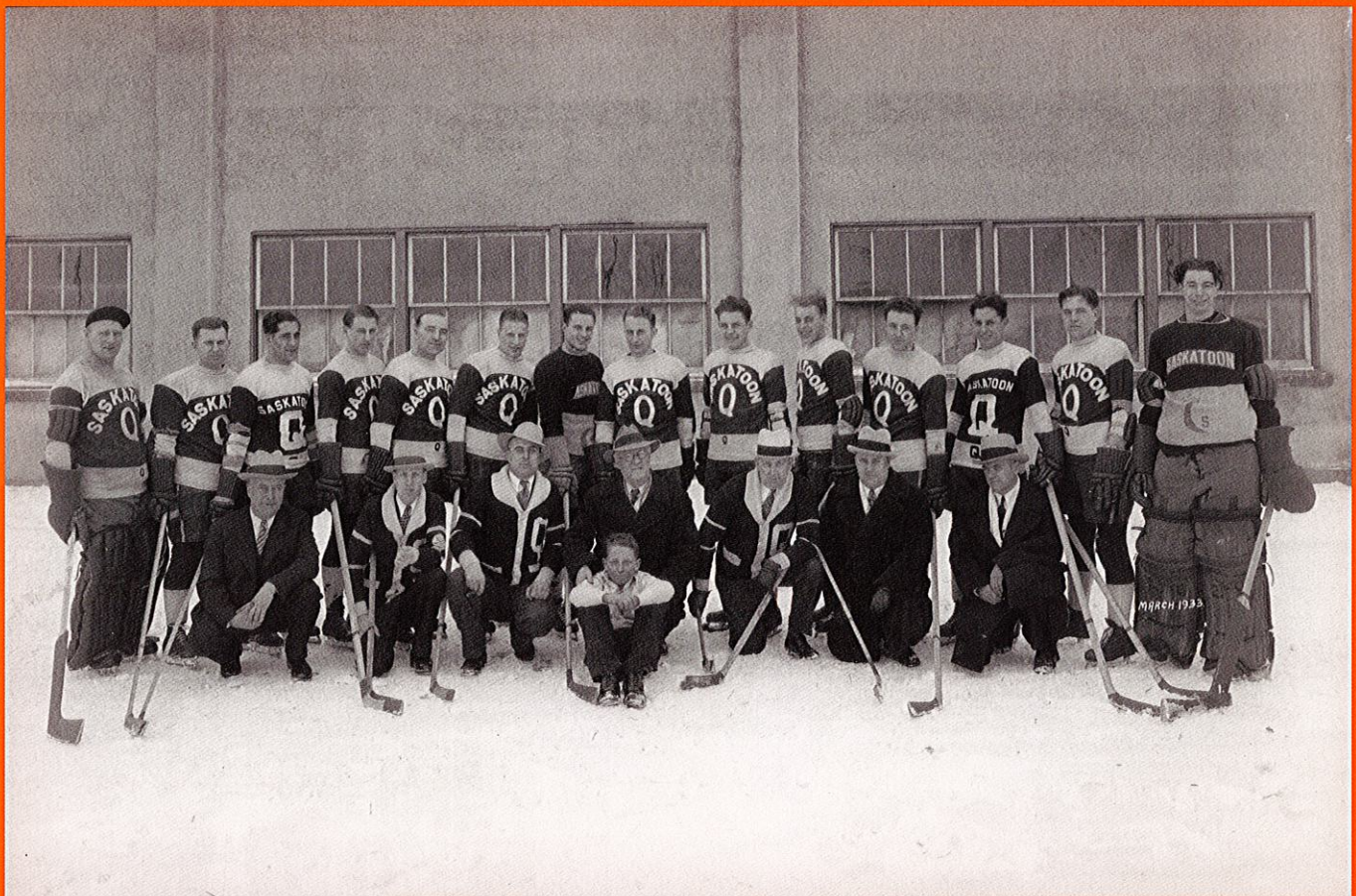


# Saskatchewan History

Volume 59  
Number 2  
Fall 2007



Father Louis Pierre Gravel and the Settlement of the Gravelbourg Area

The Saskatoon Quakers: The Rise and Fall of Community Hockey Heroes

The Hyas Doukhobor Settlement

*The Valley Echo*: Two Decades of Prose, Poetry and Cartoons Relating to the Role and Image of Saskatchewan Nurses, 1923-1943

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# Saskatchewan History

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Cover Photo: Saskatoon Quakers Senior Hockey Club, 1933 (Photo A660, Leonard A. Hillyard, courtesy of Saskatoon Public Library - Local History Room)

# Letter from the Editor

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At a recent meeting of the Saskatchewan History Advisor Board the discussion took an interesting turn when someone asked why Saskatchewan does not have an historical association. There were plenty of possible explanations offered but what really struck me was not the question of why it did not exist but the benefits that could be reaped if it did. A general historical society, an organization that brings together the professional and the general historian, the history professor and the high school teacher, those interested in genealogy and those in politics, would be a huge boon to the study of history in this province and is long overdue.

Saskatchewan is the only western province that does not have a provincial historical association. British Columbia, Manitoba and Alberta (to say nothing of the rest of the country) all have historical societies and those who are interested in history in those provinces have enjoyed the advantages that these bring. These advantages are more than the publication of a quarterly newsletter and an annual conference (although those are important to keeping the historical community informed and in touch with each other) it also helps to create a sense of coherence between the various and varying types of people who study history. Here in Saskatchewan there are two universities which have history departments (the University of Saskatchewan and University of Regina) as well numerous high school teachers and private tutors who specialize in history. There are also independent scholars and amateur historians. As well, Saskatchewan has two separate historical journals, *Saskatchewan History* and *Saskatchewan History and Folklore*. In addition to all of these, there are also numerous historical collections throughout the province. The Saskatchewan Archives Board has locations in Saskatoon and Regina, both the Universities of Saskatchewan and Regina have their own document collections as does the Diefenbaker Centre of Canada. Smaller collections are scattered throughout the province and I have not even mentioned the numerous museums that we are blessed with. To date, there is little that links these various groups together and very little co-ordination between them.

A Saskatchewan historical society could change that. It could provide a vital link between the various historical clusters and help facilitate the study of history

at all levels and in all sorts of different methods in the province. To date, a Saskatchewan historical society remains an abstract idea but maybe with enough people becoming interested, it is an idea that could be transformed into reality.

Perhaps the best way to begin is with small steps. There is not even a master list of all the different people and groups interesting in the history of Saskatchewan and this strikes me as an excellent place to take the first step. I have already mentioned a small list of people and groups interested in some aspect of Saskatchewan history; please write me with others and in each issue of *Saskatchewan History* we will published an updated list. Maybe (with apologies to specialists in chaos theory) this will be the wind from the butterfly wings that leads to the formation of a hurricane and a Saskatchewan historical society will be born from these small efforts.

This issue provides an excellent example of the different types of people involved in the study of Saskatchewan history. Beckey Hamilton is a geographer who has written a fascinating article (and provided some wonderful maps) on the settlement around the Gravelbourg area and a French priest named Father Louis Pierre Gravel. Meanwhile, Lynn Perras, who works in the Faculty of Communication at the University of Calgary, explores the history of a staple of the Saskatoon hockey scene, the Saskatoon Quakers. Then, Jonathan Kalmakoff, a Regina based lawyer, provides an insightful look into the history of the Hyas Doukhobors. If you enjoy his article then a quick to trip to his website at <http://www.doukhobor.org/index.html> is time well spent. From a lawyer we go to a professor of nursing and Sandra Bassendowski's thought-provoking (and sometimes humorous) look at the image of nurses in the *Valley Echo* magazine. The issue finishes with political scientist Duff Spafford's obituary to a towering historical figure, Seymour Lipset, who died on December 31, 2006. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Jason Zorbas

# Articles

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## Father Louis Pierre Gravel and the Settlement of the Gravelbourg Area

by Beckey Hamilton

On June 26, 1907, Philippe Michaud wrote to Father Louis Pierre Gravel, a French-Canadian Catholic priest who was founding a new colony in southwestern Saskatchewan:

When I met you on June 4<sup>th</sup> I gave you commission to take two homesteads one for my mother and the other for my brother. You would do me a great favour if you took 8 other homesteads. It would be desirable if the one closest to mother's would be for Oliva Beaulieu is located on Tp. 10 Rg. 5 sec. 22 ¼ S.E. who is an orphan without means and who is mother's grandson I will pay you the cost for him. The names of the two others are Leon Gregaie, Zide Oudet who are Catholics and Canadiens it is for this reason that mother would like to be near them and if we might have the right to a preemption, mother and my brother would like one as close as possible to their homesteads and also please tell me if someone who cannot take a homestead has right to a preemption or if they go to someone could displace them. I would like a definite response Gregaie. As for the money that will be due if you take the land I have requested tell me, when you will need the money and I will send it let me know about all that I have asked. I am planning to go and build on mother's land if you take it this fall.

This encounter and letter to the priest started this family's move to the Gravelbourg area.

