Saskatoon." The median age of the men was forty-three, and all but two were married. Three children were the average for each family, although one family had eight children, and three others had five or more. These family heads had been engaged in a variety of occupations, mostly involving blue collar work, prior to their migration. More than one-third were carpenters, while the remainder included a railway fireman, a mechanic, a cook, and a salesman. All of the women were home-makers, although a few had taught school and one had practiced as a midwife. Nearly all of these men and women had grown up on farms, and several men had been engaged in farming prior to their move to Saskatoon. Half of the eighteen settlers for whom this information is available had lived in the city for periods ranging from two to four years, but a few had resided there for a decade or more.[21] The mean length of residence in Saskatoon was five years. Fully 80 percent of the men who settled at "Little Saskatoon" were known to be on relief, although it is probable that others of them had received some form of assistance prior to their departure from the city.[22] It is clear that whether these families were receiving relief or not, each viewed settlement as an opportunity that should not be passed up.

The first group of Saskatoon residents left the city with high hopes as they prepared to begin new lives in the north. Here was a chance to become self-supporting once again. They knew that they would still be dependent on the government for assistance, but at least they could avoid the stigma of direct relief. The men would be working again, not on a make-work relief project, but on developing their own homesteads. Although funds were in short supply, the city was able to assist a total of thirty-eight families. City council agreed to pay the $16 filing fee for a homestead claim and $17 in freight charges needed to ship each family's possessions to St. Walburg. In addition, about half of the families received funds to cover railway passenger fares, and a handful were given small grocery vouchers.[23] Noting that some of the settlers were "not overly blessed with worldly goods," the Mayor appealed to local citizens to donate any equipment they could spare. "An old wagon, plow, harrow, garden tools, an old horse, and even clothing would be greatly appreciated." Materials were provided by a large number of citizens and businesses, including the Hudson's Bay Company, which supplied an ax to each family.[24]

THE SUMMER OF 1931

The settlers at "Little Saskatoon" appeared eager to make the best of their situation. The first few

months in the new settlement were difficult for the former city residents, but their desire to succeed, their existing relationships with one another, and their willingness to cooperate eased the transition. When they first arrived on their homesteads, they built shacks and cleared a small amount of land for a garden. Stanley Sly, one of the group's organizers, described the area as a "regular little heaven," and reported to the Saskatoon newspaper that "it would be impossible to induce any of [the settlers] to return to the city." Sly rather optimistically concluded, "While we have been there only a few weeks we are now practically self-supporting." The newspaper's editor responded that although the claims of self-sufficiency may have been a "little exaggerated," it nonetheless appeared that the settlers were content and that the scheme was off to a good start.[25]

By nearly all accounts, it did appear that the community was doing well. Sly, who was to prove tireless in his efforts to promote the settlement, reported in June that the settlers had constructed homes and planted gardens. Within a week of planting, Sly declared, "green shoots" had appeared in his garden.[26] In September, Ray Gearhart told a *Star-Phoenix* reporter that the group was doing as well as could be expected. Contradicting Sly's earlier statement that they were "practically self-supporting," Gearhart conceded that they had yet to reach this point, but that they were "all making splendid progress in that direction." Every settler had between two and ten acres cleared in preparation for breaking in the spring of 1932, had fair garden crops, and expected a very good potato crop. In an expression of gratitude for the assistance that the city had given to him and his fellow settlers, he offered to ship two tons of fish to Saskatoon's relief office.[27] In October, John Currie, the Saskatchewan Relief Commission supervisor based in Saskatoon, reported that the settlers were warmly housed and well prepared for the coming winter. Currie also stated that a feed shortage that existed among some of the settlers had occurred because many had arrived after the haying season and, to complicate matters, heavy rains in August had flooded many hay meadows. There were, however, plenty of oats in the district to feed all the stock, and the relief department had secured an adequate supply.[28]

RELIEF WORK

By the end of the summer of the 1931, settlers had built homes and constructed shelters for their livestock, planted, and in some cases harvested, gardens, and cleared small amounts of land. As they prepared for winter, the men continued to make improvements on their homesteads, but they also hoped to secure employment in the road work camps that could provide them with some sorely needed cash. In August, W.W. Whelan, Chief Inspector for the Department of Natural Resources, visited the settlement and reported that its residents were doing very well. Just before his trip, a large number of the district's settlers had attended a meeting in Loon Lake, at which the Minister of Highways promised that road work would begin shortly, and that jobs would be available for the settlers.[29] In late December, one homesteader complained that he had been informed that only those who had received settlement loans from the province qualified for the relief work. He demanded to know why the highway department was bringing in men from other parts of the province to build roads when poor settlers such as himself were being "turned down flat, [and] not allowed to earn a few cents."[30]

In December, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sent a telegram to Currie, the relief supervisor, that sheds more light on this particular problem. In his reply, Currie reported that he had interviewed many settlers in the north, and "found every man ... anxious to take advantage of an opportunity to go into camp." The settlers, however, had not yet been informed of any opportunities for them to secure employment from this source. Local DNR officials, with whom Currie had spoken, informed him that there would be no road work for any settlers. Infuriated at this turn of events, Currie suggested that "someone ... appears to be doing his utmost to throw a monkey wrench into the machinery...."[31]

The lack of relief road employment was a sore point for many settlers who had hoped to work off their relief and to bring home a bit of desperately needed cash. In the summer of 1932, Mrs. Charles Gould wrote to the provincial land department explaining her family's inability to pay taxes:

> We are in receipt of various notices for taxes, interest and what not. I wonder if

you realize how hard the Provincial Gov. [sic] laws are making it for settlers. It used to be a hero's work to prove up a homestead for ten dollars. Now we have endless expense and nothing with which to meet it.

She continued her letter by outlining conditions in the settlement, noting the difficulty of clearing land, and the problems associated with developing a northern homestead. Mrs. Gould suggested that work be given to settlers to complete the road from "Little Saskatoon" to Loon Lake:

> Could not the settlers here about be given the chance to work out some of their taxes and interest on the road which the Relief Gang left unfinished.... It would give us a chance to make good and at present we are all up against it. We can sell nothing for cash, neither can the men get work for cash.[32]

Six months later, her appeal for relief road work had apparently been answered, as her husband was now employed by a road building crew. The interest on the settlement loan still had not been paid, however, and the Department of Natural Resources wanted to know why. Mrs. Gould again replied that the family was unable to raise sufficient cash to make the payment because work was not available nor could they sell anything:

> Wouldn't it be possible to make arrangement so we could pay that interest [through relief road work]. The same way we are paying back relief $1.00 a day.

She concluded: "We are just as anxious as you are to get this straightened up but cannot see any way other than the road work."[33]

The problem surrounding the provision of relief road work ultimately worked itself out, with settlers permitted to work off their taxes at camps within the district. The lack of cooperation, or at least, communication, between various government departments suggests, however, that problems would continue. The need to make payments on their loans, to pay taxes, and to purchase certain necessities that relief vouchers did not cover presented a serious dilemma for some settlers. The fact, too, that so few jobs were available meant that cash was a scarce commodity.

Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 8539.

The original bridge between Loon Lake and the village of Loon Lake.

DEVELOPING A HOMESTEAD

Settlers were occupied during their first months on the land by constructing shelter for the families and livestock, and clearing small areas for gardens, and were confident that they would make significant strides in the development of their homesteads in the coming months. In late March, 1932, the city relief officer received a letter from a settler who was happy to share his story. This man reported that he had twelve acres cleared and ready for breaking, three horses, a cow, six chickens and a rooster. He was enthusiastic about his plans for the coming summer, and was certain that he would make a success of this venture.[34] Shortly after this story was published, a United Church missionary who had visited "Little Saskatoon" provided a very different portrait of the new settlement. In a report to *The Western Producer*, the weekly newspaper of the Wheat Pool, Reverend A.R. Taylor described the conditions he had encountered. Few of the city men, Taylor advised, had accomplished much in the way of farm work, and he believed that the placement of these men on the land had not been particularly successful. Commenting on this report, the Saskatchewan section of the United Farmers expressed sympathy with the desire of authorities to solve the unemployment problem, but demanded that before any further settlement of the unemployed be made, the province undertake a thorough and disinterested investigation to discover the truth about the settlement scheme.[35]

These two reports provide contradictory accounts of the new settlement, and the latter raises serious questions about the advisability of placing urban residents on homesteads in the north. It is true that the men had in fact made little progress in their agricultural endeavors, but they had been on the land less than a year when the minister traveled to the area. The time of his visit, at the end of winter when conditions were most harsh, might also have affected his perception of the situation. All settlers were aware that they would be pioneers on a new frontier, and because of their late departure in the 1931 season, no one expected that they would accomplish more than the planting of a small garden and the clearing of a few acres.[36] Little more than this had actually been achieved, but none of the settlers blamed anyone for this circumstance nor did they want to return to their former lives in the city.

After a full year of work on their homesteads, settlers had made considerable progress, particularly in light of their limited equipment and meager financial resources. In September 1932, the province's Minister of Municipal Affairs, Howard McConnell, toured the community in the company of W.J. Mather, the agricultural editor of the *Star-Phoenix*. Mather and McConnell visited the homes of sixteen former Saskatoon residents to "discover what progress had been made and to investigate some difficulties that had arisen." The newspaper man praised the progress made by the settlers and declared that although it had been "a tough struggle for many of them," they were "nearer their goal than they were a year ago."[37] Their reports suggest that these families had taken remarkable strides toward self-sufficiency.

Charlie Fowler, who had formerly been employed as a carpenter in Saskatoon, was the first settler whom the two men visited. Fowler had a team of horses, a cow, three pigs, and sixty-five chickens. Sufficient hay was stacked in his yard to get the animals through the winter, and the six acres of oats he had planted were doing well. Although he reported that chipmunks and rabbits had "played havoc with the part of his garden above ground," he expected to dig enough potatoes, turnips and carrots to get through the winter. Fred Moellman, another former carpenter, was also doing well. He had eight and a half acres broken, but unfortunately the crop that he had planted had failed. He had thirty-five loads of hay with which to feed his stock, but no grain. Moellman had two horses, two cows and two calves, some pigs, and fifty chickens. The writer did not mention a garden, but he did report that Mrs. Moellman had preserved sixty-three quarts of wild blueberries. When Mather and McConnell stopped at the home of George Knight, a former garage employee, they found Knight, his wife, and four of his children busy clearing land on a neighbor's farm. Knight had agreed to do the work in exchange for a horse, which brought his total to three. He also had two cows milking, and had kept as many as a dozen pigs, but had since given some away. Knight had six and a half acres of land broken, and three additional acres cleared and ready for breaking.[38] The progress made by these individuals was representative of that made by many others in the community.

"Everyone knew that years of hard work and sacrifice were required before their farms could become economically viable, but they moved quickly to build a community that would make living on homesteads in the bush much more than merely survival."

Most reports from the settlers reflected their commitment to settlement and the progress they had made since their arrival, but several people discussed problems they had encountered, and made suggestions for improving their situation. In the spring of 1932, provincial authorities had sent a tractor into the settlement to break land already cleared by the settlers. A total of seventy acres were broken, with the average amount per settler being five acres. Fred Whitehouse, a former machinist, urged the Province to provide heavier tractors to continue the breaking operations, and he suggested that the highway department send one of its road building tractors. The need for more powerful tractors became apparent again in the spring when the outfit that was supplied was frequently caught up in heavy roots.[39]

A second matter of concern to the settlers was the condition of the settlers' livestock. Although cattle and horses could survive on hay, grain was essential for the horses if they were to do heavy work. The failure of the province to provide feed grain often meant that horses were too weak to work in clearing operations or with the mowing of hay. Homesteaders also wanted feed grain for their pigs. Mather, the agricultural editor, reported that although every family he visited had swine, "'Pigs or no pigs' [was] a burning question in the settlement." Pigs needed grain, and because no wheat or barley was grown within thirty miles of the settlement, settlers faced a serious dilemma. Mather discussed this issue with a half-dozen homesteaders who were working on a nearby road project. The settlers had nearly two dozen pigs among them, but were unable to provide grain for the animals. One man said that the pigs he had fenced in two months before were now so much thinner that they could fit through the cracks. Where pigs had been given skim milk and permitted to scavenge, they were making "fair gains," but if they were to be kept through the winter, grain would have to be provided as a relief measure. Provincial officials believed that keeping swine through the winter was not economical, and argued that the pigs should be killed. Few settlers wanted to do this, however, because as Mather reported, they remembered the "rashers of bacon that they [had] on the breakfast table in Saskatoon and the manna of wild meat seem[ed] tasteless" to them.[40]

In early March, 1932, the DNR wrote to Currie that they had received letters from two Saskatoon settlers, A.C. Crocker and Elijah Murphy, complaining that their milk rations had been eliminated and that consequently their families were suffering from a lack of adequate nourishment.[41] Whether the rations were restored or not cannot be determined, but two months later, Murphy wrote to the DNR wanting to know why his application for a cow had been turned down.

> Many of the settlers in this district applied for a cow, and their applications were passed without questions and mine was turned down. Some of the settlers have no children, and I have four, the youngest a little girl 3 years old. We must have milk for these children....

His exasperation with the Department was apparent when he concluded:

> There is about $300 against this 1/4 now and if your department thinks it is good business to lose that amount rather than to spend $45 or $50 for a cow for me why that is up to you. I came here to try to make a home for my family but if I am not going to be given the same chance as the others my loan can be cancelled [sic] and I will get out.[42]

By the end of the summer, Murphy had obtained a cow, as had most of his neighbors. Problems such as these arose because no guidelines had been established for provision of either livestock or feed. DNR officials had to respond to settler needs on a case-by-case basis, ensuring that some settlers would be dissatisfied by the amount and kind of assistance that was given.