However, Philippe Michaud's letter also contained an unusual request as he offered payment and asked Father Gravel to reserve land for him, several family members and others. Such involvement in this area's early development, sometimes mentioned in pioneer recollections, but never fully discussed in later work, later became contentious. Beyond reserving land for a fee,<sup>1</sup> some have suggested that Father Gravel and his brother effectively controlled who settled in the colony: if settlers arrived whom they did not like, they saw to it that their land was cancelled and someone else took it.<sup>2</sup>

Furthermore, Father Gravel has been credited with attracting thousands of Francophones, like this family, to Gravelbourg and to the surrounding areas.<sup>3</sup> In this way, it has been said, that Gravel, like other Francophone priests, played an important role in settling Francophones in western Canada.<sup>4</sup> However, the extent of his involvement has been questioned. While some pioneer recollections mention him, others do not. In fact, some specifically state that no priest was involved.<sup>5</sup> Other studies have also concluded that Catholic priests were less important in the Francophone movement to western Canada than has been assumed. Their authors have contended that chain migration was key to Francophone settlement.<sup>6</sup> This article examines Father Louis Pierre Gravel's role in the early settlement of the Gravelbourg area and attempts to place him within the context of this discussion.

---

*Beckey Hamilton has a Master of Arts in Geography from the University of Regina and has taught as a sessional lecturer there.*

## Economic Factors in French Canadian Migration from New England and Quebec

The economic situation of many French Canadians in New England and Quebec promoted emigration. During the second half of the 1800s, industrial growth in New England, and the ample jobs it created, attracted thousands of Québécois.<sup>7</sup> However, factory life was very difficult. Pay was low. Work hours were long, 10-12 hours a day, six days a week. Conditions were poor: factories were noisy, hot, poorly ventilated and accidents were common.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, for French Canadians, the mills offered limited possibilities of upward mobility. Only a few were able to make modest upward moves, perhaps to *contre maître*. Even in the early 1900s, some mill supervisors believed that French Canadians were incapable of holding such positions. Some others started businesses that were often frequented by their co-nationals. Although many business owners could have been described as middle class, they easily faced financial ruin in poor years.<sup>9</sup> Thus, in Lewiston, Maine, one of the many centres where Franco-Americans lived, only a few had risen above the poverty line by 1900.<sup>10</sup> Most French Canadians in Lewiston and in other Franco-American centres, lived in ghettos, known as Little Canadas. Overcrowding, old, flimsy, multi-family dwellings, poor sanitation, poor nutrition, inadequate medical care, and high death rates, often from common diseases, characterised these areas.<sup>11</sup>

Changes during the late 1800s and early 1900s aggravated the situation. First, while several members of French Canadian families, children especially, had previously worked in factories, to enable the family to survive, by the turn of the century, American officials more closely enforced school attendance and minimum work-age laws.<sup>12</sup> Second, the influx of migrants from Poland, Portugal, Germany, Greece and Russia increased competition for jobs and held down wages.<sup>13</sup> Concurrently, aided by supplies of raw cotton, iron, copper, wood and a large, cheap pool of labour, the southern states had increased the quantity and quality of their cloth production. By the early 1900s, they were strong competitors of the northeastern states.<sup>14</sup> To compete, New England mill owners frequently sought to reduce wages. Reductions begun in the 1890s, of 8-10 percent in 1893, and another of 10-11 percent before the end of the decade, continued after 1900.<sup>15</sup> Mill owners sought to lower salaries again in 1900, 1901 and 1903.<sup>16</sup> The situation only worsened in 1904-1905, as commercial activity generally declined in the region, according to one article, by about 25 percent.<sup>17</sup>

By summer, many mills had closed, leaving some 50,000 people, including French Canadians, without work and, those who remained, facing a 12.5 percent wage cut or the closure of even more mills. The strikes that followed, especially in Fall River, were hard on all French Canadians, factory workers and others alike. With a backlog of cotton, and the ability to leave mills closed, owners stuck to their demands through the fall and winter. Strikers and business owners faced bankruptcy. Both soon joined the needy. Goodwill agencies exhausted their supplies. Still, the strike only ended in January 1905. Workers took the 12.5 percent pay cut, though they were to receive an additional share of the profits.<sup>18</sup> Yet, despite these cuts, the situation did not improve. There were additional layoffs in 1907, wage reductions in 1908, and staff cuts in 1910.<sup>19</sup>

In Quebec, although the economic situation improved after the turn of the century, significant factors that pushed emigration remained. First, the land in the area that had been divided into seigniories was overcrowded.<sup>20</sup> This was the outcome of large families (Catholic couples had an average of 6.7 children) and an inheritance system based on division among multiple inheritors.<sup>21</sup> Second, the fertility of land in Seigneurial areas had declined. The traditional style of farming involved limited crop rotations. Half the land was sowed to crops; the other half was left idle or used as pasture. Years of minimal fertilization had further reduced the land's fertility. Although some farmers with means had begun fertilizing and employing more extensive rotations by the turn of the century, the many with less land and fewer means continued former practices.<sup>22</sup>

Moreover, limited, infertile land was not the only problem that many French Canadians faced. Imports of wheat from areas that were better suited to growing this crop, particularly the American West, Ontario and western Canada, had made Québécois farmers uncompetitive, even in local markets. To compete, Québécois needed to make a transition to production that was better suited to the area. Medium and large farmers readily switched to livestock, dairy and feed crops. But, the transition was nearly impossible for those with little land.<sup>23</sup> The undeveloped banking system only added to these farmers' difficulties: the few banks in the province lent only to the elite, not to subsistence or small farmers.<sup>24</sup> Day and seasonal labour, on farms and in forests, had typically allowed small farmers to add to their earnings and was the sole source of income for others. However, as dairy production required less labour than wheat, the transition negatively affected

the availability of day or seasonal farm employment.<sup>25</sup> Forestry had also declined because of over harvesting and the growing use of other fuels.<sup>26</sup>

This situation in seigneurial areas and calls by Catholic clerics to move north,<sup>27</sup> to the Laurentians, the Ottawa Valley, to Saguenay/Lac Saint Jean, Rimouski, Gaspé and to the Eastern Townships, contributed to relocation.<sup>28</sup> However, those who left the old farm lands of Quebec and moved to the remote frontier did not fare well. Many of the colonization areas were ill-suited to farming: trees had to be cleared, soils were infertile, the growing season was short, and markets were distant. Many subsisted only if they worked in lumber camps during the fall, winter and spring. With these problems, by the late 19th century, turnover was high in Quebec's colonization districts.<sup>29</sup>

On the other hand, Quebec was industrializing at the turn of the century. This process, which was stimulated by western settlement, increased demand from the United States, and the First World War, created many jobs in the province (between 1901 and 1921, the number employed in manufacturing increased from 101,600 to 125,400).<sup>30</sup> This provided alternatives for struggling farmers. Still, factory workers faced similar conditions as those in the United States. Again, work weeks were long, accidents were common, employment was often seasonal or irregular, with frequent layoffs, and pay was low. It had, in fact, declined relative to the cost of living during the early 20th century. All family members, including children, worked to make ends meet.<sup>31</sup> Living conditions in working class neighbourhoods, such as the Saint Antoine and Sainte Anne wards in Montreal, were similar to those in the Little Canadas of New England.<sup>32</sup> Finally, in the end, given the high birth rate, even city-based factories could not employ all Québécois in need of jobs. This was a significant factor in continued out-migration from Quebec.

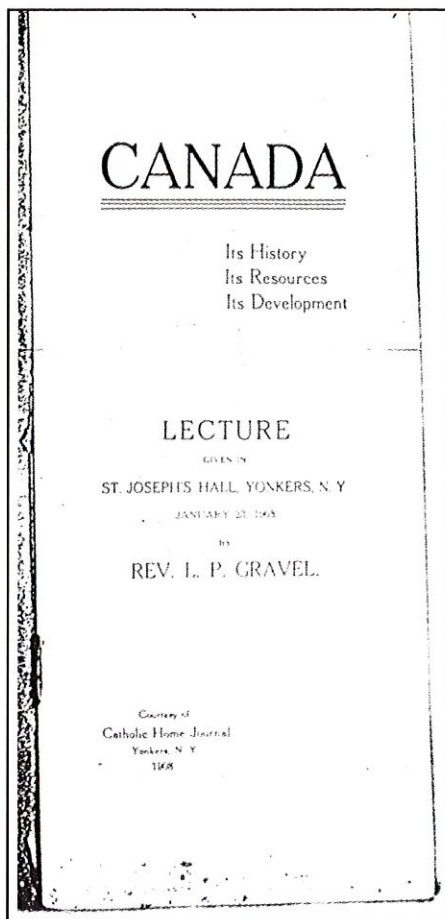
### French Canadians in the Settlement of Western Canada

Conversely, at the turn of the century, settlers were much desired for western Canada. The land needed to be filled with farmers to complete Sir John A. MacDonald's national policy of economic development. Clifford Sifton and his successor, Frank Oliver, used extensive advertizing campaigns to promote the West.<sup>33</sup> However, in the early and mid-1800s Catholic clerics, especially Archbishop Alexandre Taché, had described the West in very negative terms. They had hoped to deter English

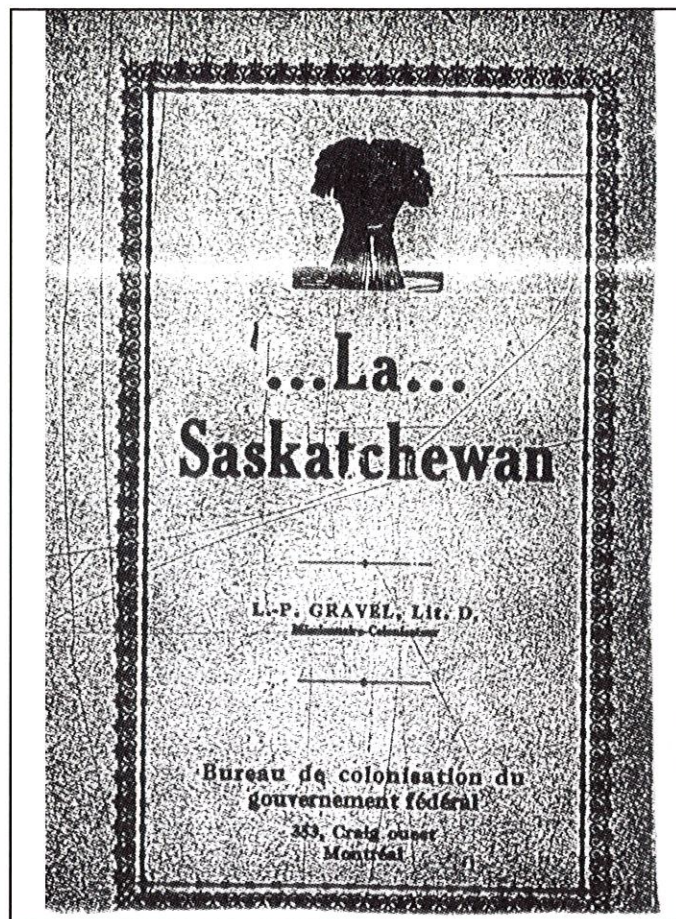


*A Statue of Father Louis Pierre Gravel in Gravelbourg*  
(Author's Collection)

Canadians from coming *en masse* and threatening the Métis and Francophone majority and culture in the region, but, instead, had apparently detracted French Canadians. However, by this time, French Catholics in the West did not wish their people to be left behind.<sup>34</sup> Archbishop Langevin, of Saint Boniface, Manitoba, and even Archbishop Alexandre Taché, in his later years, wanted to attract French-speaking Canadians to settle on homesteads in western Canada. Both viewed this settlement, particularly by French Canadians from New England, as a way to maintain the French-English political balance in Canada. This concern was especially significant as, for many years, British immigration to Canada and French Canadian migration to the United States had tipped the balance in favour of the English.<sup>35</sup>



Copy of a lecture given by Father Gravel  
(National Archives of Canada, RG 84, A 2-3, vol. 1419, file HS10-147, part 2)



Copy of a pamphlet written by Father Gravel  
(Author's Collection)

Moreover, such settlement would contribute to *Gestae Dei per Francos*, or French-speaking Catholics' belief that God gave all people a mission; the French Canadians' mission was to spread Catholicism across the continent.<sup>36</sup> To attract Francophones to the West, they developed a system of missionary-colonizers where Catholic priests, at times paid by the government, toured and advertized for Francophone settlers.<sup>37</sup>

### Father Louis Pierre Gravel, Missionary Colonizer and Repatriation Agent

Father Louis Pierre Gravel was one missionary colonizer. He was born in August 1868, in Arthabaska, Quebec, to Dr. Louis-Joseph Gravel, the first medical doctor at *L'Hôtel Dieu d'Arthabaska*, and Jessie Bettez, the only daughter of another medical doctor. A privileged family, their friends included Sir Wilfrid Laurier, the future prime minister, and Joseph Lavergne.<sup>38</sup> Apparently a gifted student with leanings toward the church, Gravel entered college at Nicolet, Quebec, earning a bachelor's degree in 1888. He then pursued theological studies at the *Grand Séminaire de Montréal* and was ordained a priest in his hometown in 1892. Still, he began his

career in the parish of Saint John the Baptist, in Yonkers, New York. He served this parish for the next fourteen years, until 1906.<sup>39</sup>

He had apparently impressed Archbishop Adelard Langevin from the beginning of his sacerdotal career, as an energetic priest, who was potentially suited to missionary-colonization work. In 1905, the Archbishop was visited by another priest from southwestern Saskatchewan, Father Alphonse Lemieux of Willow Bunch. During the visit, they discussed the fertile land to the west of Lemieux's parish that, they determined, would make a good area for a Francophone colony.<sup>40</sup> With this area in mind, in 1906, Archbishop Langevin called Father Gravel to the colonization field, hoping that he would follow other missionary colonizers and attract French Canadians to return from the United States and take homesteads in western Canada.<sup>41</sup>

Father Gravel, apparently feeling he could do more for his people as a missionary-colonizer than as a priest in New York, accepted the call.<sup>42</sup> On Archbishop Langevin's recommendation, in February 1907, the Department of the Interior appointed him as an immigration agent.<sup>43</sup>



Gravel quickly placed advertisements in New England newspapers and soon travelled to New York, Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Massachusetts. He often reported 15 to 120 interviews a week. To this, he added conferences and public meetings at Manchester, New Hampshire and New York, and meetings with clergy.<sup>44</sup> Thus, in January 1908, he wrote of attendance of 800-1000 at a conference entitled, "Canada Its History Its Resources Its Development" in New York City. Another conference in New York City was called "Canada in the 20th Century."<sup>45</sup>

### **The Reaction of New England's Elite**

However, while these recruiting speeches described Canada's resources and economic prosperity, they did not specifically promote homesteading in southwestern Saskatchewan. This may have been related to Franco-American opposition to recruitment for western Canada. During the late 1800s and, it appears, through the first part of the 1900s, recruiters in New England met many who sought to undermine their efforts. Franco-American newspapers carried several articles about the cultural hostility their people would encounter if they moved to western Canada. They invoked, for example, the Manitoba and Northwest school questions and the loss of the right to use French in the courts. They contrasted this hostility with Franco-Americans' situation in New England, where, it was argued, their numbers, the American Constitution and the ease of frequent return visits to Quebec would protect their culture.<sup>46</sup> A few newspapers, despite often reporting on prairie harvests, cautioned readers against the land in western Canada. Markets were much too distant for profitable farms. Moreover, despite the seemingly large harvests, not everyone got ahead; some of their co-nationals had returned to the States poorer for their efforts.<sup>47</sup> Such articles also pointed out that recruiters, who made grandiose promises, were only interested in personal profits and had no concern for the well being of those they were leading to a 'desert'.<sup>48</sup> Franco-American clergymen and businesspeople were also opponents. They were interested in maintaining their congregations and clients. Likewise, American land companies and others who recruited for the remaining homesteads and recently opened reserve land in the Midwest and plains States worked against repatriation.<sup>49</sup>

Despite the opposition Father Gravel continued his efforts. His family's support of the Liberals, however, led to him being replaced in 1912, by Arthur Dubuisson, after the Conservatives came to power.<sup>50</sup>

Still, Gravel continued recruiting, though on a smaller scale, sometimes placing newspaper advertisements. He also repeatedly asked to be returned to his former position.<sup>51</sup> The Department of the Interior only reinstated him, as special colonization agent for the New England States in 1923, two years after voters returned the Liberals to power.<sup>52</sup> Opening a colonization office in Manchester, New Hampshire, he again gave conferences, distributed brochures, and conducted interviews. Often he encouraged those with relatives at Gravelbourg to repatriate.<sup>53</sup> Yet, at this time, the possibilities for recruitment were less favourable than they had been in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century: mill workers' salaries had doubled during the First World War. They remained in the \$20-\$25 a week range until the 1930s. With board at about \$7/week, living in the area was now far more affordable.<sup>54</sup>

### **Missionary-Colonization Work in Quebec**

Like many missionary colonizers, Father Gravel viewed Quebec as at least as promising as New England.<sup>55</sup> Thus, some of his earliest tours were in Quebec. After reporting for duty in March 1907, he waited at Montreal, "for free transportation to Plessisville, Arthabaska to induce young men going to Montana to settle in western Canada." Over the next years, he frequently travelled through Quebec. As in the United States, he conducted interviews, and advertized in a few newspapers.<sup>56</sup>

Yet here too, he, like other recruiters, faced many opponents. For years, Quebec's elite, the province's politicians, clergy and journalists, had regularly denounced moving to western Canada. They encouraged French Canadians to be humble and stay home, despite the meagre situation on many farms. If French Canadians wanted to move, they might consider a colonization area in Quebec. Moreover, although leaving Quebec was undesirable, some might choose northern Ontario, as French Canadians had already expanded there and it was adjacent to Quebec. This would allow them to retain their culture, even if they did not live in their home province or *patrie*. The West might also be considered but, at the turn of the century, the elite saw it as a distant third choice, because Francophones would face cultural persecution. This option, it was suggested, was only to be taken, as a last resort, before moving to New England. Still, articles and speeches, that denounced choosing the West, appeared less frequently during the first decade of the 1900s than during previous years. Quebec's relative prosperity during this period had cut emigration. More

certain that Quebeckers would opt to stay home, some of the elite even scoffed at western recruiters.<sup>57</sup>

Despite this opposition, like in New England, Father Gravel continued recruiting. In the end, it was ill health that forced him to restrict his activities. He passed away in 1926.<sup>58</sup>