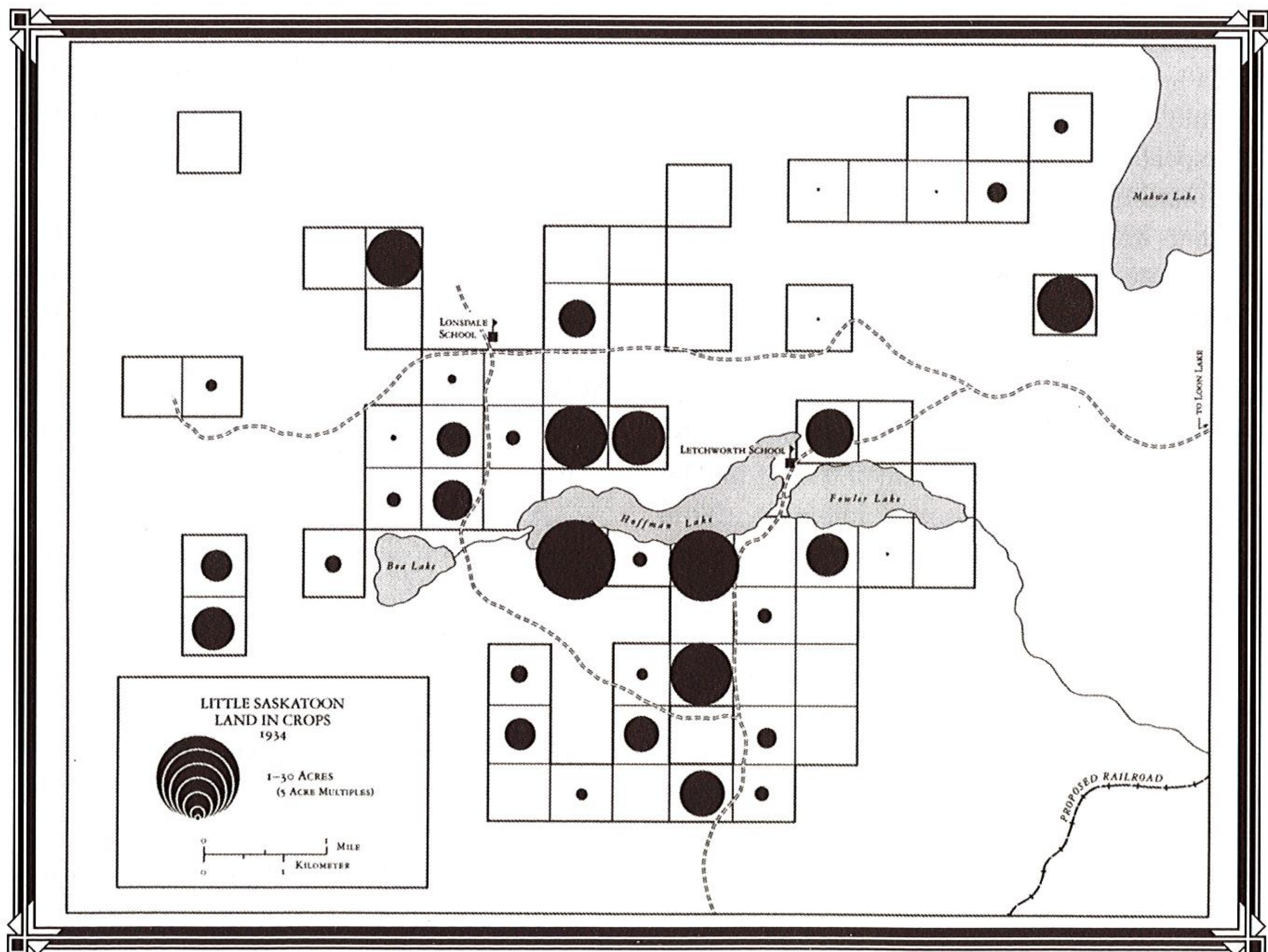
The cow issue was not raised again, but in its place loomed a larger, more serious problem for the settlers. In the summer of 1932, the DNR sent an ominous letter to the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, apparently in response to a letter written by a settler to Premier J.T.M. Anderson complaining that he and his neighbors were starving. The Premier asked the DNR to investigate the allegations that "women and children were crying because of the lack of food." The department had its local field man investigate the complaint, and as a result of his findings, provided additional food orders for the district's homesteaders. The DNR concluded that "according to information received from [our District Superintendent], which has been backed by the R.C.M.P. patrol in that district, the provisions supplied by the Department were certainly needed." Sixteen settlers received grocery orders averaging $5.50, and all but one were provided with a sack of flour.[43] There is no doubt that this situation was a serious one, and its gravity cannot be ignored. To suggest, however, as the author of the original complaint did, that starvation was widespread, is simply unfounded. Families received a ten dollar grocery voucher each month, although most complained that this barely provided adequate food for the entire month. The fact that after an investigation families were given half again that amount on this

one occasion does indicate that food was sometimes in short supply, but that the problem was ordinarily not so severe as to warrant any increase in the monthly relief vouchers.

LIVING ON THE LAND

These various problems indicate that the first year, and indeed the many months thereafter, were not easy ones for settlers from the city. No one had expected that they would be, but if perhaps they had naively assumed otherwise, those notions were quickly dispelled. Nevertheless, most settlers believed that the settlement plan was an opportunity not to let slip by. Although about one-third of the Saskatoon people cancelled their claims after no more than two years, this figure is inflated by the fact that some of these people never actually established residence. For example, Edgar Hollinger, a fifty-one year old carpenter, received a letter in May, 1932, from the Department of Natural Resources inquiring about his intentions to settle on the homestead he had claimed in 1931. The city had paid his filing fee, but the DNR had heard nothing else from the man. In his reply, Hollinger stated that he had never seen the land and was "certainly not going to bother with it."[44] Most of the actual settlers from Saskatoon persevered and for these hardy souls, each change of season brought progress in the development of their homesteads. Of those families who remained on the land for more than three years, all eventually received title to their homesteads.

By 1934, three years after their arrival, the bleak conditions that had initially confronted settlers had dramatically improved. In the fall of that year, the DNR's field inspector, Fred Mitchell, conducted a survey of settlers at "Little Saskatoon" to determine their agricultural progress. This information, combined with supplementary data from homestead patent applications, suggests that the settlement as a whole was progressing reasonably well. Houses that had been constructed in the first year had since been



Map 2: Township 58, Range 33 and 24, West of the 3rd Meridian

improved and expanded. The average dwelling was an eighteen by twenty-four foot structure built of logs and lumber, but more than a half dozen settlers had already constructed more substantial frame houses. Shelter for livestock was equally well-built. Stables averaged sixteen by twenty-two feet and were constructed of logs, although two settlers had larger structures made of lumber. In addition, most settlers had erected granaries, sheds or garages, and hen houses.[45] Archie Boa, a former resident of the city and veteran of the First World War, had constructed a twenty-two by twenty-eight foot frame house for his family, as well as a twenty-two by twenty-eight foot frame stable, a garage, a hen house, and a granary. Alex McLean, a carpenter, was even more industrious, and had built a twenty by twenty-four foot frame house, in addition to a twenty-two by twenty-eight foot log stable, and hen, ice and smoke houses.[46]

Six of the homesteaders had at least twenty acres in crops, and most of the others were cultivating more than ten. (See Map 2.) Settlers also had an average of six additional acres cleared and ready for breaking. Although a handful of men had prepared less than an acre for cultivation, most community residents were making respectable progress toward the development of their homesteads. Nearly all families had good gardens that were producing well. The amount of equipment varied from one settler to the next, with some having harrows, discs, and mowers, but every settler possessed a wagon and a plow. Numbers of livestock within the settlement were respectable, despite losses to disease and the difficulty of acquiring adequate feed. Most families had a team of horses, and by now every settler had a least one milk cow. Cattle were quite numerous, with an average of three per settler. Three homesteaders had eight, ten, and twelve head of cattle respectively, a suggestion that some men regarded livestock as a better income producer than crops. Poultry was rarely enumerated, but nearly all settlers had large hen houses, indicating that chickens were an important part of the homestead economy. Charlie Fowler, the former carpenter, kept four horses, two cows and a calf, two pigs, and fifty hens, while Elijah Murphy, another former carpenter, had two horses, three cows, three pigs, and twenty-five hens.[47]

Mitchell was pleased with the initiative that most settlers demonstrated. Angus Black, for example, was farming his son's land as well as his own. Fred Moellman was away working as a foreman on the relief road work project when Mitchell visited. Although the J.H. Parkers had only "fair" home conditions, these were "improving." Both the settler and his wife were working faithfully, and Parker had recently made an agreement to log during the winter for a local mill. There were, however, exceptions, and the lack of industry demonstrated by certain individuals was apparent. A handful of the settlers had fewer than five acres broken. In the case of Thomas Arnold, the former railway fireman, Mitchell recorded that while this man and his wife had "done better this year," there was still "room for lots of improvement."[48] Norman Watts had broken thirteen acres, but had not seeded all of it, claiming that he did not have adequate horse power. He had a new house, but Mitchell reported that his farm was only in fair condition. The reason for his lack of progress was likely the fact that his wife had left him with three children, and according to the field officer, it was "doubtful" that she would return.[49]

In the summer of 1934, J.H. Currie, the relief supervisor based in Saskatoon, traveled to "Little Saskatoon" and submitted a report of his own about the community to his superiors at the Relief Commission. He suggested that some of the settlers had "sufficient animals or poultry to provide their own meat supplies," and had a plentiful supply of vegetables from their gardens, although some would still require flour, sugar, tea and oil from the relief department.[50] Currie believed that:

> a large portion of the settlers in the Saskatoon settlement can be placed on a revised list.... They are growing an abundance of feed this year, are better equipped to harvest it, and they will, undoubtedly, have grown [in most cases], enough wheat to meet their flour needs. This of course would be ground at the local ... mill on a custom basis.[51]

It is clear that the purpose of this visit was to determine the progress of the settlers and their status as relief recipients, but it is also obvious that the relief supervisor believed that the settlement, as a whole,

John Gaudry and his children in a horse-drawn wagon, their only means of transportation when they first went north to homestead in 1927, in conditions similar to those in which the people of "Little Saskatoon" lived.

was making significant headway and the settlers were well on their way to self-sufficiency.

MEASURES OF AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS

The data presented above provides a clear picture of the level of agricultural development in "Little Saskatoon" in 1934. Compiling statistics after this time is more difficult, for once a homesteader had satisfied the residence and cultivation requirements and applied for a patent, no further documentation was provided in the homestead files. As nearly 60 percent of the settlers had applied for patents within five years of initial settlement, little data exists for a later period. The lack of tax records for the district also makes uncovering agricultural development in later years problematic, as does the absence of reports such as those of Mitchell and Currie. To acquire title, a homesteader had to cultivate a minimum of twenty acres, and by the time most patent applications were made, the average settler had twenty-five acres under cultivation. In 1934, settlers had owned three cattle on average, a number that increased to slightly more than four near the end of the decade.[52]

The homesteads of two men, one a carpenter and the other a former teamster, are perhaps typical of the district's homesteads in the late 1930s. Fred Moellman, the carpenter, had fifteen acres under cultivation in 1938, with an additional seven acres broken. He also owned eight cattle and a team of horses. The Moellmans lived in a sixteen by thirty-eight foot home constructed of log and lumber. Improvements on his property included a log stable, hen house and granary, sixty acres of fencing, and a thirty-six foot well.[53] The other man, Albert Neilly, had fifteen acres in crop and another eleven acres broken, and owned four cattle and two horses. Neilly's homestead consisted of a sixteen by twenty-two foot frame house, valued at $250, as well as a large log stable, a frame hen house and granary. His homestead was completely surrounded by a wire and rail fence.[54] Most other settlers, including those who had already proved up on their land, were doing at least as well.[55]

Despite the acreages cleared and crops planted, few settlers could expect to survive on the money they might earn from the sale of their crops. Settlers generally harvested enough to feed their livestock, and in some cases, to provide seed for the next year's crop. Much of their own food was still supplied by the relief department, although all settlers had large gardens which supplemented their food allotments. Vegetables

grew well, and potatoes, turnips, onions, and carrots could easily be stored in root cellars for consumption during the winter months. Canning of wild fruits in the summer months also provided a more varied diet in the lean months of winter. Picking wild berries often became a day-long affair with a picnic lunch; few complained of the hard work because they realized that these berries would be the main ingredient of winter desserts.[56] Raspberries, blueberries, cranberries, and saskatoon berries were plentiful, and, in some cases, the bushes were transplanted to settlers' gardens. The only problem appeared to be a shortage of cans and jars, and, perhaps more importantly, a lack of sugar. In an effort to assist the new settlers, Currie issued an appeal in the summer of 1932 to women's organizations in Saskatoon for containers and wax, and also for recipes in which fruit could be preserved without the use of sugar.[57]

Wild game, particularly rabbits, partridges, and deer, proved to be a valuable source of meat, particularly before chickens, pigs, and cattle became common in the settlement. Although shot gun shells cost money, a successful hunt could produce meat to supply a family for several days. Allan Murphy recalled years later that his father rationed out five rounds of ammunition each Saturday, and that he had to account for each round before he could have any more. If a bullet was wasted, he had to find another way of bringing home some meat. Another settler's son, Bert Parker, remembered hunting with his father, who quietly cursed if he missed. At the time, the boy was too young to realize that "a wasted bullet represented a lost supper somewhere down the road."[58] Young boys also snared rabbits, and contributed a steady supply of meat for the stew pot.

Fish, both fresh and canned, were also an important part of the settlers' diet. Young boys, in particular, spent many an hour at the area's lakes and caught pike, perch and pickerel to augment their family's food supply. Stanley Sly was apparently uninterested in the traditional rod and line method, and told a *Star-Phoenix* reporter in 1935 that by using a pitchfork, he was able to acquire all the fish he needed.[59] Catching fish was a task largely undertaken by the settlement's men and boys, while turning the fresh catch into an edible meal fell to the women. Alice Murphy, whose homestead adjoined a small lake, recalled that by adding some vinegar to soften the bones and ketchup for color, perch jelled and looked just like salmon. This practice was followed by another settler, Eunice Gibbons, who claimed that it tasted like salmon as well![60] Whether the fish truly tasted like salmon will never be known, but most families were grateful for the meals that came from the nearby lakes.

The progress made by settlers at "Little Saskatoon," as described in the preceding paragraphs, can be measured against the standards of what could reasonably be expected of homesteaders venturing into the forested areas of western Canada. Stutt and Van Vliet, two agricultural economists who investigated conditions in pioneer areas of northern Saskatchewan in the early 1940s, concluded that farmers in the Loon Lake region could be expected to clear and break approximately five acres annually.[61] This was, however, a rough estimate, as actual rates of clearing and breaking varied considerably, and were closely related to the type and density of tree cover on each quarter-section. In another study, Stutt reported that in areas of medium to heavy bush similar to that at "Little Saskatoon," it was unreasonable to expect that a pioneer could clear and break more than ten or eleven acres of land in his first three years on the land.[62] Using this figure as a crude yardstick, it is clear that a substantial number of settlers at "Little Saskatoon" were making excellent progress. Of the thirty-six pioneer farmers identified on Map 2, sixteen had ten or more acres in crops in 1934, which in most cases was their third year on the land. Six of these men had planted crops on twenty or more acres, with Oscar Johnson, an energetic carpenter from Saskatoon, leading the way with twenty-eight. Many settlers who had planted fewer than ten acres in crops in 1934 were also making good progress. When acreage cleared and broken, but not yet planted, is added to acreage already in crops, eight more men exceeded the standard established by Stutt for reasonable progress during the settlers' first three years on the land.[63] Altogether, two-thirds of the homesteaders at "Little Saskatoon" for whom records exist had cleared and broken ten or more acres by 1934, a clear indication that settlers here were moving ahead at a faster than average rate.

These figures do not mean that the families at "Little Saskatoon" quickly became self-sufficient. Indeed, an economic report summarizing the experiences of nearly 2200 settlers on the pioneer fringes of Saskatchewan, Alberta, and British Columbia, most of whom established homesteads in the 1930s, suggests that the people of "Little Saskatoon" still had a long way to go. This report, published in 1946, concluded that farmers in these newly settled areas needed to place at least one hundred acres under cultivation before they could produce enough to begin paying off debts or putting money in savings. In many places, farmers would have to spend nearly two decades clearing and breaking bush land before they reached this stage.[64] No one in "Little Saskatoon" succeeded in putting a hundred acres under cultivation during the entire period under study, forcing settlers to find off-homestead employment or accept relief for many years. This view is substantiated by a woman who lived in "Little Saskatoon" from 1931 to 1939, and recalled years later that throughout this period most families in the community were obliged to accept some sort of government relief. Her husband, generally regarded as one of the area's most successful farmers, received relief payments in every month that the family was on the land, a sobering reminder that there was a considerable gap between making progress and making a living by farming in this frontier locality.[65]

Although agricultural progress was important, it was only one indicator of the potential success or failure of settlements like "Little Saskatoon." Agricultural economists believed that provision of services such as schools and roads was also necessary, and that development of a sense of community was essential.[66] The people living at "Little Saskatoon" could not have agreed more. Everyone knew that years of hard work and sacrifice were required before their farms could become economically viable, but they moved quickly to build a community that would make living on homesteads in the bush much more than merely survival.

SOCIAL LIFE

Once the immediate need to build houses and plant gardens had been met in the summer of 1931, residents turned their attention to creating a social infrastructure that would truly make "Little Saskatoon" home. The homesteaders were anxious to provide educational facilities for their children, and held meetings to organize school districts in the fall. Two schools were needed to serve the settlement, one in the north, and another in the south. Despite the initial impetus, it was still nearly a year before the first school, Lonsdale, serving the northern part of the community, actually opened.[67] The effort to construct the school was shared by the settlers, who gathered logs and hauled lumber for the roof and flooring, and retrieved windows and doors from St. Walburg, where they had been sent via railroad by the provincial Department of Education. Although he had no children of his own, Ray Gearhart, who was an experienced blacksmith, constructed a heater for the new school out of an old oil barrel. Each man was responsible for making desks for his own children according to patterns sent from Regina, although in fact several desks were built by Charlie Fowler.[68] In November, 1932, the first inspector to visit the new school was favorably impressed with the building, the teacher, and the students who were present.[69] The second school, named Letchworth, opened in January, 1933, with Alice Murphy, one of the settlers who had formal teacher training, providing instruction for twenty-five students. The school buildings quickly became important centres of community activity with church services, dances, and meetings held in each structure.

Religious services were initially held in people's homes, and were later moved to the school houses. During the winter, the Anglican minister from Loon Lake made bi-weekly visits to the settlement, and a United Church missionary also called frequently on the residents. In the summer months, student missionaries were sent to attend to the spiritual needs of the community.[70] Outsiders also contributed to the settlers' religious development. A chest full of children's books for the Sunday school library was donated by an Anglican church in Listowel, Ontario, and the same group also sent a portable organ.[71] This religious diversity was perhaps best illustrated by the observations of a newspaper reporter visiting the settlement. While he was having lunch at the Murphy residence (where the organ was stored), the student missionary dropped in and a "sing-song" was held. The writer later observed that although the hostess

was a Baptist, the parson from the United Church, and the organ Anglican, harmony was achieved.[72] This observation makes it clear that settlers were happy to have the benefit of any religious activity, regardless of their denominational affiliation.

Schools and religious services were the more formal events for which settlers gathered, but dances, amateur nights, and suppers were also common occurrences, as families sought to create a vibrant community. The Knight home, which was centrally located and, like the McLean home, also had a piano, became a hub of activity.[73] During the winter, families used almost any excuse to get together. Dances were held every Friday night, and other evenings were marked by smaller groups gathering for card games. Christmas parties for the children also provided an important occasion for the settlers to gather. In December, 1931, the first of these parties was held at the Knight home. A huge tree had been decorated in the front yard, and Santa Claus made an appearance and presented each child with candy, nuts, and an apple. Gifts, courtesy of Loon Lake and St. Walburg residents, were also provided for each child. Later, after Santa Claus had departed, families gathered indoors for a pot-luck supper.[74]

Summer brought a new round of activities, nearly all of which focused on the out of doors. Adults enjoyed men's baseball and women's softball games, and children participated in track and field events. Picnics were also highlights of the summer months, when families often gathered on the shores of one of the area's lakes. These same lakes also provided hours of swimming enjoyment for the children of the community. Within a year of his arrival, Angus Black built a twelve-foot boat which his son used frequently on a nearby lake. Another settler, Alex McLean, also built a boat for his son and daughter to use. Charlie Fowler, on the other hand, came to the settlement prepared. He had selected a homestead near the lake, and when he brought his family from Saskatoon, their possessions included a row boat. In the summer of 1933, Fowler built a dock and a diving board on the lake just below his family's home, and this spot remained a focal point for community-wide recreational activities for years to come.[75]

These social events should not imply that life was idyllic for the settlers of "Little Saskatoon." Hard times had driven them to the north, and they continued to experience difficulties as they began to carve farms and homes from the bush. Their common circumstances, as well as their ties of family relationships and friendships, were important bonds that helped to unite them as a community. Assisting one another erect homes and barns, as well as with clearing land and planting crops, and sharing the responsibility for building a school, demonstrated their common cause. Joining one another for parties, dances, and picnics after the work was done further cemented those relationships.

THE IMPACT OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR ON THE COMMUNITY

"Little Saskatoon" remained a cohesive community throughout the 1930s. By 1939, more than three-quarters of the homes that had been built by settlers at the beginning of the decade were still occupied. Most empty dwellings had been the homes of people who came to the settlement but quickly decided that life on a homestead would be too difficult and returned to the city. George and Lorena Skuce, for example, spent one winter on their homestead and then moved to Paradise Hill, thirty-five miles south of the settlement, where George found work as a blacksmith. For some, poor health prevented them from staying in the north. Less than two years after his arrival, Ray Gearhart suffered a serious medical setback and returned to his family home in the Donovan district. John W.F. Smith, an English-born carpenter, made tremendous strides toward creating a farm before dying of colon cancer at a Saskatoon hospital in December, 1934. Other settlers had worked for several years to develop their homesteads, applied for their patents, and then moved elsewhere. Norman Walper returned to Donovan after leasing his land to another settler in 1936. Robert Hogg also left in the summer of 1936, and spent a few months in Milden, Saskatchewan, before moving to British Columbia. Alex and Olga McLean felt there was not a future for their children in the settlement, and in the spring of 1939 they moved to Carrot River, where Alex found employment as a carpenter.[76]

Canada began to emerge from the Depression in 1935, but it was not until the outbreak of war in

Europe that the nation's economy really showed marked improvement. Only then did large numbers of families leave the settlement. Several families moved to British Columbia, where they found jobs in war industries, while others left for farms in other parts of the province. Still others returned to Saskatoon, resuming former occupations or finding new positions. A large number of the community's young men and women joined the armed services. Two of Elijah Murphy's sons signed up soon after the war started, and his youngest son, Stewart, joined the RCAF in 1943. Albert Neilly's son, Allan, joined the army in 1940, as did Frank Fowler, the only son of Charlie and Alice Fowler, and Tom Coulter, the son of another settler who had taken a homestead in the area. In 1942, the Butterworth family returned to Saskatoon, where Mr. Butterworth joined the Veteran Guards and his daughter enlisted in the Air Force. Charlie Trask left his homestead in 1941 and served three years in the Air Force before returning to Saskatoon.

By 1946, a large number of the original city settlers had left "Little Saskatoon." Less than one in three houses was still occupied. Many of the former residents had left during the previous six years to find employment in war industries or to join the military. Others, who had become too old to farm, had sold their land and established small businesses in Loon Lake. Still others had retired and moved closer to their children, who by now were living elsewhere. Although most of the movement was made by those leaving "Little Saskatoon," a few people were coming back to the community. In 1945, Tom Coulter was discharged from the military and soon resumed farming. Ted Moellman, the son of another settler, also returned to the settlement after the war. These men were the exceptions, however. Conditions that had led to the creation of the community had long since passed, and there was little incentive for most people to stay any longer when better opportunities became available elsewhere. The departure of these settlers should not suggest, however, that residents' sense of community disappeared. Social activities continued at "Little Saskatoon" with dances, picnics, ball games, church services, and meetings of community organizations taking place on a regular basis. Frequent visits from relatives and former residents added another dimension to the social life of this small but still vibrant community.[77]

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Life in "Little Saskatoon" was a tremendous change from that experienced by these settlers in the city, but a homestead offered families a fresh start. One man referred to the resettlement plan as "new hope."[78] Another recalled that

> The homesteaders were from all walks of life. All had experienced misfortune and loss, but were willing and eager to get started again no matter how much hard work and humble living it cost.[79]

A homestead in the north certainly did require hard work and meant many years of humble living, but the recognition that everyone faced similar difficulties helped to reinforce a sense of community among the settlers: "People worked together and didn't mind lending to their neighbours. Everyone made the most of what they had."[80] This sentiment was echoed by many other former residents.

The settlers who pioneered at "Little Saskatoon" remember their experiences with a great deal of fondness. This is not to suggest that they did not encounter serious hardships, but, for most, a positive pioneer spirit prevailed. There is little doubt that some of these good memories have been embellished with the passage of time, but few settlers were critical of the government, or placed blame on others for their difficulties. In every case, families who came north chose to do so in hope of making a better life for themselves. Although not all of them succeeded, those who persevered believed that they had benefitted from the opportunity. Creating new lives in the north was not easy, but by building upon linkages that had been forged earlier, and by working together, the citizens of "Little Saskatoon" created a tightly-knit rural community.

The expectations of settlers obviously cannot be overlooked when trying to judge the settlement schemes, for they often determined how hard they worked and how well they adapted to new conditions. The situation of one settler at "Little Saskatoon" is illustrative. Elijah Murphy, a forty-seven year old father of four, went north with several fellow veterans in the spring of 1931. He built a shack on his claim and returned to Saskatoon in time to work as an enumerator for the Dominion Census in June. When his children had finished school, the family packed up

and moved to the homestead, intending to stay only through the summer. Mrs. Murphy had applied to teach at Saskatoon's new school for the deaf, and anticipating that she would be hired, the family returned to the city at the end of August. Upon their arrival, Mrs. Murphy found a letter from the school offering her a position, but the deadline for her acceptance had already passed. She hurriedly went to the school, only to be told that the vacancy had already been filled. Mrs. Murphy remembers that she "sat down and had a good cry" before going home to tell her husband that she had no job. Mr. Murphy looked for work in Saskatoon, but could find nothing, so the family decided to return to the homestead and truly make it their home, rather than remaining in the city and living on direct relief.[81]

The actions taken by this family in response to their particular situation suggest that for them homestead life was preferable to living on relief in Saskatoon. That belief was shared by the hundreds of other families who turned their attention back to their rural roots. It is not likely that the Murphys expected to become prosperous farmers, for despite their agricultural backgrounds, they were now city people. Nevertheless, when neither one had a job and their prospects were bleak, the Murphys chose to leave Saskatoon with the expectation that life on the homestead would provide more opportunities than simply collecting relief in the city. It was a decision that hundreds of other families made when the cities offered no work, inadequate relief, and little hope for the future.

It is essential that efforts be made to understand the meaning of the "Little Saskatoon" experience for the families who lived there. There were clearly incidents of deprivation, as indicated by the lack of adequate relief work, the suggestion of widespread hunger by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the difficulty that some settlers experienced in their effort to obtain cows. Despite these problems, and they should not be easily dismissed, most reports shed a more positive light on the settlement. Times were tough and they were tough everywhere. It could be argued that, in fact, conditions were more difficult on a bush farm in the north than in an urban neighborhood, but considering the level to which life for many of these people in Saskatoon had fallen, it was a choice that most families made willingly. They viewed this experience as an opportunity to get off the dole and regain their self respect, and with hard work their homestead might indeed become home. Considered from this perspective, relocation to "Little Saskatoon" should be interpreted, on balance, as a positive step.

NOTES:

1. John Herd Thompson with Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1985); C.W. Peterson, "How're You Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm?" *MacLean's Magazine* 15 January 1928: 17,18, 32, 37; W. Burton Hurd, "Back to the Land," *Canadian Forum* 16 (184) (May 1936): 19-20; George V. Haythorne, *Land and Labour* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1941); Robert England, *The Colonization of Western Canada: A Study in Contemporary Land Settlement (1896-1934)* (London: P.S. King & Sons, Ltd., 1936).
2. John McDonald, "Soldier Settlement and Depression Settlement in the Forest Fringe of Saskatchewan," *Prairie Forum* 6 (1) (Spring 1981): 35-55.
3. T.J.D. Powell, "Northern Settlement, 1929-1935," *Saskatchewan History* 30 (3) (Autumn 1977): 81-98.
4. C.W. Peterson, "How're You Gonna Keep 'Em Down on the Farm?" *MacLean's Magazine* 15 January 1928: 17, 18, 32, 37; W. Burton Hurd, "Back to the Land," *Canadian Forum* 16 (184) (May 1936): 19-20; Ralph Borsodi, *Flight from the City* (New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1933); Alvin Johnson, "Homesteads and Subsistence Homesteads," *Yale Review* 24 (3) (March 1935): 433-447; "Wedlock for Town and Country," *Review of Reviews* 90 (1) (July 1934): 54-55.
5. *House of Commons Debates*, 20 July 1931, 3973-3976; 11 March 1932, 1054-1056; 21 April 1932, 2263-2265; 28 April 1932, 2448-2459.
6. John H. Archer, *Saskatchewan: A History* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1980), chapter 12.
7. "Suggests Establishing 500 Jobless on Stocked Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 4 March 1932, 4; "Hair Would Put Jobless on Farm Land," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 7 March 1932, 3.
8. "Men Ask Cash to Settle on Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 16 May 1931, 7; "Dr. Anderson Answers Macauley's Criticisms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 29 March 1932, 12; "Unemployed Ask $400 for Each Family," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 3 May 1932, 3.
9. "Going to the Land," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 18 May 1932, 11.
10. "Scores Now Planning to Obtain Land," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 20 April 1931, 3.
11. *Statutes of the Province of Saskatchewan, 1931*, (Regina: King's Printer, 1931) c. 22. Unfortunately, the debates of the provincial legislature were not recorded verbatim until the 1940s, so no official record exists of how this Act was received in the Assembly or what concerns may have been raised by any of its opponents.
12. "25 Families Seek Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 14 April 1931, 5.
13. "Back to the Land," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 22 March 1931, 15; "Unemployed Ask $400 for Each Family," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 3 May 1932, 3.
14. "Scores Now Planning to Obtain Land," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 20 April 1931, 3.
15. "Ask Heads of Families to Register," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 31 March 1931, 3; 25 "Families Seek Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 14 April 1931, 5.
16. "Will Confer Friday with Sask Premier," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 11 March 1931, 3.
17. Saskatchewan Archives Board [hereafter SAB], Department of Agriculture, Lands Branch, S-Ag.11, File H. 25, J.H. Currie, Relief Supervisor, Saskatchewan Relief Commission [hereafter SRC], to Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 14 May 1931; *Through the Years ... Delisle, Donavon, Gledhow and O'Malley, Laura, Swanson* (Delisle, SK: Women's Institute, n.d.), 188-89; *Portrait of a Community: Kelfield, Saskatchewan, Canada* (Kelfield, SK: Kelfield

History Book Committee, 1982), 111-112 and 120; *Trails North: A History of the School Districts of Letchworth, Lonsdale, Worthington* (Paradise Hill, SK: Whelan History Club, 1988), 63-64, 81, 128 and 139.