### **Chain Migration to Gravelbourg**

Still, while Father Gravel attracted a few Francophones, like Philippe Michaud and his family, many appeared to come through the process of chain migration. Chain migration involves family and friends settling in a new area, then attracting friends and relatives to join them. Letters, and, at times, return visits and assistance with fares, also contributed to the establishment of migration chains. The result of this process is that in many localities settlers came from a few common areas and/or were related or acquainted.<sup>59</sup>

In Gravelbourg, where settlers' recent residences, differed significantly from where Father Gravel toured (figures 1 and 2), birthplaces, reminiscences, and the settlement pattern (figures 3 and 4) appeared as evidence of chain migration. Most of the priest's American tours were to the New York City area, with others to Providence, Rhode Island and Bridgeport, Connecticut. Most of his time in Quebec was spent in Montreal, St. Jean, Ottawa and Plessisville. Still, as shown in the maps of recent residences, very few settlers came from these areas. Franco-Americans from New England most often came from Holyoke; Father Gravel did not leave a record of a tour through Holyoke. Those from Quebec were often from Île-des-Allumettes or Napierville. Other common recent Canadian residences included Eau Claire, Ontario, Fannystelle and Elie, Manitoba and French settlements in southeast Saskatchewan, particularly Cantal. The concentrations of birthplaces at Weedon, Napierville and Île-des-Allumettes, Quebec, with direct moves from Napierville and Île-des-Allumettes, and both direct moves and moves in steps from Weedon to Cantal, then onward to Gravelbourg, also reflects the pattern of chain migration. Most who came from Weedon were related to those who stopped at Cantal. Moreover, several recollections of the move mentioned following family. The settlement pattern in the community, involving many clusters of family, friends and people from common recent residences (likely acquaintances) further suggested that chain migration was common. Still, despite this evidence of chain migration, not all came through family, friends

and acquaintances. Some settlers' letters showed that Father Gravel was involved.<sup>60</sup>

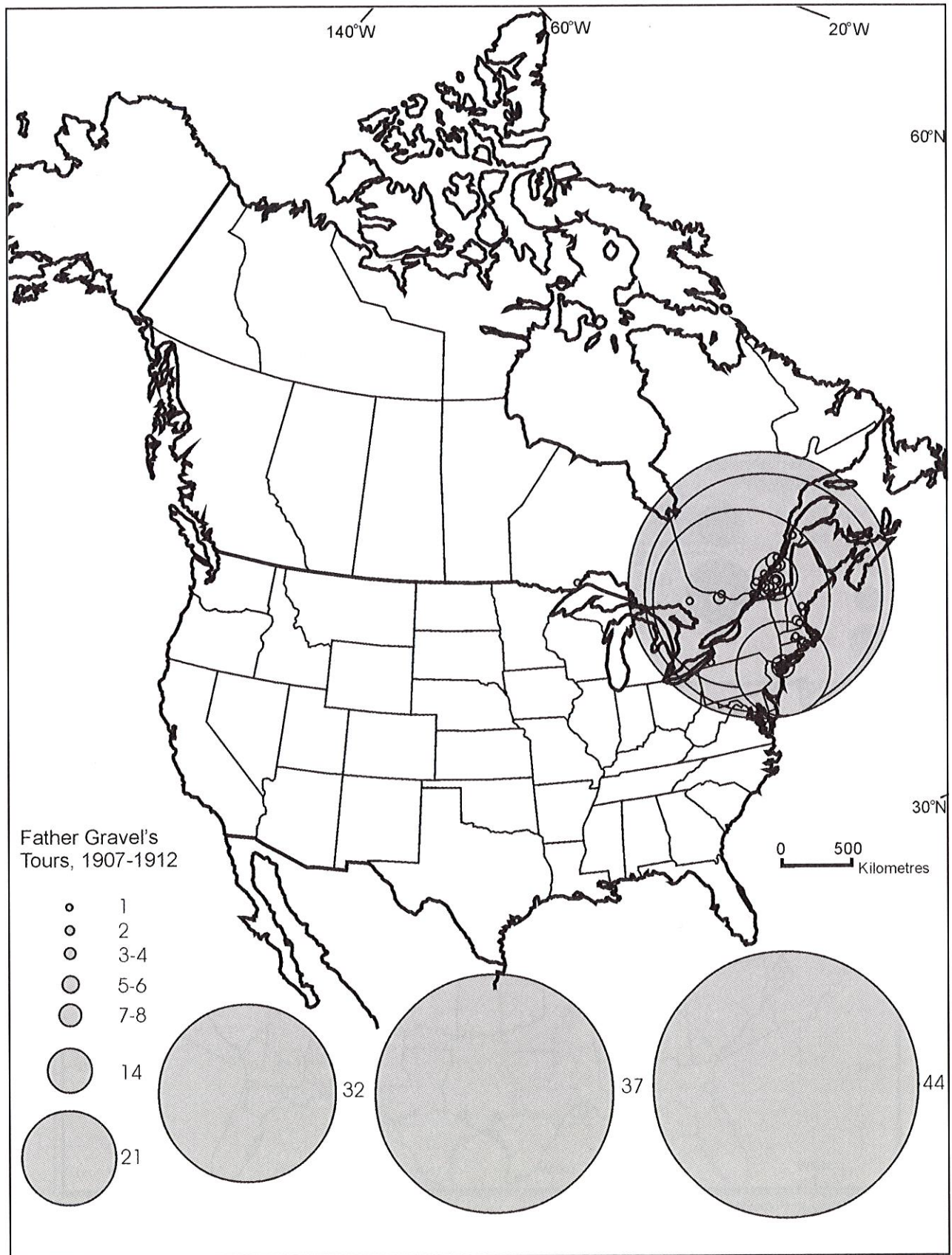
Moreover, there may have been factors other than Father Gravel and migration chains that influenced who settled at Gravelbourg. Many homesteaders from Quebec and New England shared characteristics that would have placed them at a disadvantage in New England. Many were young and single, married without children, or had young families. This demographic profile was common among prairie settlers. However, it may also have reflected the difficulties that French Canadians would have encountered surviving in New England at this time without children who were old enough to work and add to the family income.<sup>61</sup>

The affordability of moving west may also have been a selection factor. Farmers in Quebec generally produced less than their counterparts in Ontario: this has been taken as part of the explanation for why so few French Canadians moved west.<sup>62</sup> Furthermore, for those Québécois considering leaving their home parishes, moving west was considerably more expensive than moving to New England. In 1899, rail fare from Montreal to Edmonton was \$42.30 per person. By 1927, fares had increased, to \$46.45 per person, to travel to Winnipeg. By contrast, Québécois could travel to Maine for \$14.40, with their young children travelling free. But rail fares were not the only expenses in relocating to western Canada. It has been estimated that prospective settlers needed a minimum of \$300 to \$550 to start a homestead.<sup>63</sup> Thus, many settlers with families arrived from at least small, if not medium-sized farms, rather than from the smallest "subsistence" farms.<sup>64</sup> Because some of these homesteaders still had non-adult children, they may have been 'selected' according to whether they could afford to make the trip. On the other hand, some single farmers' sons who, at least at the turn of the century, did not own land, were able to make the trip and in some cases, their search for a farm appeared to start the families' move.<sup>65</sup> Yet, the potential of a 'selection' among Québécois, of those who would move, of where they moved, and of those who would stay behind, is further substantiated by other studies that have shown that Québécois with less land, particularly those who were subsistence farmers, were common among migrants to New England.<sup>66</sup>

### **Father Gravel's Further Involvement at Gravelbourg**

Despite the possibility that Father Gravel was less important in attracting migrants than some have

Figure 1: Location of Father Gravel's Tours



(Author's Collection)