18. National Archives of Canada [hereafter NAC], RG 30, Vol. 5614, File 2231-D, J.P. Martin, "Special Representative," CNR, to A.G. Sinclair, 31 April 1931.
19. "Choose Land in Loon Lake Area," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 21 April 1931, 3.
20. "25 Families Seek Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 14 April 1931, 5.
21. SAB, Department of Agriculture, Lands Branch, S-Ag.11, SW Section 33 Township 58 Range 23, West of the 3rd Meridian, "Application for an Eligibility Certification, Department of Natural Resources, Province of Saskatchewan," in homestead file of William T. Taylor.
22. Data compiled from: SAB, Department of Agriculture, Lands Branch, S-Ag.11, the homestead files of selected Saskatoon settlers; City of Saskatoon Archives [hereafter CSA], City Clerk's Files [hereafter CCF], File D500.III.880, the 1930 and 1931 City of Saskatoon Relief Lists; CSA, CCF, File 1069-2055 (7) 370 Unemployment [1931], F.J. Rowland to Andrew Leslie, City Commissioner, 11 September 1931; family histories recorded in *Trails North: A History of the School Districts of Letchworth, Lonsdale, Worthington* (Paradise Hill, SK: Whelan History Club, 1988).
23. CSA, CCF, File D500.III.880, 1930 and 1931 City of Saskatoon Relief Lists.
24. CSA, CCF, File 1069-2055 (7) 370 Unemployment [1931], Rowland to Leslie, 11 September 1931; "Thirty Families Prepare for Trek to Farm Location," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 6 May 1931, 3.
25. "Thirty Families Prepare for Trek to Farm Location," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 6 May 1931, 3.
26. "New Settlers Are Sold on 'Little Saskatoon'," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 20 June 1931, 3; "Little Saskatoon," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 23 June 1931, 9.
27. "New Settlers Are Sold on 'Little Saskatoon'," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 20 June 1931, 3.
28. "Offers Fish to Repay this City," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 14 September 1931, 3.
29. "Face Winter Confidently," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 31 October 1931, 3.
30. SAB, Department of Natural Resources Files, S-NR 1/1, D-124-FR, W.W. Whelan, Chief Inspector, DNR, to John Barnett, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 4 August 1931.
31. SAB, R-281.4, Relief Files of the Department of Railways, Labour, and Industries, Micro. R-6.40, File 21, Unemployment Relief - Loon Lake Project, 1931-32, J.A. Leitinger to Department of Highways, 22 December 1931.
32. SAB, S-Ag.11 File II.25, Currie to John Barnett, Deputy Minister of Natural Resources, 27 December 1931.
33. SAB, S-Ag.11, SE Section 28 Township 58 Range 23, West of the 3rd Meridian, Mrs. C.S. Gould to Provincial Lands Office, 14 June 1932, in homestead file of Charles S. Gould.
34. SAB, S-Ag.11, SE Section 28 Township 58 Range 23, West of the 3rd Meridian, Gould to Provincial Lands Office, 4 December 1932, in homestead file of Charles S. Gould.
35. "Saskatoon People Making Good on Loon Lake Farms," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 28 March 1932, 3.
36. "Conditions Bad in Loon Lake District," *The Western Producer*, 31 March 1932, 5.
37. "Thirty Families Prepare for Trek to Farm Location," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 6 May 1931, 3.
38. "Loon Lake People Happy in New Life on Frontier," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 21 September 1932, 3.
39. "Loon Lake People Happy in New Life on Frontier," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 21 September 1932, 3; "Loon Lake Folks Anxious to Have Schools Opened," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 22 September 1932, 3 and 5.
40. "Loon Lake People Happy in New Life on Frontier," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 21 September 1932, 3.
41. "Loon Lake People Anxious to Have Schools Opened," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 21 September 1932, 3.
42. SAB, S-Ag.11, File II.25, DNR to Currie, 4 March 1932.
43. SAB, S-Ag.11, SW Section 13, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, E.L. Murphy to Barnett, 23 May 1932, in homestead file of Elijah L. Murphy.
44. SAB, R-281.5, Records of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, Micro. M, File 14, "Natural Resources, September 1931 to May 1934, W.R. Holmes, DNR, to A. Kendall, SRC, 27 July 1932; SAB, S-Ag.11 File II.25, J.H. Currie to DNR, 29 July 1932.
45. SAB, S-Ag.11, NE Section 23, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, Edgar Hollinger, Declaration of Abandonment, 5 June 1933.
46. The information in this and the following paragraph is compiled from the progress reports and patent applications in the homestead files of settlers (SAB, S-Ag. 11) in Township 58, Ranges 23 and 24, West of the 3rd Meridian.
47. SAB, S-Ag.11, SE Section 16, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, Progress Report of Field Officer (hereafter PR), n.d. [October 1934], in the homestead file of Archie Boa; SAB, S-Ag. 11, SW Section 24, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, Homestead Patent Application (hereafter HPA), 17 December 1935, in the homestead file of Alex McLean.
48. SAB, S-Ag.11, SE Section 19, Township 58, Range 23, West of the 3rd Meridian, PR, n.d. [October 1934], in the homestead file of Charles R. Fowler; SAB, S-Ag.11, SW Section 13, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, PR, n.d. [October 1934], in the homestead file of Elijah L. Murphy.
49. SAB, S-Ag.11, NE Section 20, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, PR, n.d. [October 1934], in the homestead file of Thomas E. Arnold.
50. SAB, S-Ag.11, NW Section 1, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, PR, 6 October 1934, in the homestead file of Norman B. Watts.
51. SAB, R-281.5 Records of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, Micro. H, "Relief Supervisors" section, File 7, Currie, J.H. — Saskatoon (Kendall — Currie Correspondence), 1931-1934, Currie to Kendall, 9 July 1934.
52. *Ibid.*
53. This information is compiled from the patent applications in the homestead files of settlers (SAB, S-Ag. 11) in Township 58, Ranges 23 and 24, West of the 3rd Meridian.
54. SAB, S-Ag. 11, SE Section 26, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, HPA, 27 April 1938, in the homestead file of Fred Moellman.
55. SAB, S-Ag. 11, SW Section 23, Township 58, Range 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, HPA, 20 April 1940, in the homestead file of Albert H. Neilly.
56. This observation is based on information collected from the progress reports and patent applications found in the homestead files of settlers (SAB, S-Ag. 11) in Township 58, Ranges 23 and 24, West of the 3rd Meridian.
57. *Trails North*, 43, 53 and 74.
58. *Trails North*, 48; "Saskatoon Leads Settlement Work," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 27 June 1932, p. 3.
59. *Trails North*, 73, 98 and 108.
60. "Progressing at Loon Lake," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 4 October 1935, 3.
61. *Trails North*, 95 and 48.
62. Stutt and Van Vliet, 36-38.
63. R.A. Stutt, "Average Progress of Settlers in the Albertville-Garrick Northern Pioneer Areas, Saskatchewan, 1941," *Economic Annalist* 13(3) (August 1943): 45-47.
64. This statement is calculated from data available in the progress reports and patent applications found in the homestead files of settlers (SAB, S-Ag.11) in Township 58, Ranges 23 and 24, West of the 3rd Meridian, SAB.
65. C.C. Spence, "Land Settlement in Western Canada," *Economic Annalist* 16(2) (May 1946): 36-38.

66. Interview with Olga McLean, Langham, Saskatchewan, 16 June 1993; *Trails North*, passim; SAB, R-281.5 Records of the Saskatchewan Relief Commission, Micro. H, "Relief Supervisors" section, File 7, Currie, J.H. — Saskatoon (Kendall — Currie Correspondence), 1931-1934, Currie to Kendall, 30 July 1934; Currie to Kendall, 4 August 1934.

67. Spence, 39; B.H. Kristjanson and F.M. Edwards, "Conditions of Life Associated with Land Settlement in the Bonnyville Area of Northeastern Alberta," *Economic Annalist* 15:1 (February 1945): 16.

68. "Plan Concert in New School House," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 16 September 1932, 3.

69. "Loon Lake Hospital to be Opened at Week-End," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 18 March 1932, 3; *Trails North*, 9 and 125.

70. *Trails North*, 12.

71. *Trails North*, 133; "Loon Lake Hospital to be Opened at Week-End," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 18 March 1932, 3; "Plan Concert in New School House" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 16 September 1932, 3.

72. "Loon Lake," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 5 March 1932, 13.

73. "Loon Lake Folks Anxious to Have Schools Opened," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 22 September 1932, 3.

74. *Trails North*, 74.

75. "Loon Lake," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 4 January 1932, 6; *Trails North*, 140.

76. *Trails North*, 35, 86, and 53.

77. Information about settlers in this and the succeeding paragraph has been gathered from homestead files (SAB, S-Ag. 11) and family histories in *Trails North*.

78. Lonsdale and Whelan news reports in the *Loon Lake Star*, 1947 - 1948.

79. *Trails North*, 35.

80. *Trails North*, 70.

81. *Ibid.*

82. *Trails North*, 95.

The Peoples of Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 119, photographer unknown.

This woman was visiting "town" during the "pioneer days." The town may have been Saskatoon. She stands waiting for her husband beside their Red River cart pulled by a small Indian horse, a vehicle often used by indigenous peoples on the prairies.

.... to be continued on page 31

INDIGENOUS VOICES

"The Old Men of the Reserves"

by Edward Ahenakew, edited by Ruth Matheson Buck

THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

The following passage was written by Edward Ahenakew in 1923 and found when he died in 1961. "The Story of the Ahenakews," the article from which this passage is taken, was edited by Ruth Matheson Buck and published in the Winter 1964 issue of *Saskatchewan History*.[1] She then went on to edit Ahenakew's full-length unpublished manuscript, *The Voices of the Plains Cree*, which was published in 1973. The passage below is in the book in a slightly different form.[2] A new edition of the book came out in 1995 with an excellent new introduction by Cree scholar Stan Cuthand, who knew Ahenakew personally.[3]

Edward Ahenakew was born in 1885 on the Ahtahkakoop Reserve at Sandy Lake in Saskatchewan. He attended the Ahtahkakoop Day School, the Emmanuel College Boarding School in Prince Albert, Wycliffe College at the University of Toronto, and Emmanuel College at the University of Saskatchewan. He graduated in 1912 and a Bachelor of Arts was later conferred on him by the University of Saskatchewan. After his ordination as an Anglican priest in 1912 he served as the assistant to the Reverend John R. Matheson at Onion Lake. Because he saw so many of his people dying during the flu epidemic after the Great War and from other diseases, he took a leave of absence and went to the University of Alberta to study medicine. He fell ill and returned to Saskatchewan to recover on the Thunderchild Reserve.[4] During his convalescence he wrote the manuscript from which this passage is taken. As Cuthand points out, Ahenakew was "a cautious man," who

> looked down on people who practiced the Cree beliefs and rituals. He never talked about this to me, but I sometimes think he had a real struggle inside himself. On the one hand he was writing stories about the past so they would be preserved for posterity, before they were forgotten, while the old men were still alive. At the same time he was preaching the gospel, so there were two sides of him.[5]

The following passage by Ahenakew, which shows this conflict, tells us a great deal about the preservation of the oral tradition among the Cree.

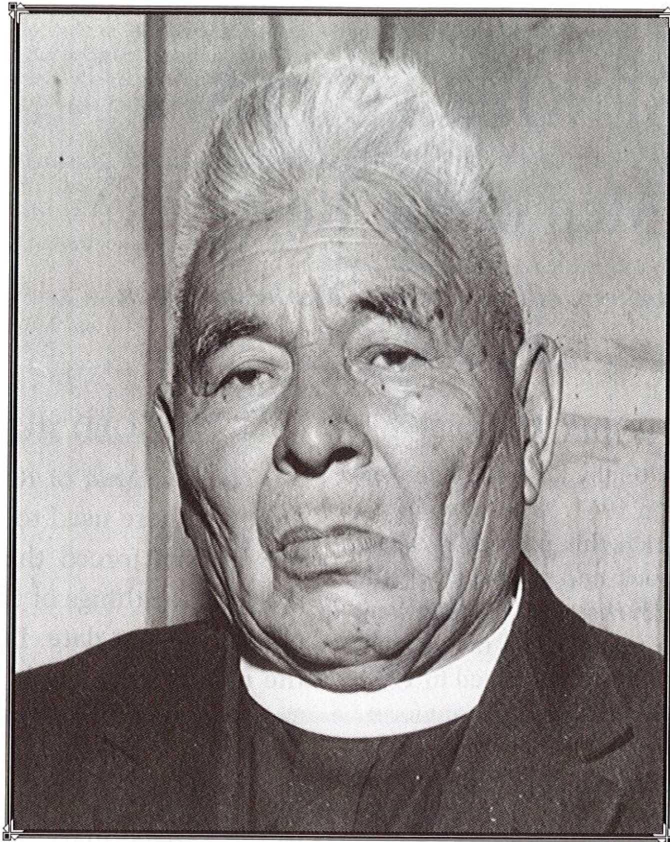
Georgina M. Taylor, Editor

"THE OLD MEN OF THE RESERVES"

The Old Men of Reserves are an institution. The fact that there used to be no written language among the Indians forced them to depend entirely on the memory for things of the far past, as well as for those of more recent date. Because of this, the accuracy of the memory of the old men of the race is surprising. The minutest details regarding events that took place in childhood are remembered, and it is most interesting to hear two or more old men comparing notes as to the surface markings and points of a horse which may have lived some forty or fifty years before. The Old Man had a responsible and important position to fill in the band. In a sense, he supplied our moral code, he took the place of legal advisor, and of written history. His also was the task of firing the spirits of the young men with stories of daring deeds done in the times past.

The Indian religious dances did not have much moral effect on the people. It is true that in them, the people were exhorted to be kind and to live at peace with each other — tribal loyalty also required this of them — but beyond this, these dances seem to have had no elevating effect. It was the old men who were the influence for good. At impromptu moments they spoke to the young men, assembled perhaps on a hilltop on a summer evening. By moral persuasion alone they sought to right wrongs and to settle disputes. Their own youthful fires being burnt out, and they having passed through most of the experiences of life, they were qualified to speak. Even the least of them

The drawing by Dean Whitebear at the top of this page is of Poundmaker. He was the first chief of the Poundmaker Band. The Poundmaker Reserve is one of the many reserves that Edward Ahenakew knew well.



The Reverend Edward Ahenakew in April of 1959.

had some wisdom; but the greater the warriors they had been in their past, the greater the effect of their words upon youthful listeners.

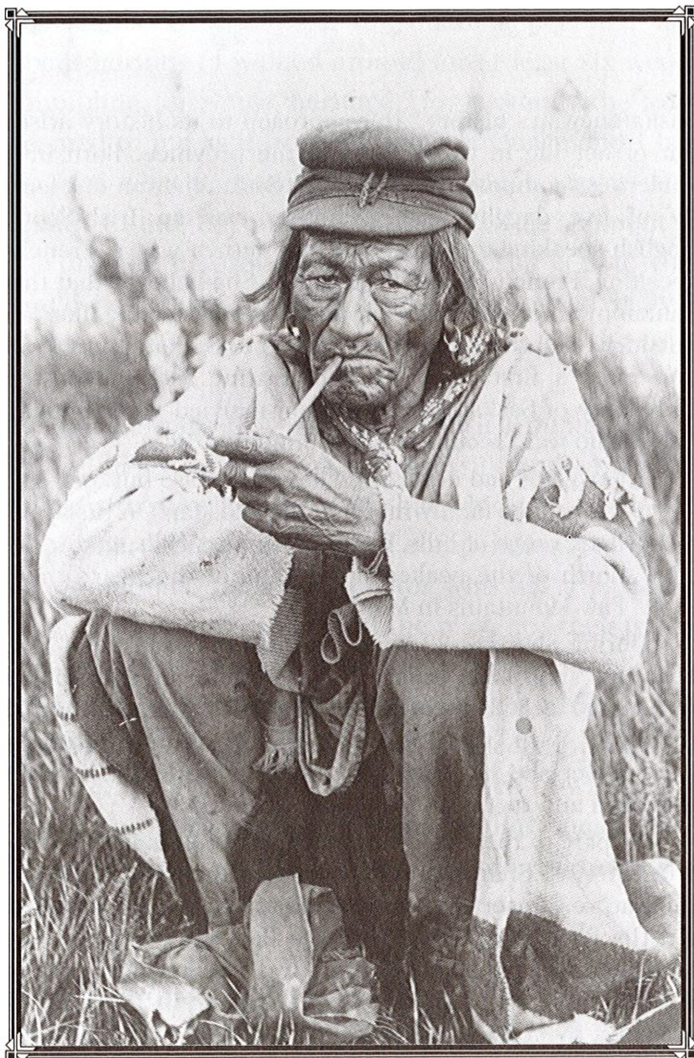
I have listened to them often. Eloquence, enhanced by the natural richness of the language and by a superb mastery of gesticulation, was general among them. Never does one find an old prairie Indian at a loss for a suitable word. Naturalness, simplicity in the use of a language that is rich in itself, skill in weaving the great primary bigness of things into the smaller actualities of every day life, make him a truly eloquent man.

It was in the narrating of past events, of the frequent battles, that his genius came out most strongly. He could weave comedy into a tragic subject, making it more tragic in effect; introduce a melting touch of pathos; sweeten it with love and loyalty. And all this he would present in a language so highly figurative yet suited to the subject, that his listeners would sit entranced, imagining themselves seeing and hearing the events as if enacted before them.... Stories were hoarded and kept intact in the minds of our old men who held with great tenacity to that which had been entrusted to their keeping by the previous generation.... In telling these stories, the Old Man dared not lie, since ridicule, keen and general, would have been his lot, and his standing as the teller of authentic events would have suffered. He dared not lie, for there were always a number of other old men in the encampment who could contradict him and who would delight in doing so, for there was always rivalry among them. So his veracity had to be a settled fact, and this, together with his well-developed powers of observation, made him a reliable depository for the annals of his race, and a worthy medium through whom the folklore of preceding generations might be passed on to the future.

NOTES:

1. Edward Ahenakew, "The Story of the Ahenakews" edited by Ruth Matheson Buck, *Saskatchewan History*, 17(1) (Winter 1964), 12-23.
2. Edward Ahenakew, *The Voices of the Plains Cree*, ed. Ruth M. Buck (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 1995).
3. Stan Cuthand, "Introduction" to *The Voices of the Plains Cree*, ix-xxii.
4. Cuthand, "Introduction" to *The Voices of the Plains Cree*, x-xv.
5. Cuthand, "Introduction" to *The Voices of the Plains Cree*, xix.

The Peoples of Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A 21488

Chief Star Blanket or Ahchacoosacootacoopits, which means "the stars are his blanket" in Cree. The photograph was taken in the Indian Head area around 1895 when Star Blanket was over 100 years of age. His Band had been one of several small bands in the 1870s. See the introduction for more information about this picture.

Saskatoon Public Library – Local History Room, LH 246, photographer Peter McKenzie.

A young First Nations woman with her baby in a photography studio, likely in Saskatoon, around 1905 to 1909. She may have been from the White Cap Reserve, a little south of Saskatoon.

.... to be continued on page 41

HISTORY IN THE COMMUNITY
Reflections on the Heritage Endeavour

by Sharon Butala

THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Sharon Butala is a friendly, down-to-earth woman from rural Saskatchewan. She is also one of Canada's "true visionaries" who "writes with scrupulous honesty and without a lick of pretension."[1] She is the author of six novels, two selections of short stories, and two works of non-fiction.[2] Her 1992 novel *The Fourth Archangel*, the story of the people of the dwindling farming community of "Ordeal" in southern Saskatchewan, is essential reading for anyone interested in the complex ties between the past, the present, and the future of rural Saskatchewan.[3] A number one best-seller in Canada, Butala's 1994 book *The Perfection of the Morning* is an "accomplished memoir." It explores the roots of creativity through dreams, visions, and the history of Saskatchewan.[4] Currently for sale in Canada, her novel *The Garden of Eden* will be reprinted in the United Kingdom by Virago Press in 2000. She is now working on a book of non-fiction titled *Wild Stone Heart*.[5]

Butala is one of the people in our community who has given a great deal of serious thought to the significance of Saskatchewan's history.[6] Her approach to its history arises out of her life in three areas of the province. Born in a wilderness community in northern Saskatchewan to a family of five daughters, her mother was an Irish-Scots, English-speaking Anglican and her father was a French-speaking, French-Canadian Catholic. She believes that this "unhappy intermarriage" left her "forever" feeling like "an outsider to all traditions." She moved to Saskatoon in 1953 and after a first marriage and a stint teaching at the University of Saskatchewan Sharon married Peter Butala.[7] Peter, who was "secure in his community," was

> born and had never lived anywhere else but on the remote family ranch in the Old Man On His Back range of hills, south of Cypress Hills, and north of the peaked purple line of the Bear's Paw Mountains in Montana.[8]

During Sharon's 22 years on their ranch in this "vast, beautiful shortgrass prairie" she became an exceptional writer who feels that she is "fated" to live in "loneliness and isolation." With "the simple lives of agricultural people" as her subject she has created a body of work that is both universal and rooted in rural Saskatchewan.[9]

As part of their commitment to the "heritage endeavour," in 1996 Sharon and Peter turned their ranch over to the Nature Conservancy of Canada to become the Old Man On His Back Prairie and Heritage Preserve.[10] Sharon also instigated a campaign to save the Wallace Stegner House in Eastend built by his father, George Stegner, in 1916. She is active in the Eastend Arts Council, which owns and runs the House as a retreat for artists, mainly writers, in honour of the renowned American writer who lived in Eastend and on a nearby homestead as a boy.[11] Stegner discussed this house in *Wolf Willow*, "a strange and wonderful book," about his childhood in southern Saskatchewan.[12] Numerous artists and writers have stayed in the House for a nominal rent and enjoyed its beautiful garden in the eight years or so since the Council opened the House.[13]

A mother and grandmother, Butala continues to pursue the "possibly unanswerable" question "What is Nature?" in both her fiction and her non-fiction.[14] This pursuit and her vision are both evident in "Reflections on the Heritage Endeavour," a keynote address she gave to a Saskatchewan Heritage Association Forum in Saskatoon on the 18th of April 1998.

Georgina M. Taylor, Editor

Photograph courtesy of Sharon Butala.

Sharon Bulala, one of Saskatchewan's leading writers.

ister Chairman, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: When I was asked to give this address and I was hesitant because I am not an historian — or expert, as a matter of fact, in anything — it was suggested to me that I should not be intimidated by all the authorities and professionals in various fields in the audience, but speak to you in a personal way about heritage. I walked around for at least six weeks mumbling, "heritage, heritage," for suddenly the word seemed to me as if from a foreign language and I had no idea what it meant in general, much less what it meant to me, beyond the cliches we can all spout at the drop of the proverbial hat. The result is that what you'll be hearing from me this morning is really a series of reflections or a meditation on the heritage undertaking.

But perhaps it would be useful if I quoted something I heard when I was at university and which has stuck with me all these years, but which I can't find in either Bartlett's or the Oxford compendiums of familiar quotations. Imagine an actor who has a part in a play, but who has never read the play, nor seen it performed. His part consists of delivering the *last* line in it. At the appropriate moment he goes on stage and speaks his line, but, since he has not seen nor read the play, he has no idea of the significance of what he is saying; he does not know what his line means, nor how to say it. *That* is the person who doesn't know history.

Those of us who are interested in saving our heritage are helping to make our history palpable, not just for those of us who remember and care, but for all of those who either were not here fifty years ago, or who think, mistakenly and sadly, that history doesn't matter, that it is about the long-dead and the far away, but that has no message, no meaning or importance for the living.

Thinking about this speech, I began to wonder what I'd *really* thought about the work we did on the Heritage Foundation Board, about my real, my deepest feelings about the desire a handful of local people have to save a tiny, pretty church in Eastend built the same year as at least two other churches in the area, and the fact that almost certainly no money would be forthcoming from the Heritage Foundation Board because none of the churches have anything unusual or special to recommend them in terms of architecture, important "stories," or even age, and there are far too few funds, a lack of will in the general public to give money to projects not clearly deserving of it, and sometimes, as we all know to our chagrin, even to those clearly deserving of it.

I remembered too, an occasion when we on the Heritage Foundation Board were mulling over a request for funding to save a very expensive, very historic old building, and even as I raised my hand to vote 'yes' to the funding request, I was mumbling *only half-facetiously* to the Board member beside me that because I'd had such unhappy experiences as a child in a building just like it, I really thought we should just "burn it down," and would have been happy to throw the match in myself.

> *"We are trying to save the essence of a society, not just its crowning achievements, not just its good points. And in order to do that, we have to think about the truth of that society, about what it really was, not just about where the power lay ... not just about its skeleton and its corporate mind but about its heart."*

While on other occasions I found myself, along with the others Board members, voting not to give financial assistance to a project that I really wanted to see saved, but which couldn't be, because like the pretty little church in Eastend there is one just like it in every community in the province and — lacking any powerful will in the communities themselves to save them — there isn't enough provincial money to save more than a few around the province, as examples.

I thought, too, of a certain community I know but would never name — it's not Eastend — which, and I stress this is *in my opinion* only, although I am not alone in it, is caught in a death-grip by tradition, tradition wielded by the — actually the male — elders of the community which says that nothing in the present is any good and it certainly won't be getting any better in the future. Only the past matters, is of any

importance, had any goodness, any rightness, any joy, any heroism. And judging by the artifacts saved in the local museum and other locations in the town, one has the impression that that remarkable past must have been all-male, since there's virtually no trace of women and their history to be seen. And besides, how could women, doing the daily stuff, the stuff of the quotidian, diapering babies, baking bread, staying up with sick children, planting a garden and harvesting it, ever match the heroism — which was, at least sometimes, real enough, I think — of the men?

It is clear that too great a reverence for a tradition can stultify, act as a straitjacket on everyone, not *just* the young, but *especially* them; it can be unworthy and its unworthiness hidden and/or unacknowledged; it can be unquestioningly worshiped instead of merely respected, or respected for the wrong reasons. I think of the saving of the terrible prison camps of the Second World War: Auschwitz, Bergen-Belsen, Buchenwald. So that none of us, but especially the nation where this horror was perpetrated, can ever forget the evil that always lurks at the bottom of the human heart, and thus, how each one of us must be ever-vigilant against its indulgence. In Saskatchewan many of us would probably prefer to see the Indian Residential Schools torn down so that we would not be reminded of our own culpability in that tragic past. We'd like to see the slate wiped clean — as if it ever could be — while Native leaders, I've heard, would prefer to see them remain. Of course, it is wrong to bury the past, to rewrite the textbooks in order not to face our own errors and misdeeds, for they too, are part of our history; they too, are part of what we are today.

It is also abundantly clear that trying to save our heritage in palpable form is done not without a considerable amount of personal conflict within the decision-makers, and not without a degree of general societal ambivalence as to what to save and what to let perish.

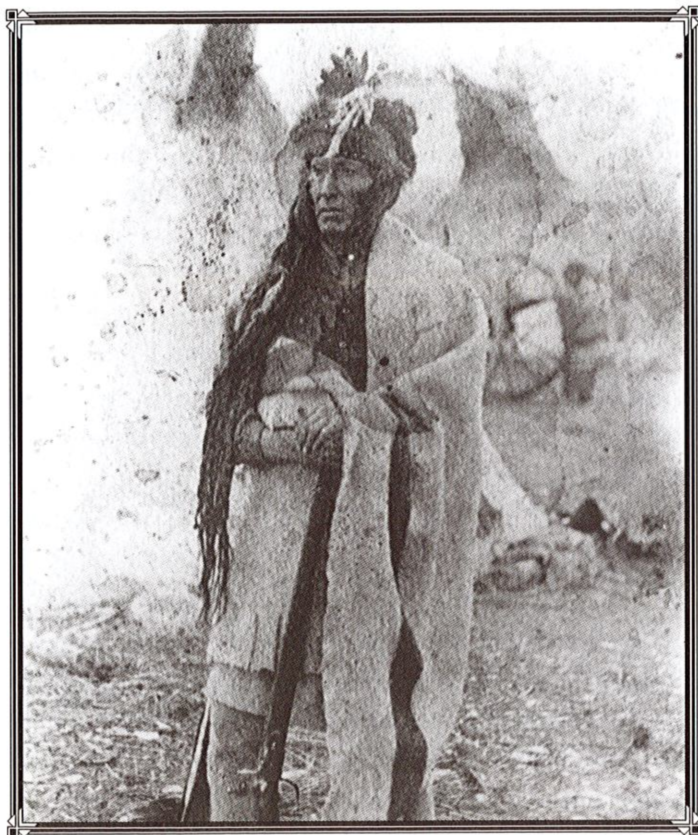
How *do* we decide to save what we do? How do we make the decision to save this and let that return to dust? Because, as custodians of the past, we must remember that in fact we are acting — frequently unwittingly — as *interpreters* of that past, a role that is fraught with danger and difficulties, since what we save and what we don't gives a pretty clear message about our attitude toward our history, and about our priorities as a society.

We base our decisions, I think, on publicly-acknowledged and publicly-accepted interpretation of our past, that is, of what is salvageable of that which we regard as important. In this, we are anything but unbiased, i.e. we don't save brothels, or if we do, only to the degree to which we find any particular one amusing and charming, not for what the reality was; we don't save the shanty of the poorest family in town, we save rich people's houses; we don't save squalor, for the most part, we save beauty where possible; we try but are less good at saving the ordinary, i.e. the farmstead of the average farm family during the settlement period, in favour of the extraordinary, i.e. the Seager Wheeler farmstead, although the Western Development Museum does a good job of saving the ordinary and trying to put it in context, albeit a highly polished, dust and dirt-free context.

I think that the great Saskatchewan myth, myth in the sense of the true story by which we all live whether consciously or not, at least for European Saskatchewanians, has to do with the family farm, with the beauty in and the freedom, independence and joy of that life. Never mind that most farmers were desperately poor most of the time since 1905, and that the work for survival was endless and hard, that the life was often if not always, very harsh, that a crippling load of debt was the rule rather than the exception. Nobody much remembers it that way, or if they do, they easily erase that with memories of the birds singing in the early morning, the smell of the clean, fresh air, of hay, of ripe wheat, of fishing and hunting or picking berries in the bush, or the schoolhouse dances with somebody sawing away on an old violin, accompanied by piano and guitar, the doors and windows all opened to the hot prairie night and to the stars.

George Melnyk of Alberta and Don Kerr of Saskatoon have special interest in the role our cities play in Saskatchewan life and in the effect of growing up in a prairie city — not a farm — on Saskatchewan people. But what the myth they might be interpreting or declaring is, I don't really know. I think it hasn't been coherently expressed yet, and in any case, it has

been a minority voice, since so few city dwellers of my age and their age began in prairie cities. On the other hand, maybe there isn't anything particularily distinctive about it. But I'm curious about it as something that might make more coherent my own past since I moved to this city in 1953 when the population was about 50,000, and I was a West Side kid, and to this day haven't been able to integrate those years into my



Saskatchewan Archives Board, S-B 97.

This picture of Chief Poundmaker, the first chief of the Poundmaker Reserve, has not been published before, so far as we know.

own personal myth, except on the one hand, as dislocation and the loss of innocence, and on the other, as an awakening to the vast possibilities of life — not something I'd ever wish away.

Then there is the myth by which First Nations people describe and explain themselves to themselves as well as to others. It is more clearly and emphatically expressed every day by those who live within it. And in fact, when we Europeans first came here , we recognized at once, although not in so many words or with any clarity or understanding as to what it was, that if we were to have dominion in this new place, we would have to destroy that myth. And we set about doing it with a thoroughness that today is our national shame, our national tragedy, as real as it is, at least partly because it continues to be denied by so many. I make no attempt to describe this myth except to say that it had to do with living in Nature, with respect and striving for harmony, and that attributes a wholeness to creation that I, at least, don't find in Christianity. It is through the restoration of that myth, broken and torn and sullied as it has been, that First Nations people are once again becoming whole and strong. Which in itself is a powerful demonstration of how vital a national myth is to a people, to any people, including ourselves.

The difficulty with these national myths, especially in an era of the global village, corporate globalization, and massive emigration and immigration, is that, powerful as they are, they never apply wholly to everybody resident within that society, trying to make a home in it, trying to belong to it. Nowadays, it seems even in Saskatchewan, not exactly a hotbed of immigration, such myths apply to fewer and fewer people.

In Saskatchewan they have failed to apply to the real lives of women settlers; for a long time they failed to apply to Ukrainian Canadians; always, but it's increasingly so, they leave out French Canadians in their role as the founding Europeans in this province; they leave out the few Jews who came here; they leave out the Chinese; actually, they leave out pretty much anybody who wasn't white, anglo-saxon, Protestant , and very often also, male.

One of the results of these myths has been saving a world where the deeds of men are recognized well beyond the deeds of women. It occurs to me that we need a *Women of the West* museum which would include women of all nationalities, races, cultures, and religions. Such a museum would, of course, inevitably reveal our similarities, but I see it working to reveal the precise, minute differences in our daily lives. It would show a culture respecting the grandmothers and not just the grandfathers of our heritage. It would, also inevitably, show the unfairness of many of our laws – that we couldn't vote until 1916, for example, and especially, the gross inequality to women of the 1872 Dominion Land Act, which extended its rights and benefits only to women with children under 18 who could prove they were widows. All others need not apply, although they were allowed to buy the land which was given for $10 to all male applicants. These

too are part of our heritage, part of the evil of our past. Saving it, keeping it as a part of public knowledge will help women to be strong in their continuing fight for equality – and I might add, especially where the ownership of land in the true sense, that is, in more than just the name on the title, is concerned. In case it has escaped your notice, out there on the land, primogeniture is alive and well, and it is still based at root on the assumption of the innate supremacy of males over females.