Figure 2: Pre-Settlement Residences of Gravelbourg Homesteaders

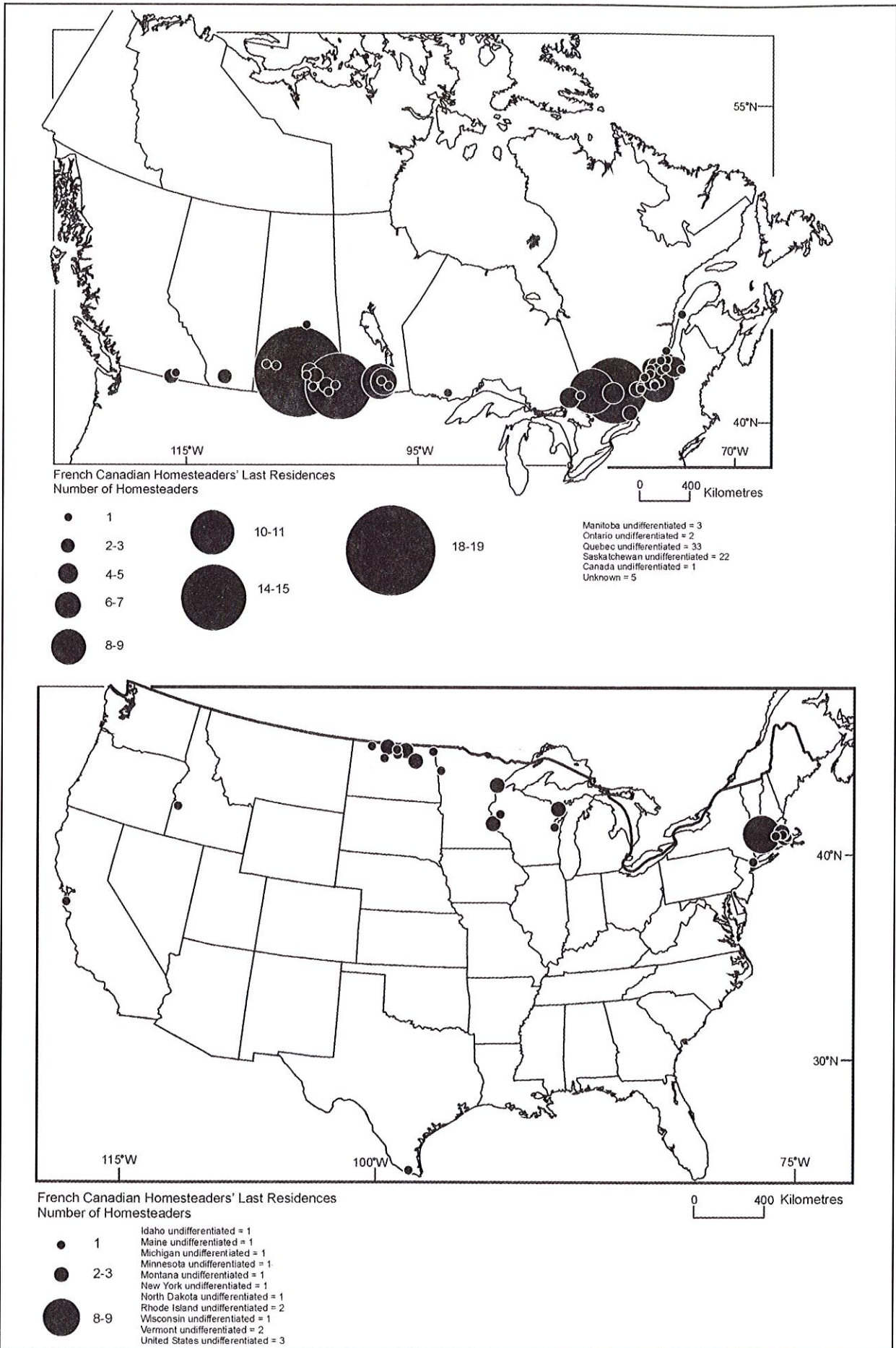


Figure 3: Birthplaces of Gravelbourg Homesteaders

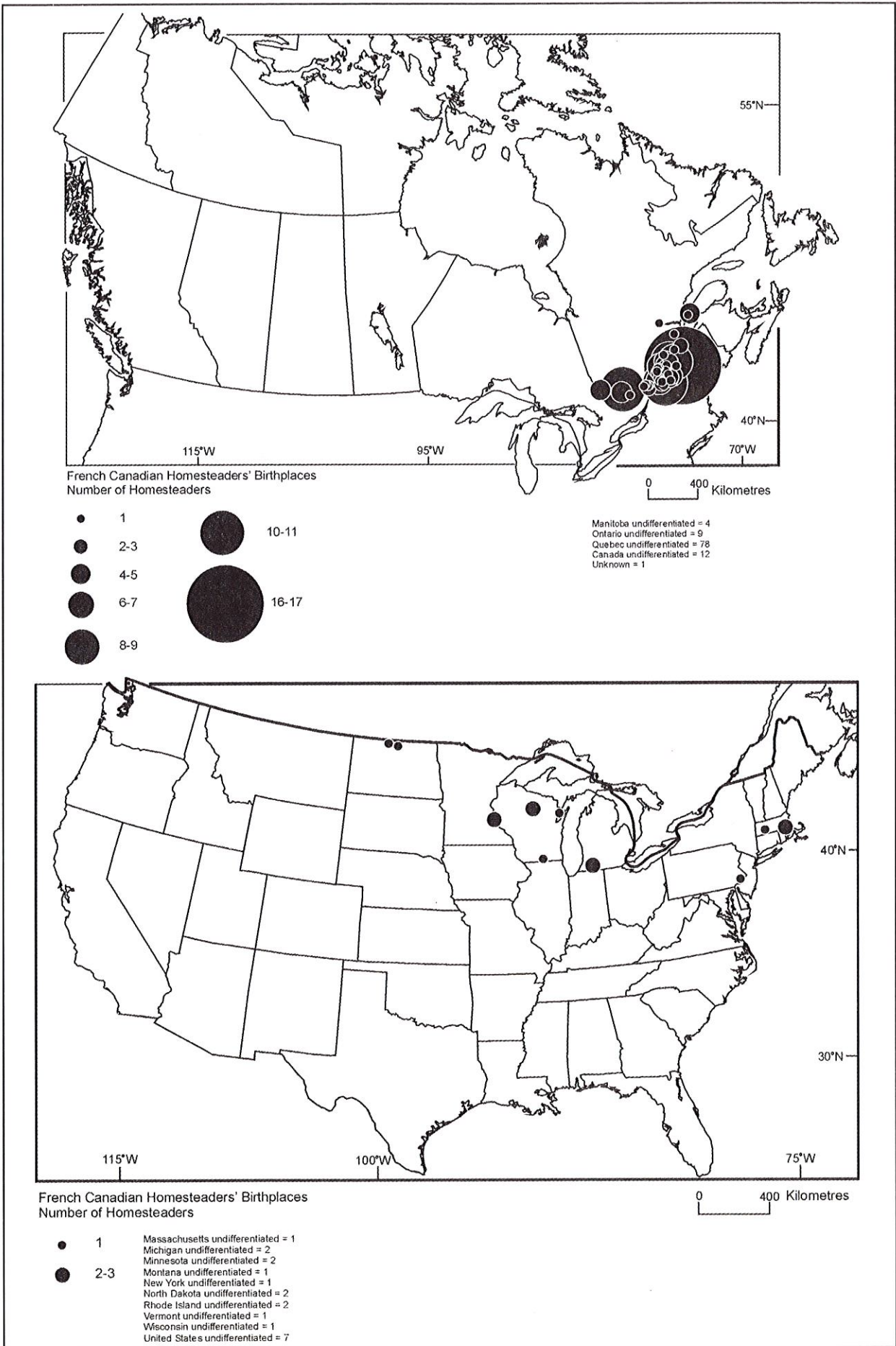
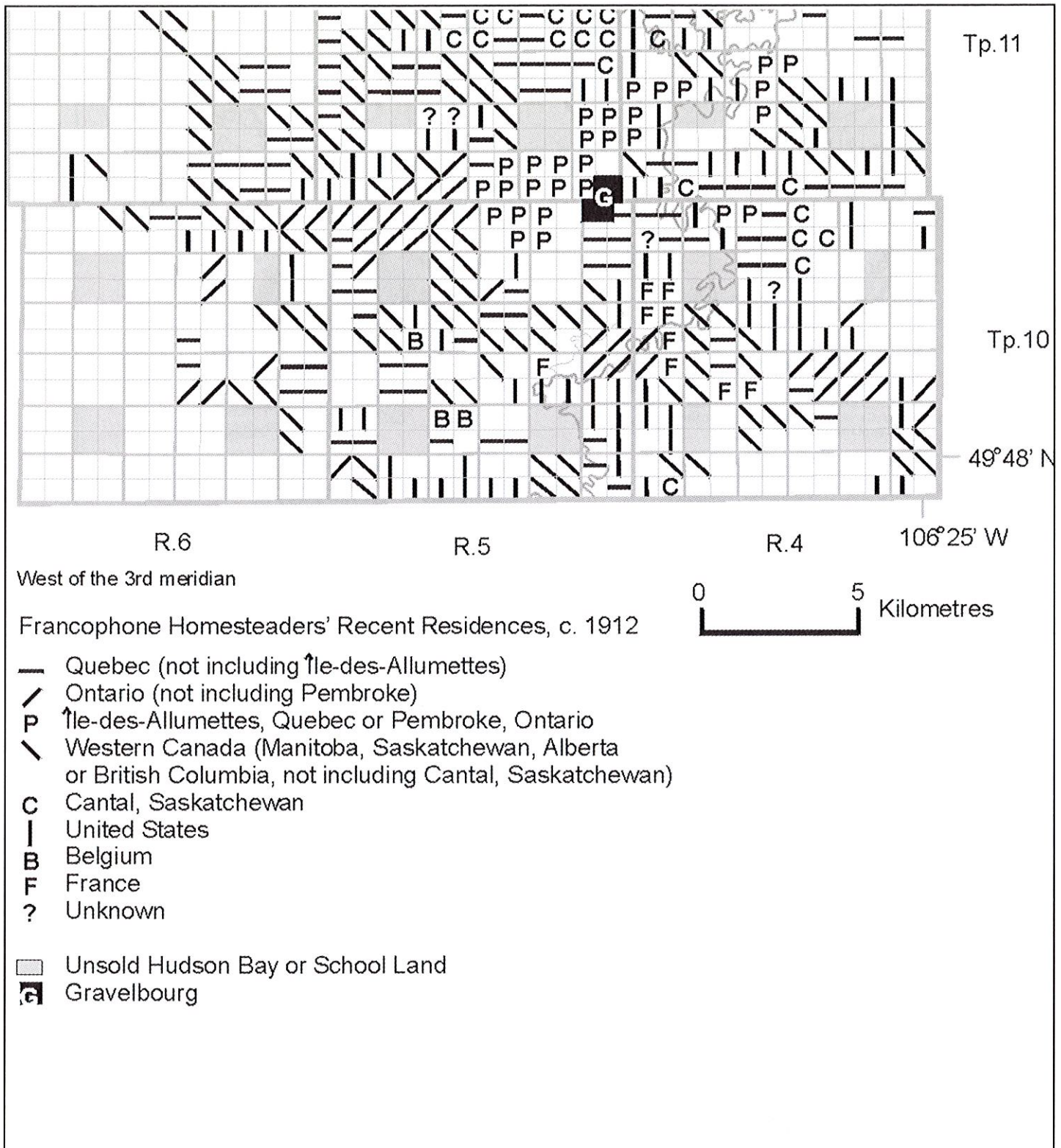


Figure 4: The Francophone Settlement Pattern at Gravelbourg, 1912



suggested, he was involved in the community's early settlement. Father Gravel first visited the Gravelbourg area in the summer or fall of 1906.<sup>67</sup> Still, he was not the first to arrive, and the initial settlers came independent of him. Edmond Gauthier was the first Francophone settler in the region. His family had migrated from Weedon, Quebec to Cantal, Saskatchewan. When he was old enough to take land, none remained at Cantal. So, he responded to Father Alphonse Lemieux's (previously the priest at Cantal) call to join him at Willow Bunch.<sup>68</sup> However, the hilly land at Willow Bunch disappointed him and a fellow traveller, Mr. Lepage. Yet the many Métis at Willow Bunch counselled them to move on, to *La Vieille* (now Wood River), a flat fertile area where the Métis hunted.<sup>69</sup> Directed by Alexander McGillis, a Métis man from Willow Bunch, in mid-May, Edmond Gauthier selected land, built a shack and erected a cross near the river; Mr. Lepage, on the other hand, appeared to leave.<sup>70</sup> Over the summer, Edmond Gauthier returned to Cantal, and travelled to Quebec and Massachusetts attracting several relatives who joined him at his colony of "Gauthierville."<sup>71</sup>

The Ross family also arrived in the Gravelbourg area before the colonizing priest. Originally from Rimouski, Quebec, though having lived for several years in Kingston, Ontario, they headed to Moose Jaw in 1905, seeking land. After wintering at Willow Bunch, they helped Father Passaplan, another priest resident in the area, move horses to Lake Pelletier. This took them past *La Vieille* River. Though they continued looking for land, near the 76 Ranch and the South Saskatchewan River, they concluded that the land at *La Vieille* was the best they had seen; they returned and settled on the horseshoe on the river. Antoine Ross first saw Edmond Gauthier and his group "off to the east," looking for stakes that marked the land they had claimed in June 1906.<sup>72</sup>

Father Marie Albert Royer also came that year, with a group of settlers from France. This priest had ambitions of establishing a colony of Auvergnats (settlers from the Auvergne region of France) and naming it to honour the Virgin Mary. While he considered various locations, especially in Algeria, an article by Father Gaire, a priest who was establishing settlements in southeast Saskatchewan, led him to western Canada. With a Frenchman, Jean Baptiste Brousse, he toured Alberta and northern Saskatchewan, searching for a wooded location that resembled his home country. Yet, the disadvantage of northern locations, that settlers would need to clear trees before they could start farming,

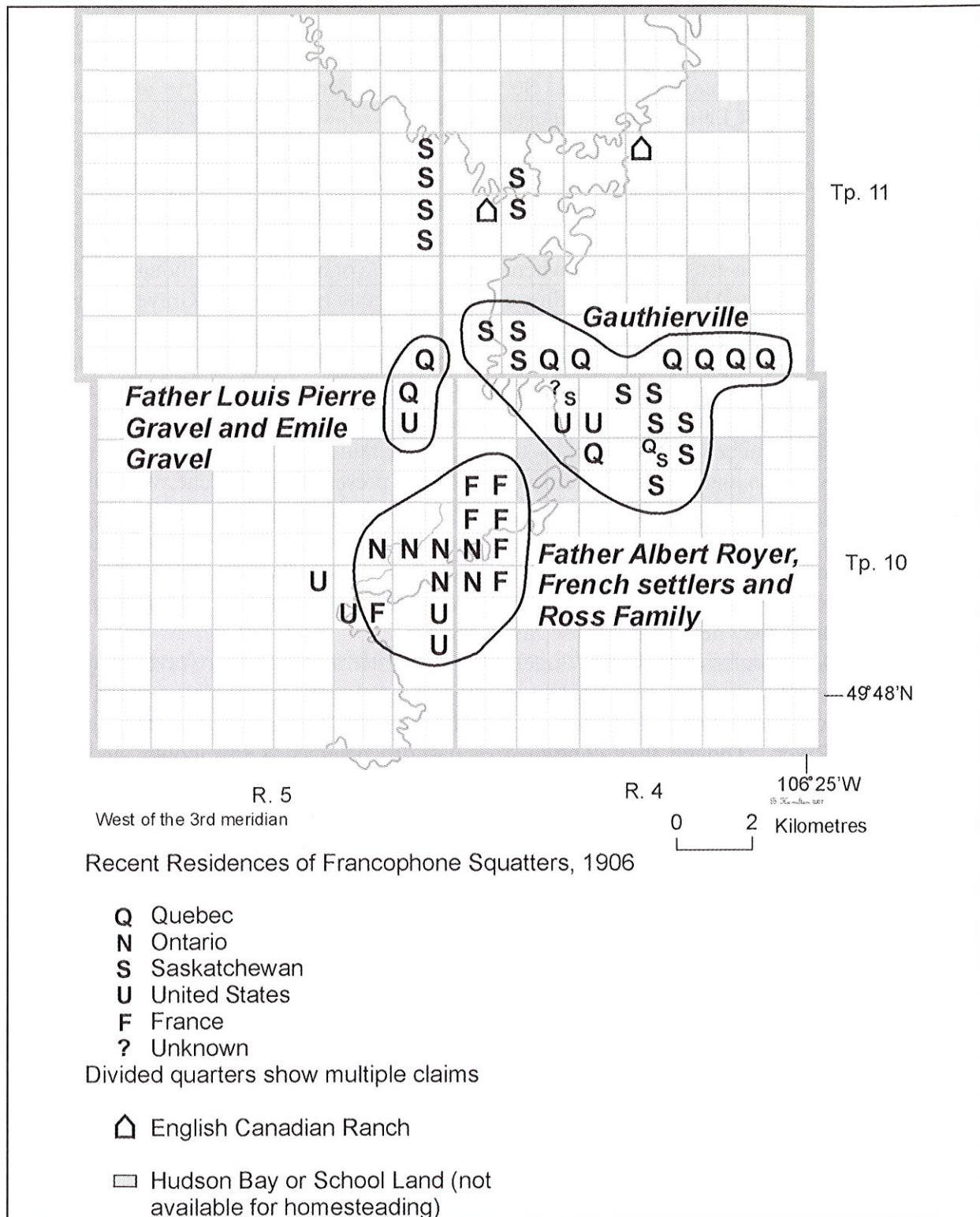
prompted him to return south. On arriving in Winnipeg, he met Thomas Gelley, an immigration agent, who told him of Edmond Gauthier's group that had headed to *La Vieille*. Since Mr. Gelley described a good area with some bush, as he had wanted, he informed Jean Baptiste Brousse. Mr. Brousse, along with a French newcomer, Louis Gallard, soon headed to claim land in the area, while Father Royer returned to France to recruit other settlers.<sup>73</sup>

Though he may have made an earlier trip, Father Gravel arrived in southwestern Saskatchewan, in September 1906, with his brother, Emile Gravel. He had Archbishop Langevin's permission to establish a parish at a location of his choosing, though the Archbishop had suggested that he select the Gravelbourg area. He was provided with additional information about the area to help him select a site, particularly a plan of a proposed railway route.<sup>74</sup> Father Gravel appears to have travelled to Gauthierville, then continued south to examine land along the railway. However, the land near the railway, north of present-day Lafleche, was hilly; this led him to choose a site near Gauthierville. Gauthierville had another advantage: the few non-Francophones in the area and a partially completed survey would allow Francophones to establish a large colony before others came.<sup>75</sup>

After selecting the Gravelbourg site, the priest began developing the colony. Aided by his family's influence with Wilfrid Laurier, Father Gravel established a post office named "Gravelbourg" and had his brother, Emile, named as the postmaster. He was also able to get assurances that the land in four townships, although he may have hoped for six townships, would be surveyed, but held off the market, rather than surveyed and immediately opened for settlement as planned, and as what was usually done in western Canada.<sup>76</sup>

Thus, during the winter of 1906-1907, Emile Gravel, who had remained in the community, recorded names of Francophones who wished to reserve land in the four townships. On Father Gravel's request, in December, the names were entered into the land register at the Moose Jaw lands office. The records suggest that by the end of the year, Francophones had reserved most of the land in the designated townships.<sup>77</sup> The pattern of reserved land, with clusters in township 11, range 5 and township 10, range 4, appeared to reflect Father Royer's continued involvement in the colony. Father Royer planned to build his church in the northern part of township 11, range 5 and assumed that Father Gravel would build his in the southern part of township 10,

Figure 5: The First Settlers at Gravelbourg





The image shows a historical land reservation map from 1906. It consists of a grid of numbered plots, likely representing land parcels. The plots are numbered from 1 to 36, arranged in a roughly rectangular pattern. Each plot contains handwritten text, including names and possibly descriptions of the land or its status. The names are written in cursive and include various surnames and first names. The map is titled "Land Reserved in the Gravelbourg Area, circa December 1906" and includes a source reference at the bottom: "Source: N.A.C., R.G. 15, D-II-1, vol. 994, file 1318110".