In the same vein, we have been pretty good about saving what I've been calling to myself, for lack of a better word, corporate or institutional Saskatchewan, by which I mean Saskatchewan as a political-cultural-institutional body. We save our legislative buildings, our land titles buildings, court houses, post offices, our banks and other centres of commerce, artifacts of the railroads and the wheat economy, the occasional

Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, LH3029.

Sgt. Hugh Cairns of the 46th Battalion Saskatchewan Regiment, who came to Saskatchewan from England as an apprentice plumber in 1911. Hugh Cairns school is named after him.

school, major churches, even old apartment buildings, and of course the grand houses of the once powerful.

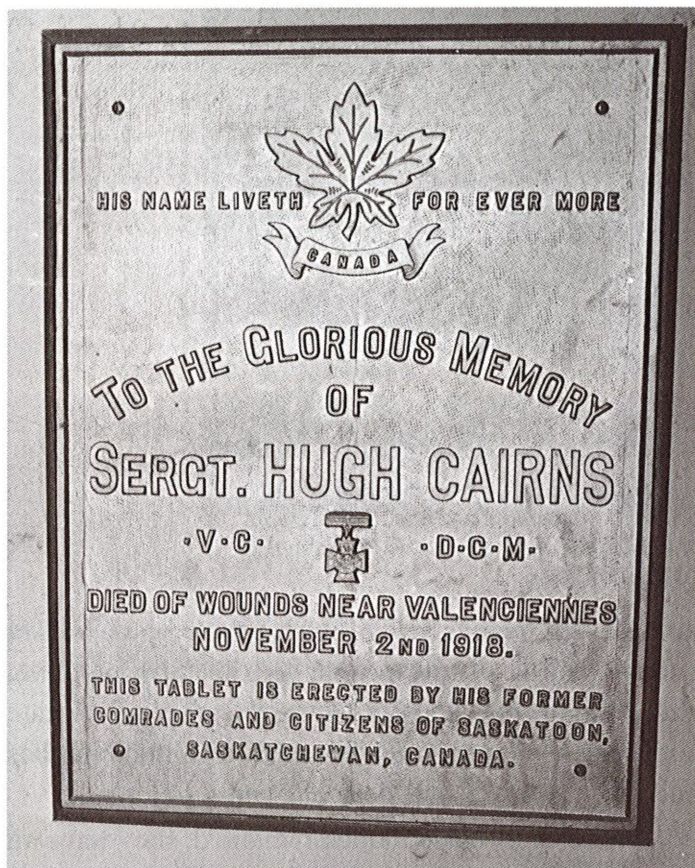
One of the least charming outcomes of saving corporate Saskatchewan is the habit of naming buildings after middle-aged white guys. It's probably deeply unwise of me to take an existing specfic example — I didn't name the town above caught in the death-grip of history because I feared for my life if I did — but recently I had reason to tour my old high school here in Saskatoon, the Saskatoon Technical Collegiate Institute, now called 'The F.J. Gathercole Centre.' And as I stood outside the main door and looked at that name engraved there in all its cement splendour, I wondered, Is there anybody left besides his family members who even remembers who he was? Who knows why the old high school's name – which would still mean something to the many hundreds of people who attended it - was erased in order to honour this man? That is, what it was he did that made those in power – other middle-aged white guys, I guess — desire to honour him? I found myself wondering, How many hundreds of women teachers made the F.J. Gathercole Centre possible? What about the artist Ernest Lindner, who for many years taught art there and influenced hundreds of students, and whose work is so very good that it is shown in galleries and collections around the world? Why is it not the Ernest Lindner Centre?

I know who F.J. Gathercole was, I even have a vague memory of what he looked like. But, my personal feelings aside, there is the fact that if I remember who Mr. Gathercole was, I suppose other people my age involved in education in Saskatoon probably do too, but we are all getting old and won't be around forever. At the same time the building is — I hear — in danger of being destroyed — and if it is torn down and a new building erected in its place, I doubt the name would be carried forward.

Are there young people in Saskatoon who remember who the admirable *Hugh Cairns* was? In 1953 when I moved here with my family, we all knew, since the war had been over only eight years, but now it's been over forty-three years, and the history behind the name is, in a popular, street-wise way, sliding into oblivion.

What average person, stopped on the street and asked, could tell you who Dewdney or Elphinstone were? And history has changed its tune on Dewdney anyway, since he was the man who shamefully ordered that the First Nations people be starved at Fort Walsh in order to force them to "take treaty," and to leave southwestern Saskatchewan, where in the

eighteen-eighties too many had massed for the comfort of the police, government, and those few white settlers. Naming buildings and streets to honour people whose contribution was in the corporate framework of Saskatchewan is bound to be short-lived.



Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, B229.

A memorial plaque to Sgt. Hugh Cairns who died at 21 years of age just ten days before the end of the First World War, the day after he was awarded the Victoria Cross for bravery.

Well then, what names do we remember, unprompted and pretty much throughout the population, in this province? If you stopped people on the street and asked them, what names do you think you would hear? *Louis Riel* is the first name that pops into my head. After that, *Sitting Bull, Poundmaker, Almighty Voice, Piapot*, maybe *Jerry Potts*. Those are the names that resound in popular memory of people my age. I think it very strange, for like it or not, they were the defeated, while the names of the victors are forgotten outside of history classes. Even as victors what we remember is the heroism of those leaders, and their suffering. Yet there is no Chief Sitting Bull public school, nor Almighty Voice Civic Park

Why is there no — as far as I know anyway — Violet McNaughton Boulevard, civic building, rink, arena, school? No memorial of any kind to the Saskatchewan woman who led the fight to get Saskatchewan women the vote, and then for many years provided a forum for them in *The Western Producer* when forums for women were otherwise hard to come by? Why no statue or fountain or brass plaque on an historic building, in the manner of the Unknown Soldier, bearing a tribute to the Unknown Woman Homesteader? And, were there not Founding Mothers in this province, not even in this city?

I suspect the names of streets and buildings are what they are because most of that naming is done by, or at least approved by, the City Fathers who, despite a few women on council, inevitably see the world and provincial history the way they see it, as the guardians and the gatekeepers of the "corporate" past.

We are trying to save the essence of a society, not just its crowning achievements, not just its good points. And in order to do that, we have to think about the truth of that society, about what it really was, not just about where the power lay as evidenced by its civic buildings, its parks, or even its prominent, powerful people, its chiefs, principals, mayors, governors and directors of education, not just about its skeleton and its corporate mind, but about its heart. And its heart has never been as clearly evident in as tangible ways as the other. Women and children, and in the past, First Nations people, didn't build impressive stone buildings. It is only recently that people of different ethnicities have begun to preserve their heritage on their own: i.e. the Ukrainian Museum on Spadina Crescent.

This seems an appropriate place to bring up the idea proposed by a local Chinese organization that Twentieth Street be renamed — was it *International Street*? It seems to me an excellent idea, and I hope the heritage community will enthusiastically support it in representations to city council.

Why aren't there City Mothers? I think we ought to propose that Saskatoon appoint a shadow council of older women who have distinguished themselves, not in doctorates or CEO positions or elected office, or having run the furthest or the fastest, or even in good works, but whose wisdom is the consequence merely of having lived long lives mostly in this province. How would we find these women? We'd ask local people to nominate them — you could nominate your own

Violet McNaughton, fourth from the right in the front row, with The Western Producer staff in front of the Modern Press Building on Second Avenue in Saskatoon in 1927. McNaughton, the leading woman in the province during the first half of the twentieth century, gave women a voice in "The Producer."

grandmother if you really thought she was unusually wise or unusually seasoned – and then perhaps all the nominees would get together for a long weekend somewhere in the country and choose from among themselves. Or maybe all nominees would automatically be on the Shadow Council with some system of rotation evolved for public occasions.

Their purpose would be to keep reminding us who we *really are* — they would view events from an angle different from the standard or corporate one – from the angle of mothers and grandmothers, from the traditional feminine role as keepers of the earth, and as carriers of soul; they would comment on events and on decisions made by the council elected by the standard political process, on occasion they would deflate grandiosity. They would act in the manner of a chorus in a Greek tragedy, or as the Wise Fool of medieval times, or as a counterbalance, a weight reminding us of the multiplicity of voices, and of larger values, the values of the heart over monetary, political, and financial ones. Unsalaried and unelected, they would have nothing to lose by speaking the truth, and nothing personal to gain except honour.

It is hardly a secret that when our ancestors came here they refused to acknowledge, could not even seem to see that the land was already inhabited, understood, described, and had a history, as well as names. Traces of 'the people' in the form of burial sites, remains of camps, trails of one sort or another, and hunting devices and sites such as buffalo pounds and so on, were everywhere one cared to look.

Where their place names remained, they have an ingenuity ours lack: Seven Persons, a village in Alberta named more or less after seven bodies found there; Old Man On His Back range of hills or plateau, so named because an old man was found there lying on his back, "in bad shape," as an Elder explained to us recently; or Cut Knife, or Old Wives Lake, and so on. Names given for events that happened there that remain alive for each succeeding generation by the stories told to them. First Nations people understood the places as having names inherent in them, belonging to the place as a hand fits in a glove, that represents a vision of landscape, a vision of community, and a vision of heritage as living — as imprinted — a vision of the heart, and a true reflection of what the place is. But all of that can only come, of course, through very long association with a place.

Other appropriate names have been given, either by explorers, early settlers or as versions of the original Native names, in response to the terrain: Thunder Hills, the Big Muddy, Foam Lake, Gull Lake, Cypress

Medicine Hat Museum and Art Gallery, 355.2, photograph by Gainsboro Studio in Medicine Hat.

A landscape in the vicinity of the Cypress Hills, perhaps south of the Hills, looking north.

Hills, Fir Mountain, Wood Mountain, even if they do tend to be somewhat misleading, i.e., there are no cypresses in the Cypress Hills and no mountains at either Fir or Wood Mountain.

One of the names, given I think by the provincial government, which I find puzzling is the Francois-Finlay Dam at Nipawin: Francois was Francois Le Blanc, one of the very earliest traders on the Saskatchewan River who made himself at home with the First Nations people of the area. He was also called Franceways, or Saswe, which I think means 'yellow legs' after his yellow stockings. Finlay came along a year or two later, so it was fitting that the dam was named after the two men, I suppose, not that I think the average person on the street would know who either of them were. But what annoys me, since my maiden name is Le Blanc, is the puzzling decision to give Finlay his proper surname, but refer to Francois Le Blanc as merely 'Francois,' as if to denigrate him in a not-so-subtle way, as a matter of fact, as the non-French white traders did at the time and which is recorded in history books for anyone to read. (Because he lived with the Native people as the Native people did.) Or did someone in the provincial bureaucracy think merely that Francois-Finlay had a nicer ring to it than Le Blanc-Finlay? As far as that goes, First Nations people had been meeting in that area for seven or nine thousand years before either Le Blanc or Finlay arrived there, but as First Nations people are not fond of dams and the havoc they wreak on traditional hunting grounds, a First Nations name would probably have been a bad idea.

Or take the names our little towns are given: Many by the officials or workers of the railway, some by the settlers filled with longing for the place they'd left behind forever: Stornoway, Stoughton, Orkney, Dundurn, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Perigord; or after the aristocracy of their home villages, or the castles near where they eked out a living in Europe. Quite a few were named for the dreams of settlers: Bounty, Plenty, Climax, Fortune, Success. In my novel *The Fourth Archangel*, I named the small towns Remorse, Solitude, and Ordeal, which seemed to me more representative of the actual situation of the settlers.

But that kind of naming is what happens when you bring in, wholesale, people from all over the world, and plunk them down on ground about which they know nothing at all, in villages set in places for which there is no earthly reason to be a village beyond the needs of the corporate world — that is, the railroads, the grain trade — and fill them full of malarkey about what they might expect and deserve of their new lives.

At a loss for names appropriate to the place itself, they graft on inappropriate names.

If the provincial legislature passed a law saying that every town, village and city had to be renamed within six months, what do you suppose would be the names people would choose? Now, after close to a hundred years since their establishment? I'm afraid to guess – possibly they'd be as firmly a case of the head ruling the heart as in the past. But I doubt it. My doubt is based on the plebiscite quite a few years ago which renamed Port Arthur-Fort William 'Thunder Bay,' and one in Eastend that named the new Old People's Lodge 'Wolf Willow Lodge,' proving that there is poetry in the hearts of so-called 'ordinary' people and, especially, that a true sense of place is slowly developing in the descendants of the settlers.

I mentioned earlier that I would have preferred to have seen a certain impressive brick building burned to the ground because in childhood I had hated and been mistreated in a place just like it, but nonetheless, recognizing its heritage value, voted to give funds to preserve it — a case of the head ruling the heart. I asked myself what building that has been destroyed, had I the power to preserve, would I have saved?

I would have saved a certain small farm north of Prince Albert with a log house, a garden behind it and a huge old willow tree, a curving, sandy road leading into it at the front, a split-rail fence around the house and grounds, bluffs of trees around it, a small pond down by the log barn. My grandparents farmed there when I was maybe three or four years old and I remember it as a paradise, a place where I was loved and protected and allowed to roam free with my sisters and cousins in its environs, in the warm summer sunshine. Like thousands of other Saskatchewan people, out of all possible memories, and even knowing that it is only a child's truth, that is what I would preserve.

Perhaps what we need is a museum called "Memory Farm." Inside there would always be the smell of bread baking in a wood stove, somebody would always be churning butter, the sun would always be shining in through the windows of the shabby, well-used, but scrupulously clean log or sod house, and the sounds of birds singing would always filter through over the crackling of the fire in the cookstove. Grandpa and Grandma would be there, warm and smiling, ready to welcome the visitor with open arms ... Wait a minute! I think I've been there! It's in southern California. I think it's called — Disneyland!

Somewhere between the two extremes I've mentioned — trying to forget or bury parts of our past because they do not do us credit, and trying to save a wholly sentimental version — we need to find something that might come closer to the reality of our past, and not just part of that reality, but the reality in its entirety.

I'm wondering now if maybe we're wrong when we decide that we can't save all those small churches in tiny, often dying communities. I know that if we gave say three thousand dollars — and often that's all these groups ask for — to the custodians of one church in every community in Saskatchewan it would cost a good deal more than the saving of one impressive brick or stone heritage building in a city — it would cost more than the Heritage annual budget. But where have people lived? Where are their hearts? Where are their memories? In what buildings does the history of a community really live? I think in those small, drab, frame churches, in the long-gone sod huts, log cabins, the tumbling-down frame shacks where most of us my age were raised, in the graveyards, in the 'corduroy' roads in the bush country, more than in the architect-designed corporate tower, or the private mansions of the rich.

I would like now to draw these various strands of thought together in one stirring and profound conclusion. Unfortunately, I can't. Failing at this essential speaker's task, I'd like to try to put into perspective the things I've been saying — at least the perspective from which I've come to view the matter of preserving our heritage.

I like to go for a walk in the early morning out on the native grassland. I find out there on the land more beauty, more solace, more wisdom, altogether more value to all of us there in the relatively unspoiled prairie than I ever find in any building, no matter how grand, how richly-decorated, how historic. And it seems to me that if there is any heritage in Saskatchewan we should all be working to save, it is the land itself, now, quickly, before all the trees and bush and native grass vanish. I know we all have to

find a way to live, to support our families, and members of our society unable to support themselves, and that for we European Saskatchewanians the traditional way has been farming and ranching, in forestry and fishing, generally in harvesting our non-renewable resources. Attempts to prevent this from going too far are occurring in the form of laws and regulations and increasingly, more and more private attempts by private citizens. And yet so-called 'progress' rolls on, farms are getting bigger and bigger, as is farm machinery, and there's no economy in saving sloughs, old farmsteads, road allowances and bluffs of trees if the land under them is arable, sometimes even if it isn't. And the computer revolution having failed in its promise to use less paper, in fact, the opposite having happened, our remaining forests are in danger. No grassland, no forests, means among other things, no animals. I know I don't need to go on. This is a message we've all heard, and all of us who eat bread and use paper are implicated in the decimation of our resources.

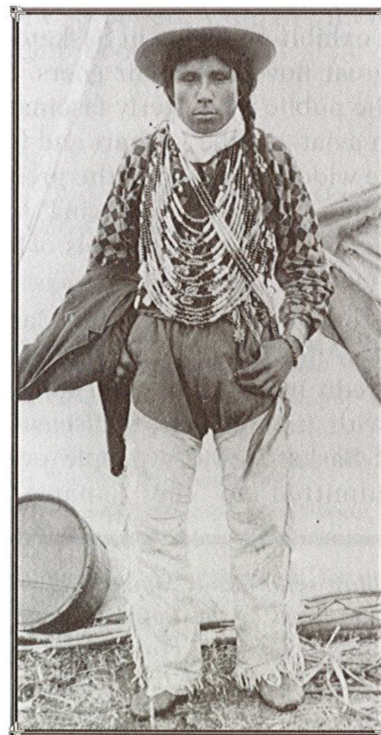
So this is the message with which I want to leave you: That [I] pray our heritage bodies will work to help our government find ways for all of us to survive in the natural paradise this province once was, in some ways still is, and one day may be again, that will not utterly destroy our essential heritage of grass and trees, sky and air, soil and water, a heritage without which, nothing else will matter. Thank you.

Sharon Butala
Eastend, Saskatchewan

NOTES FOR THE EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION:

1. Reviews in *The Toronto Star* and *Books in Canada*, quoted on the back cover of Sharon Butala, *The Perfection of the Morning — An Apprenticeship in Nature* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers, 1994).
2. Sharon Butala's novels are: *Country of the Heart* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1984); *The Gates of the Sun* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1985); *Luna* (Saskatoon, Saskatchewan: Fifth House, 1988); *Upstream "Le Pays d'en Haut"* (Saskatoon: Fifth House, 1991); *The Fourth Archangel* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1992); and *The Garden of Eden* (Toronto: Harper Flamingo Canada, 1998). Her collections of short stories are: *Queen of the Headaches* (Moose Jaw: Couteau Books, 1985); and *Fever* (Toronto: Harper Collins, 1990). Her books of non-fiction are: *The Perfection of the Morning — An Apprenticeship in Nature* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1994); and *Coyote's Morning Cry — Meditations and Dreams from a Life in Nature* (Toronto: Harper Collins Publishers Ltd., 1995).
3. Butala, *The Fourth Archangel*, 10.
4. Lawence Scanlon, "A novelist discovers the healing power of the prairies," a review in *The Globe and Mail* 19 March 1994. Butala, *The Perfection of the Morning*. See also Butala, *Coyote's Morning Cry*.
5. Sharon Butala to Georgina Taylor, April 1999.
6. Butala is not a historian and makes no claim to be one. When she made this speech she was apparently was unaware of the senior citizens' high rise in downtown Saskatoon, the McNaughton Place Apartments, which is named after Violet McNaughton. Nor was she aware that McNaughton has recently been named as a Canadian of national historic significance by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada. The decision was based on the findings in Georgina Taylor, "Violet Clara McNaughton (1879-1968)," HSMBC Agenda Paper 1997-70.
7. Butala to Taylor, April 1999. Interview by Taylor with Butala, 4 February 1994.
8. Butala, *The Perfection of the Morning*, 2.
9. Butala to Taylor, April 1999. Interview by Taylor with Butala, 4 February 1994. For more about the connection between nature, history, and Butala's life as a writer and a ranchwoman see Butala, *The Perfection of the Morning*.
10. Butala to Taylor, April 1999.
11. Butala to Taylor, 4 June 1999.
12. A review in the *New York Herald Tribune* quoted on the back of Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow – A History, a Story and a Memory of the Last Plains Frontier* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1955). Butala to Taylor, 4 June 1999. For more details about Stegner see "Correspondence, Notes, and Comments" in this issue.
13. Butala to Taylor, 4 June 1999. When Stegner died his widow, Mary, donated $10,000 to the Council for the House. The Council invested the money and now uses the interest to help with the expenses of running the House.
14. Butala to Taylor, April 1999.

The Peoples of Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan Archives Board, Chambury Collection, #D0–51/11, photographer Theodore Charmbury.

A young "Sioux" cowboy from the Prince Albert area. Like other Indian cowboys and cowgirls, he combined traditional culture with the culture of Euro-Canadian society, as we can see from the mixture of clothing he is wearing.

.... to be continued on page 47

ROGUES, HEROES, ADVENTURERS, AND TRAILBLAZERS

Nellie Carson: a daring young woman in her flying machine

by Ruth Millar

viation was in its golden era in 1929, when Nellie Carson of Saskatoon became the first woman pilot in Saskatchewan, and the ninth woman in Canada to qualify. She was later to set an altitude record in 1931.

On May 20, 1927, a little over two years before Nellie's qualifying flight, Charles Lindbergh had made his pioneering solo flight across the Atlantic. In 1928, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to cross the Atlantic in a plane. Even though she was not at the controls, the crossing gained her ardent public adulation. It was not until 1932 that Earhart actually duplicated Lindbergh's feat, only the second person to do so, and certainly the first woman, making her "the goddess of aviation."

The first exhibition flights in Saskatoon took place in 1912, a great novelty for fair goers. By the 1920s and 1930s the public was utterly fascinated with aviation. Women aviators, like Earhart and Carson, whose exploits were widely reported in the press, personified modern women who were proving themselves in many new fields. They were models of independence and achievement.

Born in Yorkton in 1900, Nellie Carson attended school there. After training as a stenographer, she worked as credit manager of a Yorkton firm. In 1923 she fell ill with tuberculosis, a disease which killed hundreds of Saskatchewan's people every year, and she was admitted to the Sanatorium at Fort Qu'Appelle. On her recovery, she went to Saskatoon and worked as a stenographer until she joined the staff of the Saskatoon Sanatorium, when it opened in 1925.

Nellie was one of the earliest members of the Saskatoon Aero Club. She learned to fly with various flying instructors, and passed the test for her pilot's license, PPL #384, on September 30, 1929. Later the same day, Grayce Hutchinson of Saskatoon also qualified. Nellie's certificate was issued on October 12, 1929. Her daring achievement was all the more remarkable considering a spate of recent fatal aviation accidents in this province in 1929. E.J. Smith-Marriott, Alfred Johnson, Dale Blount and Theodore Helps were all killed in small plane crashes that shocked their communities. There may have been more deaths.

Photo courtesy of Ray Crone of Regina and Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, PH 99 23.

Nellie Carson, on the right, and Grayce Hutchinson in front of a Gypsy Moth.

Ruth Millar, who has a Master's degree in Library Science, is the head of the Local History Room at the Saskatoon Public Library. For several years she has been collecting photos and biolgraphical information about particularly fascinating people from Saskatchewan. Many of them, like Nellie Carson, had lived unsung lives.

The picture at the top of this page is of Charlie Parmer, whose story Millar will tell in the next issue. Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, LH 3581.

Saskatoon Public Library — Local History Room, LH 1456.

The Tuberculosis Sanatorium in Saskatoon where Nellie Carson worked and where she died in 1949.

Undaunted, Nellie made headlines and wowed the aviation community on June 8, 1931 when she set an altitude record for women in a Gypsy Moth. Shirley Render reported that "With no oxygen, considered necessary (in fact now mandatory) over 12,000 feet, Nellie ... took one hour and twenty minutes to reach a height of 16,000 feet by flying a series of circles over the airfield." Reportedly, Nellie flew completely out of sight and hearing of the spectators. Although she was clad in winter flying clothes, she reported on her return that she had experienced severe cold at 16,000 feet. Attendants who helped her from the plane corroborated that she was "nearly frozen."

To finance her flying lessons in the 1930s, Nellie barnstormed around Saskatchewan, flying into farmers' fields and charging adventurous souls "a cent a pound for one five-minute circuit," or "$3 a flip" at exhibitions. Reportedly one of the first Canadian women to take up barnstorming, she was also the first female in Saskatchewan to solo in a plane. Barnstorming was exhilarating but it did not pay the rent, so Nellie took to the skies on weekends and continued her day job as secretary to Dr. H.C. Boughton, medical superintendent at the Saskatoon Sanitorium. She remained at this post until January 1, 1942, when she resigned to enlist in the RCAF Women's Division, with 50 hours' flying time to her credit. She was turned down as a pilot, but during the war she became a corporal in the administrative branch of the Women's Division, served as section officer, and was adjutant of two Vancouver hospitals.

For two years Nellie was president of the Sanatorium branch of the Canadian Legion, and was first woman president of a Legion unit in Saskatchewan. Ironically, she died as a patient at the same sanatorium in which she had laboured for so many years, in July 1949, a year after the new anti-tuberculosis drugs were available for widespread use in Saskatchewan, and the death rate from tuberculosis declined drastically. "Work [had] ended" for Saskatchewan's pioneer woman flier who had ascended to such record heights.

NOTES:

PRIMARY SOURCES:

"Becomes Pilot", *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 1 October 1929.

"Big Funeral Planned for Crash Victims," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 6 August 1929.

"Dale Blount, Regina, Dies in Air Crash." *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 3 August 1929.

"Local Aviator Killed; Looping the Loop Ends in Death of Theodore W. Helps," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 8 October 1929.

"Nellie Carson Climbs 16,000 Ft. To Record," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 10 June 1931.

"Nellie Carson, Noted City Flier, Clerk at San, Joins CWAAF," *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 22 January 1942.

"Work Ended" [obituary], *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*,12 July 1949.

BOOKS:

Ellis, Frank H. *Canada's Flying Heritage*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1954.

Houston, C. Stuart. *R.G. Ferguson: Crusading Against Tuberculosis*. Toronto: Hannah Institute & Dundurn Press, 1991.

Render, Shirley. *No Place for a Lady*. Winnipeg: Portage & Main Press, 1992.

Spring, Joyce. *Daring Lady Flyers: Canadian Women in the History of Aviation*. Porter's Lake, N.S.: Pottersfield Press, 1994.

Ware, Susan. *Still Missing: Amelia Earhart and the Search for Modern Feminism*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993.

BOOK REVIEWS

A Century in the West: Life of a pioneer women — Mary Popp's story

By Mary Popp. Edited by D. Layh. Langenburg, Saskatchewan: Twin Valley Consulting, 1998. Pp. 241. Illustrations. $20.00 (paper).

This book is based on the memoirs of Mary Popp (nee Maria Lowenberger) with editing and footnotes by Donald Layh and drawings by Janet Layh.Mary Popp began writing her memoirs at the age of seventy. She wrote sporadically until she turned ninety-nine in 1996. She died in 1998.

Mary was born in the Hoffenthal District of Saskatchewan eight years after her parents, Jakob and Augustina Lowenberger emigrated to the Canadian prairies from Landestreu, Austria with three other young German couples in 1891. One of eight children, Mary was encouraged to marry Henry Popp at the age of seventeen, and a hard life of economic difficulties and emotional stress began. Mary tells her story of her childhood, her marriage, her fifty-eight years of life with Henry, and her twenty-five years as a widow in a straightforward, understated style. There is sadness and pain, disappointments and losses, as all of Mary's children predeceased her, but she also shares the good times, the travelling she enjoyed, the friendships and the fun. Mary's memoirs also chronicle the life of the people of a district of Saskatchewan and Manitoba over most of this century. In addition to the communities where Mary and Henry lived, MacNutt, Calder, Langenburg in Saskatchewan, the towns of Shellmouth and Russell, Manitoba are frequently mentioned because they were service and medical centres for Saskatchewan citizens too. I found this aspect of the book particularly interesting because my family homesteaded at Shellmouth and lived in Shellmouth and Russell throughout the period of Mary's memoirs.

While the content of this memoir is like many I have read of prairie women of this period it has some special qualities too. One is the detail Mary provides and her story-telling style. You find yourself drawn into it and eager to continue reading. You understand better the significant role of the country doctor in people's lives as you read Mary's stories; you understand the impact of technology, the Spanish influenza and improved methods of travel. You understand the economic ups and downs of a family as influenced by a local economy, and the impact of the second world war on a family with two sons. You appreciate the flavour of a community of people trying to make a good life for themselves and their children in times of uncertainty and worry. Like many women writing about their own lives, Mary is a champion of understatement, particularly in describing the pain and worry that Henry's drinking causes in her life. Some of her expressions make you laugh right out loud. Her account of the demise of their troublesome dog Spot is an example. She wrote, "I felt bad about it. He was a very nice dog, but I liked him better when he was gone. Henry brought him home and after supper Henry and Ella buried him on the vacant lot next to us. End of Spot." Mary's story is one of triumph over all that life hands her. It sobers, inspires, informs and entertains.

The memoir is enhanced by a collection of forty wonderful black and white photographs of good quality and historical references provided by the editor. Through Donald Layh's detailed work, family genealogical charts were developed for both Mary's and Henry's families of origin as well as their descendants, and information on Landestreu, Austria is also provided. All of these provide a rich context for Mary's ordinary, but also extraordinary, life story.

Nanci Langford
University of Alberta

A Family Chronicle — Mendel's Children

By Cherie Smith. Calgary: University of Calgary, 1997. Pp. 174, Illustrations. $19.95 (paper).

(Selections from this book, in slightly different versions, first appeared in *Canadian Woman Studies*, *Canadian Ethnic Studies* and *Saskatchewan History*.)

Family Chronicle — Mendel's Children, although on occasion overly sentimental, is an entertaining and enlightening work. Cherie Smith, with her reminiscences of Kamsack, joins Ruth Bellan of Melville, Fredelle Bruser Maynard of Birch Hills, Clara Lander of Prince Albert, Molly Lyons Bar-David of Rosthern and Prince Albert, Miriam Mandel of Moose Jaw, and Tillie Taylor of Saskatoon, a group of Jewish women who have written about growing up in Saskatchewan. Unlike the other women, Smith introduces both sides of her family to her readers and guides them along the slippery genealogical slope with charts for the Steimans, the Finns, and the Shatskys, her father's family, her maternal grandmother's family and her mother's family, respectively. For added clarity the author provides a map, "The Road to Kamsack,"which locates various places in Manitoba and Saskatchewan mentioned in the book.

The author also gives some historical background for the flight of Jews, including her family, from Russia. Another map, "Pale of Jewish Settlement," expands this information by showing the area in Russia, to which the Jews were confined from 1772 to 1917. They were not allowed to settle in villages and in the cities of Kiev and Nikolaev. Other areas were forbidden to new Jewish settlement. Vicious Russian pogroms during 1881 resulted in a public outcry against these outrages. Throughout the world, various high profile people became involved in meetings which led to the formation of relief committees.

The Shatskys, Smith's mother's family, and the Finns, her maternal grandmother's family, arrived in Winnipeg in 1882. They were among those who were aided by one of the relief committees. Robert Steiman was the first member of her father's family to leave Russia when the Czarist regime's oppression of the Jews reached a new high in 1891. After a stay in England and his marriage to Sarah Hornstein, he and his bride, with tickets in hand, sailed for California; but an unfortunate misadventure led to a change of plans. After a harrowing trans-Atlantic voyage, they reached Halifax. For reasons, still unknown to the writer, they were misdirected to a train bound for Winnipeg instead of Chicago. While en route a stranger convinced them that he could get them rerouted. After handing over the tickets to him, they never saw their "good Samaritan" again. Robert Steiman and his bride finally arrived in Winnipeg sometime between 1899 and 1902.

In Winnipeg the author's grandfather Sam Shatsky and his brother Morris, like other men, worked at different jobs. Later they joined forces and moved with their families to Pelly, Saskatchewan where they opened a store. Immigrant breadwinners without a profession and with little or no knowledge of the English language had few options. Frequently a younger member of the immigrant family, through tremendous effort, managed to attend university and become a professional. The author's father, Iser Steiman, accomplished this. He became a doctor in 1924 and eventually practised medicine in Pelly.