Land Reserved in the Gravelbourg Area, circa December 1906  
(National Archives of Canada, R.G. 15, D-II-1, Vol. 994, File 1318110)

range 4.<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, despite reserving land, very few Francophones appeared to winter at Gravelbourg. The *Codex Historicus* notes that many who had been in the region returned home for the winter.<sup>79</sup>

The winter was hard and spring came late in 1907. A group of settlers arrived in Moose Jaw in April, but they were detained by cold weather and poor roads.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, Wood River flooded that spring causing many along the river to lose homes and cattle.<sup>81</sup> By summer 1907, few Francophones remained in the area. Many of those whose names were recorded in 1906 and many of those who came in the spring appear to have left. Father Royer wrote of those who remained: most were part of the initial group attracted by Edmond Gauthier. They lived on the east side of the river. The west side was nearly deserted, with only Mr. DeCouesbouc, Emile Gravel and a few Frenchmen brought by Father Royer.<sup>82</sup>

Sources about the colony are limited for the next year and a half. In March 1908, C.F. Miles, a surveyor who passed through the area, wrote about a large colony of French Canadians at Wood River, and few other settlers in the region.<sup>83</sup> In mid-1908, when squatters made claims, much of the land had again been taken by

Francophones, though not those who had reserved the land.<sup>84</sup> The lack of source material was unfortunate, as this appeared to be the period when Father Gravel and his brother may have further influenced settlement in the colony. Thus it is difficult to confirm or deny allegations that they influenced who came to or left the colony.

Father Gravel's and Father Royer's desires to found colonies at the same location also came into conflict at this time. When Archbishop Adelard Langevin first visited the region in the spring of 1907, he either reminded Father Royer of earlier instructions to avoid Father Gravel's chosen location, or offered him a position as vicar in Father Gravel's church. However, since Father Royer wanted to form a colony of Auvergnats and Father Gravel was establishing a French Canadian colony and because Father Gravel's new choice of church location meant that less than ten miles would separate the churches, as the Archbishop required, Father Royer determined to relocate. Within the year, he led French settlers to a new location, now Ponteix.<sup>85</sup>

Edmond Gauthier also left the colony disappointed. He hoped the church would be built on

32-10-4-3, his land, and the centre of Gauthierville.<sup>86</sup> On the other hand, the Gravels wanted the church built on their land.<sup>87</sup> However, while Edmond Gauthier and some of his supporters had temporarily left the region, in 1907, parishioners decided to locate the church on Emile Gravel's land. This decision divided the colony. Edmond Gauthier, and others from Cantal, soon wrote the Archbishop and requested a second chapel on Mr. Gauthier's land. The disappointing response, that this would be too close to Father Gravel's church, contributed to Edmond Gauthier's decision to leave.<sup>88</sup>

Father Gravel's influence on the colony did not end after the land was opened for homestead entry. He continued to attempt to expand the colony and to acquire additional services. He had his other brothers, Alphonse and Joseph Gravel, placed as immigration agents and interpreters in Mortlach and Moose Jaw. From these locations, they directed French-speaking settlers to Francophone colonies in southwestern Saskatchewan.<sup>89</sup> The Department of the Interior also appointed French-speaking subagents of Dominion Lands at Gravelbourg: Alphonse Dorais in 1910, and André Nassans in 1912.<sup>90</sup> Father Gravel's influence further contributed to the appointing of Emile Gravel and Alphonse Legros as land guides to help Francophones choose land – though how much this service affected settlement is unknown; from reminiscences its effect appears limited.<sup>91</sup> Finally, Gravel's hoped for immigration hall, a more permanent shelter for settlers, was also built and maintained, until about 1918.<sup>92</sup>

Moreover, Father Gravel contributed to the bringing of rail services to the community. Initially railway companies did not plan to build through Gravelbourg.<sup>93</sup> Yet a petition signed by area settlers in 1909, an appearance by Father Gravel before the Railway Commission in Ottawa in 1910 and the taking of Mr. Burns, the Canadian National Railway's locating engineer, through his colony,<sup>94</sup> likely contributed to the C.N.R. building a branch line from Moose Jaw in 1913.<sup>95</sup> He also sought to have the Canadian Pacific change its route to pass through Gravelbourg rather than Lafleche. Gravel wrote a letter to William White, president of the C.P.R., and attempted to influence the area's Member of Parliament to present a proposal in favour of the C.P.R. passing through the town of Gravelbourg.<sup>96</sup> Still, the Canadian Pacific stuck to its plan and built through Lafleche, rather than Gravelbourg.<sup>97</sup>

Father Gravel also clearly contributed to the religious and cultural well-being of the colony. Shortly after choosing a site for his colony at Wood River, he

had a tent erected as a temporary church, the first in the area.<sup>98</sup> Other structures, most notably the cathedral that remains at Gravelbourg today, followed. A school was built in the town by 1910 and others followed in the surrounding rural area. Father Gravel's efforts ensured that Gravelbourg would be the site of a number of additional educational establishments. His influence contributed to the arrival, in 1915, of the Sisters of Jesus-Marie de Sillery, to teach in the convent. The Missionnaires Oblates du Sacré Coeur et de Marie Immaculée arrived later, in 1918, to teach younger boys. Collège Mathieu was founded that same year, to educate a Francophone elite that would defend the group's religious and national objectives.<sup>99</sup>

Finally, an important question is how much of Gravelbourg's development would have occurred similarly without the priest? Father Gravel attracted some settlers. However, a colony, based on chain migration through the Gauthier group, and other early settlers, clearly would have formed without him. As the first-comers who reserved land left, this aspect of the Francophone "reserve" little changed the colony. On the other hand, holding the land off the market, and publicizing it, likely allowed and encouraged Francophone settlement. This helped the development of a large group of Francophones in the area. However, it did not fully discourage others from coming, as a few non-Francophones squatted in the northern portion of the reserved townships. Finally, Father Gravel's contributions to the attracting of a railway, and establishing of education facilities would have made the community more attractive to Francophones.

To a great degree this research has seconded others' such as Lalonde's,<sup>100</sup> in suggesting that Francophones made practical and feasible decisions, influenced by various factors when they chose to move west or to another area, like New England. They did not simply follow the priests' exhortations. Some clearly considered recruiters' advertisements. But, many others were influenced by relatives and acquaintances. Those whom they knew provided what seemed to be reliable information about the practicality of moving and the opportunities for getting ahead in an area that they knew little about.<sup>101</sup>