During the twenties, with the construction of branch railway lines, hamlets mushroomed throughout Saskatchewan. So too did general stores. In many of these hamlets during this era, it was not unusual for the storekeeper to be Jewish and the restaurant owner, Chinese. Retailers, non-Jewish and Jewish alike, made important contributions to the villages and hamlets in which they lived. Coming from countries such as Russia, Poland, Austria and Roumania, Jewish storekeepers knew the needs, languages and customs of most of the settlers, who, like themselves, had come to make their new home in Canada. English was soon added to the merchant families' multilingual repertoire. If there were Native people in the area, storekeepers frequently acquired a smattering of one or two Aboriginal languages.

Families wishing to maintain their Jewish heritage had many problems and difficult choices to make. For example, to strictly adhere to the Jewish food rules for meat a ritual slaughterer, *shokhet*, must kill and examine the carcass to make certain that it is ritually clean, kosher. When a family lived far enough away from a

large centre to make it necessary for the meat to be sent by train, the situation was difficult. There was no refrigeration. During the summer, the meat would spoil. The family would either become vegetarian or make special arrangements with an out-of-town shokhet to butcher the animals. Then the housewife would have the formidable task of cleaning, cutting up and canning all the freshly butchered meat. Because Sam Shatsky himself killed the chicken (p.53), it is evident that both Cherie Smith's grandparents decided that it was not possible to follow all the dietary laws of orthodox Judaism. However, they did participate in and enjoy the Friday night Sabbath rituals when Grandmother lit and blessed the candles and Grandfather blessed the wine and said the prayer over braided egg bread. This was followed by the traditional Sabbath meal which included chicken soup and roasted chicken. Although the Shatsky women did not appear to work in the family business, many storekeepers' wives did. As this book points out, and the recipes included in it attest, most of these Jewish women were very proud of their culinary skills.

The 'country' doctors of those times were confronted with many challenges: poor weather, impassable roads, primitive working conditions and impoverished patients. Jewish doctors faced the additional challenge of anti-Semitism. On the other hand, Jewish immigrant doctors, like Jewish immigrant storekeepers, had the advantage of being multilingual. Dr. Iser Steiman's knowledge of English, Russian, German and Ukrainian no doubt contributed, in large part, to his success as a prairie doctor. That he eventually had his own hospital in Kamsack was indeed a major achievement.

Generously laced with amusing anecdotes, Cherie Smith's excellent descriptions make *Mendel's Children* a welcome addition both to those interested in the development of prairie communities and to those who would like to increase their knowledge of Jewish social history in Saskatchewan. She has also given her family a very special gift to cherish.

Anna Feldman
Saskatoon

The Diefenbaker Legacy: Canadian Politics, Law and Society since 1957

Edited by Donald C. Storey and R. Bruce Shepard. Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center Publications, 1998. Pp. 170. Illustrations. $15.00 (paper).

Published collections of conference papers almost inevitably provide an uneven set of readings, and this is no exception. Denis Smith's biography of 'the Chief' in 1995, *Rogue Tory*, dealt carefully with most of the debates concerning John Diefenbaker's personality and policies, and some of the articles in this collection shed little light beyond Smith's illumination of this fascinating prime minister's political life. But some do.

Patrick Kyba and Wendy Green-Finlay provide an unabashed defence of Diefenbaker in an article entitled "John Diefenbaker as Prime Minister: The Record Re-Examined." They note that Canada's only prime minister from Saskatchewan, thus far, has been largely panned by scholars and journalists, but suggest that Dief's detractors "by and large, represent the views of central Canada." They provide a laundry list of the Diefenbaker government's achievements that, no doubt, to the central Canadian mind, would read like no more than expensive patronage projects for constituencies in Western, Atlantic, and Northern Canada. Roads leading from everywhere to Northern Canada, rail lines leading to resources, large expenditures on dams in Saskatchewan and British Columbia and on thermal plants in Atlantic Canada are prominent in this list. Certainly Kyba and Green-Finlay are correct in accusing other analysts of the Diefenbaker period of ignoring such achievements in favour of a focus on the internecine conflicts and the unpredictable policy shifts of the Diefenbaker years. The charge of central Canadian bias seems fair. The list of achievements also better explains the loyalty of hinterland residents to the Diefenbaker government, after central Canada abandoned it in droves, than the usual claim that Diefenbaker's 'populist' style swayed the 'hicks' outside the belt of sophisticates in the Montreal-Toronto corridor. Many Westerners, like Atlantic Canadians and Northerners, believed they benefitted from Diefenbaker's policies and were, whatever central Canadian commentators might have believed, voting in support of his administration rather than simply endorsing the man himself.

However, uncritical applause for the Diefenbaker mega-project approach at this remove seems as misplaced as central Canadian write-offs of his achievements as petty regional patronage. Diefenbaker shared the mindless enthusiasm of most Canadians in the 1950s and 1960s for technological wonders. He ignored the pleas of First Nations in Saskatachewan about the impact of the irrigation development of the South Saskatchewan River and showed little concern about the impact of the various projects resulting from his 'Northern vision' on Northern Natives. He was perhaps no more callous than most of the white Western pioneers who ignored First Nations rights; but he was no more visionary.

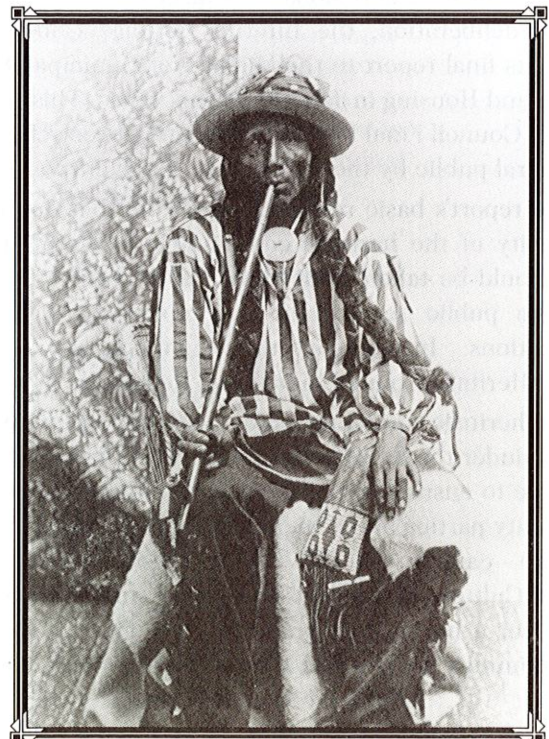
Whatever his vision, Diefenbaker was no reactionary. His brand of Toryism, while respectful towards private enterprise, perceived a large state role in the establishment of both social welfare programs and the provision of infrastructure for industry. Another contributor to this collection, David Stewart, repeats traditional cliches that suggest today's Reform party "is the Diefenbaker Conservative Party" (p. 94). In some respects, such as opposition to official bilingualism, that may be true. But, on economic issues, there is little to connect the Diefenbaker and Reform traditions. Stewart need only have read Kyba and Green-Finlay to know that.

Perhaps the article in this collection that does more to focus on Diefenbaker's legitimate achievements than any other is Erika Simpson's "New Ways of Thinking About Nuclear Weapons and Canada's Defence Policy." It may seem ridiculous to suggest that Diefenbaker had any achievements of which to boast in the area of nuclear policy. The classic histories of his determination of defence policy by Desmond Morton and Jack Granatstein portray the Chief as a bumbling idiot, a liar, and a blackguard. Underlying the narrative of these pro-American Cold Warriors is a focus on Diefenbaker's changing his word to his Allies. First, he agreed to accept nuclear warheads for Canadian missiles and then he broke his promise. This, it is clearly implied, was unmanly and made Canada appear fickle, indeed effeminate, in its foreign affairs.

This rather macho view of the real issues in the nuclear policy debate of 1962 and 1963 is simply rejected by Simpson who zeroes in on the arguments that defenders and critics of NATO's nuclear-deterrent policies, including Diefenbaker, put forward. Diefenbaker emerges in this article as a convert to a well-defined point of view that regarded diplomacy across the Cold War wall of ideology as the better course of action than an unending nuclear build-up on both sides of the divide. The "renegade in power," as Peter C. Newman described the prime minister in his hateful book in 1963, emerges, at least on the defence issue, as a thoughtful individual who was influenced by the powerful arguments emanating from groups such as Voice of Women, as well as influential members of the government and civil service, against nuclear madness. Simpson notes correctly that Diefenbaker's legacy in foreign affairs was that he allowed the public questioning of Cold War nuclear policies to take place, removing the taint from critics of NATO's approach that they were simply Communist dupes. The stakes were a lot higher than keeping one's manly promise within the old boy's nuclear club.

Alvin Finkel,
Athabasca University

The Peoples of Saskatchewan



Saskatchewan Archives Board, Charmbury Collection, #S90-51/26, photographer Theodore Charmbury.

This photograph of an unknown man, who lived in the Prince Albert area, was taken between 1904 to 1918.

Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society

INTERIM HERITAGE COUNCIL - FINAL REPORT RELEASED

In November of 1995 the Minister of Municipal Government established an Interim Heritage Council with a stated mandate to examine the desire and potential of consolidating heritage funding within one agency or structure and to develop a report which reviews the entire spectrum of heritage issues, to complement the work of previous arts and multiculturalism task forces.

After holding a number of consultation meetings with the heritage community, the Interim Heritage Council distributed a discussion paper entitled Perspectives on Heritage. From this discussion paper a number of in-depth written responses were received (one of which was from Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society) and individual and group meetings were held.

From these submissions and discussions, and much internal deliberation, the Interim Heritage Council forwarded its final report to the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing in January of this year. This Interim Heritage Council Final Report has recently been released to the general public by the Minister, Carol Teichrob.

The report's basic recommendation is that due to the complexity of the heritage community in Saskatchewan, steps should be taken to develop a coordinating body for both the public sector and community-based heritage organizations. In summary the recommendations of the Interim Heritage Council in its Final Report are as follows:

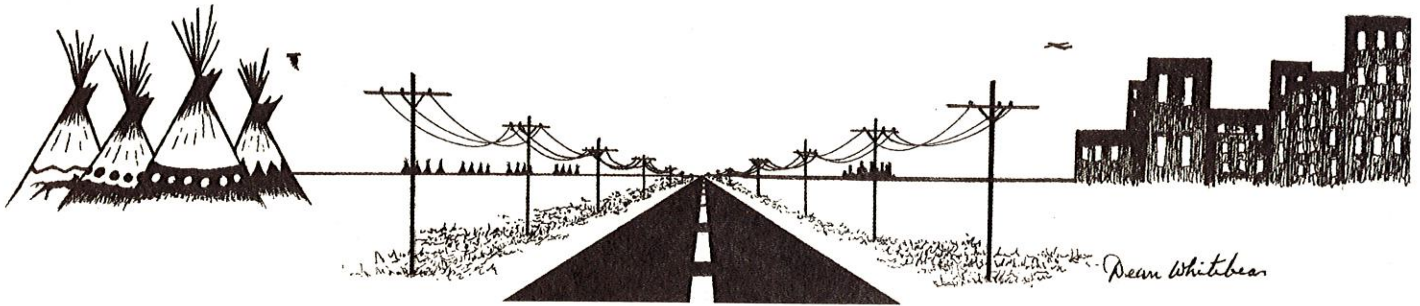
1. The heritage community should develop a heritage caucus under the SaskCulture umbrella. Efforts should be made to ensure that all members of the heritage community participate as members in SaskCulture. A heritage caucus should then negotiate with the SaskCulture Board to secure staff and resources to deliver a heritage program that will give the heritage community a voice and a forum to coordinate its activity.

   The heritage program would be financed by a combination of membership fees and SaskCulture's trust allocations.

   The Interim Heritage Council calls on SaskCulture to convene a meeting of the heritage community to start the process of forming a heritage caucus. Both SaskCulture and the Government of Saskatchewan are called on to provide support to the process of putting this new structure and program in place.
2. Simultaneously, the Government of Saskatchewan should begin to consolidate its heritage activity into a heritage agency. At this time, agency directors would be entirely appointed by government and should represent broad public interest from across Saskatchewan. It is recommended that the Government invite nominations for such a Board from the heritage caucus of SaskCulture. One concept for an agency is to restructure the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation and consolidate Provincial heritage activity under its Board and with its own staff.
3. Powerful imagery should be developed as the central theme for the upcoming Saskatchewan Centennial that shows our common heritage as the foundation for the future strength of Saskatchewan.

   The celebration of the Saskatchewan Centennial represents an excellent opportunity to think about what kind of society we want to build for the future. This can only be done well in the context of our common heritage.
4. The Government of Canada's investment in heritage activity in Saskatchewan is much lower than any other part of the country, based on per-capita expenditures. The heritage community and the Government of Saskatchewan should work with federal officials to develop a strategy to increase the Federal contribution to heritage activity in this province.

Copies of the Interim Heritage Council's Final Report are available from the Heritage Office of the Department of Municipal Affairs, Culture and Housing at 1855 Victoria Avenue, Regina, Saskatchewan S4P 3V7.



SASKATCHEWAN HISTORY

Quotations from the First Fifty Years

Selected by Joan Champ

"The news of the successful beginnings of the Keng Wah Aviation School [in Saskatoon] had reached Dr. Sun Yat-sen in his place of exile. A large silken scroll four feet wide and seven feet long was sent from Shanghai to Saskatoon in late 1919. It was addressed to the Chinese National League in Saskatoon. When it was unrolled... The words 'Keng Wah' were outlined in Oriental characters on the silk panel. Translated into English the words Keng Wah meant 'A Great and Free China'. Also inscribed on the scroll in Dr. Sun's handwriting was a message of goodwill for their co-operative efforts towards a united China."

RAY H. CRONE, "The Unknown Air Force,"
30 (1), Winter 1977

"If farmers were to gain control over their industry [during the depression following the First World War] they must organize. But a local or even provincial organization, the leaders of the Farmers' Union argued, was not enough. To be effective the Union must be national and even international. The organization of farmers was looked upon as a necessary and natural response to the concentration of power in other sectors of the economy. The interests of other claimants to the national income were advanced by organization; the farmers must follow their example."

D.S. SPAFFORD, "The Origin of the Farmers' Union of Canada," 18(2), Spring 1965

"Quite evidently there is no use for a penniless person in this land of opportunity; a person without work and money is considered an outcast, no town or city wants him but he can usually get two meals per day and exist because even Canadians do not usually let dogs starve. When a person has lost all his money and cannot get work he can either take to the road and become a bum or stop in his home town and get a free bed and two meals a day from the city relief for which he has to do as many hours work per week. I estimate that this scheme breaks the spirit of the average man within a year; hence I chose the road. My spirit is by no means broken. I just feel angry and the harder Canada kicks me the more I'll retaliate."

"Experiences of a Depression Hobo,"
[written originally in 1932], 22(2), Spring 1969

Saskatchewan History

ARTICLES

"Little Saskatoon": An Experiment in Land Settlement during the Great Depression *by Dawn S. Bowen*

Indigenous Voices — "The Old Men of the Reserves" *by Edward Ahenakew*

History in the Community — Reflections on the Heritage Endeavour *by Sharon Butala*

Rogues, Heroes, Adventurers, and Trailblazers — Nellie Carson: A daring young woman in her flying machine *by Ruth Millar*

BOOK REVIEWS

MARY POPP

A Century in the West: Life of a pioneer woman — Mary Popp's story *by Nanci Langford*

CHERIE SMITH

A Family Chronicle — Mendel's Children *by Anna Feldman*

DONALD C. STOREY and R. BRUCE SHEPARD, eds.,

The Diefenbaker Legacy: Canadian Politics, Law and Society Since 1957 *by Alvin Finkel*

VOLUME 51 NUMBER 1
SPRING 1999

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE $7.50