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  77. N.A.C., R.G. 15, Series D-II-1, vol. 994, file 1318110, Title page; P.G. Keyes to Thomas Gelley, 28 December 1906.
  78. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 259, p. 493, A. Royer to Monsieur [Emile Gravel or Father Louis Pierre Gravel?], 14 July 1907.
  79. S.A.B. "Historicus de la paroisse de Saint-Philomène de Gravelbourg" (n.d.), 5, 12.
  80. N.A.C., R.G. 76, vol. 408, file 595025, part 1, Father Gravel's report for the week ending 28 April 1907.
  81. N.A.C., R.G. 76, vol. 408, file 595025, part 1, Father Gravel's report for the week ending 28 April 1907; St. Stephen, "Father Gravel," 107-109; Gravelbourg Historical Society, *Heritage Gravelbourg*, 533-534.
  82. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 259, p.493-494, A. Royer to Monsieur, 14 July 1907.
  83. S.A.B., Department of the Interior Dominion Lands Survey Files, R.183, file I.342, Report of C.F. Miles to E. Deville, March 1908.
  84. S.A.B., Homestead Files.
  85. S.A.B., A. Royer, "Le Récit", n.p.; G. Hébert, *Les Débuts de Gravelbourg*, 19; B. Wilhelm, "Le Pot de terre contre le pot de fer: La Lutte entre Notre Dame d'Auvergne et Gravelbourg," in J.G. Quenneville, ed., *À la mesure du pays... Les Actes du dixième colloque du Centre d'études franco-canadiennes de l'Ouest tenu au collège Saint-Thomas More Université de la Saskatchewan les 12 et 13 octobre 1990* (Saskatoon: Unité de recherches pour les études canadiennes-françaises Collège Saint Thomas More et le Département de français Université de la Saskatchewan, 1990), 129.
  86. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 259, p.493, A. Royer to Monsieur, 14 July 1907.
  87. S.A.B., A. Royer, "Le récit", n.p.
  88. Un Ancien, "En Marge des fêtes," 36-37; *Le Patriote de L'Ouest*, 7 January 1920; S.A.B., E. Auclair, "Histoire d'une paroisse," 63; G. Hébert, *Les Débuts de Gravelbourg*, 19; S.A.B., taped interview R-A1370; Claudette Gendron collection, taped interview R-5226.
  89. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 281, p. 868, Alphonse Gravel to Bruce Walker, 15 July 1909.
  90. N.A.C., R.G. 15, Series D-II-1, vol. 1070, file 2120360, Appointment of Alphonse Dorais, 28 November 1910; Appointment of André Nassans, 1 April 1912.
  91. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 246, p.1296, J. Bois to L.P. Gravel, 26 November 1909; F.F.G. File 281, p. 864, Office of the Commissioner of Immigration to L.P. Gravel, 21 July 1908. However, few recollections were located of settlers who used a land guide.
  92. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 350, p. 1544, F.C. Minusey [?] to L.P. Gravel, 13 February 1918.
  93. The Dominion surveyors' field notebooks show the Canadian Pacific's planned route through Lafleche and Meyronne. There was no indication of railway plans at Gravelbourg. Saskatchewan Information Services Corporation, Surveyor Field Notebooks, 10003, 10004, 10005, 10006, 10236, 10241, 10242.
  94. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 353, p. 1595, Letter to Mr. Thompson, 27 July 1909; F.F.G. File 353, p. 1596, Alphonse Gravel to Emile Gravel, 28 July 1909; F.F.G. File 353, p.1597-1598, L.P. Gravel to S. Porter, 30 November 1909; S.A.S.B., F.L. L-41168 to L-41169, L.P. Gravel to A. Langevin, 26 November 1910; S.A.S.B., F.L. L-41192, Report of L.P. Gravel to W.D. Scott, 4 March 1911.
  95. S.A.B. Map B10/14, B10/15, B10/16, E. Drake, "Railway Steel Laid in Saskatchewan."
  96. S.A.B., F.F.G. File 353, p. 1602-1604, L.P. Gravel to Mr. Knowles, 1 December 1910; S.H.S.B., F.L. L-41196 to L-41198, L.P. Gravel to William White, 24 March 1911.
  97. S.A.B. Map B10/14, E. Drake, "Railway Steel Laid in Saskatchewan."
  98. St. Stephen, "Father Gravel," 108.
  99. The rural schools were: L'École Aussant (1909), L'École Gauthier (1909), L'École Piché (1910), L'École Pelletier (1912), L'École Lefort (1912), L'École High Region (1913). Anonymous, "Gravelbourg centre culturel canadienne française," *Vie française*, 10, no. 4 (1955): pp. 86-87; L. Tessier, "La Vie culturel dans deux localités d'expression française du diocèse de Gravelbourg" (M.A. Thesis, University of Regina, 1974), 33-36; Gravelbourg Historical Society, *Heritage Gravelbourg*, 36; R. Lapointe, *100 Noms*, 199.
  100. Lalonde, "L'Intelligentsia du Québec," 184-185.
  101. Limited knowledge of the area, a given with the settlers' situation, is clearly conveyed in many of the letters written to Father Gravel. S.A.B. F.F.G.

# The Saskatoon Quakers: The Rise and Fall of Community Hockey Heroes

by Lynn Perras

In the prairie city of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, hockey has always been a unifying and defining component of the community's culture and identity. Even before its incorporation as a city in 1906, with a population of 4500, local residents organized teams to play and received a great deal of support from both players and fans. One of the most notable senior hockey teams was the Saskatoon Quakers and many interesting and sometimes surprising changes have occurred throughout its history, in both the composition and popularity of the team. The Quakers have progressed from the highly respected position of 1934 World Hockey champions to relative obscurity and insignificance in the early 1970s, when hometown crowds drew minimal attendance. From a historical and cultural studies perspective, this article will trace the devolution of the Saskatoon Quakers from the early 1930s until the 1970s, focusing upon how the team helped to solidify local identity in the early years, and how its status as a community icon gradually declined as Saskatoon developed and progressed.

Marshall McLuhan has said, "Rocket Richard, the Canadian hockey player, used to comment on the poor acoustics of some arenas. [In the best arenas] [he] felt that the puck off his stick rode on the roar of the crowd. Sport, as a popular art form, is not just self-expression but is deeply and necessarily a means of interplay within an entire culture."<sup>1</sup> Here McLuhan reflects on the necessity of the spectator as well as the activity, noting that the relationship between them is what creates and sustains the phenomenon. He also alludes to each being an essential component of the success of a sport. It is this interplay within a culture that can be observed in the downward spiral of the Saskatoon Quakers senior hockey team. A multitude of cultural factors, each dependent upon one another, worked to change the perception of and reception to the Quakers from that of cherished heroes to ignored athletes whose prime had long passed. The team which was once referred to by a Berlin newspaper as a group that became a "mark of quality" that was "recognized

beyond the frontiers of the town and the whole country"<sup>2</sup> ultimately became a team about whom a sportswriter commented: "Nothing, not even penicillin, was going to save the Quakers...may they rest in peace."<sup>3</sup>

The love of hockey in Canada has always been strong, but perhaps even more so in cold and desolate Saskatchewan. In *Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada*, authors Ken Dryden and Roy MacGregor write that the "search for solidarity and entertainment [explains] a lot about prairie people's fascination with hockey.... Hockey, in particular, became a winter passion for both players and watchers. It kept coffee row humming. It was, for many, a means of off-season fitness for the rigours of farming, the driving force behind the building of community centers, the way in which widely separate communities connected with each other."<sup>4</sup>

That the Quakers became part of this passion is not surprising then and the vibrant early beginnings of the team suggested an illustrious and sustaining tenure. The team name of "Quakers" originated in 1910 when J.F. Cairns offered wholesome Quaker boys—those who neither smoked nor drank—positions on his professional baseball team. The name, however, soon became associated with the Quaker Oats Company who took over a flour mill in Saskatoon in 1912. Until the Mill closed in 1972, Quaker Oats sponsored many community and sports events, so for most of its history, including hockey, fans of the Quakers associated the team name with the mill rather than the religious affiliation.

The Quakers hockey team came into existence in 1929, when a group of players wanted to enter the Northern Independent Senior Hockey League to play

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against teams in neighboring towns. Despite the lack of support from Saskatoon's wealthier citizens, the interested players persevered and managed to secure funding, a New York Ranger scout as their manager, as well as several prominent figures as their secretary-treasurer, vice-presidents, and honorary vice-presidents. The Quakers won the Northern League title in 1929 and went on that same year to win the Saskatchewan senior crown. Playing for a chance to compete for the coveted Allan Cup, senior amateur hockey's most coveted trophy, they lost to Trail, B.C. in 1930.

It was during the 1930s that the Saskatoon Quakers experienced their greatest glory. Describing the team, Saskatchewan businessman and hockey scout Hub Bishop wrote that in these years, the Quakers "covered themselves in glory and their achievements have won them fame and renown throughout not only the length and breadth of Canada but also in every other known country in the world where hockey is played."<sup>5</sup> In 1933, the team again won the Saskatchewan senior crown, and met the Moncton Hawks in the final series leading towards the Allan Cup. Even in the preliminary rounds, the team showed tremendous energy and garnered a great deal of community support. The local newspaper, the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, celebrated the Quaker victory in 1933 with the beginning line, "Hail the Saskatoon Quakers!"<sup>6</sup> In a special report on the game in which Saskatoon was to win a spot to play for the Western Canada finals, the *Star-Phoenix* used superlatives such as "sensational," "deserving," "brilliant," and "polished" to describe the hometown heroes; in fact, about center Cooney Wood it was said, "He stood out like the Statue of Liberty as the Quaker hero."<sup>7</sup> After the Quakers moved on to play for the Allan Cup against Moncton, the response from Saskatonians was overwhelming, and continued to be so even after the team's subsequent loss to this eastern team.

The kind of welcome that the Quakers received on their return to Saskatoon after the Allan Cup attests to the support and affection the community offered. The headlines in the April 15, 1933 edition of the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* read: "Enthusiasm Reaches Great Heights as Saskatoon Representatives in Allan Cup Finals Arrive Back in City: Over 5000 Present."<sup>8</sup> In a city populated by only approximately 42,000 people, this number was impressive. Team members and officials returned to Saskatoon by train, and all accounts revealed a raucous and thrilling reception: "The Quakers came home Good Friday morning and all Saskatoon heard the cheering. At least 5,000 throats sent up a mighty shout that

seemed to reverberate from Idylwyld to Caswell Hill," local neighbourhoods in the city.<sup>9</sup> As the train carrying the team rolled into town, the Saskatoon Light Infantry band played "For They are Jolly Good Fellows," as local police tried to keep the boisterous crowds in check. A parade through downtown streets carrying the players took place shortly after. The newspaper recorded both the scene and the atmosphere:

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City officials and dignitaries offered congratulations on behalf of Saskatoon and the province as a whole. The mayor, J.S. Mills, called the Quakers "the team that has made Saskatoon famous all over Canada."<sup>11</sup> J.S. Woodward, president of the Saskatoon Board of Trade and managing editor of the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* was no less effusive in his praise, recalling the "magnificent way the team never quit fighting," and he congratulated the players for upholding the best traditions of Saskatoon.<sup>12</sup> Although Woodward observed that the city was nervous listening to the series on the radio, the fans were consoled because they knew that the team "was working every minute; and Jack Hamilton, past president of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association, continued the accolades, noting, "at no time was the city or province represented more truly by the spirit of sportsmanship than by the Quakers."<sup>13</sup> Not only did Saskatoon's civic pride increase, the community also enjoyed a respite from the bitter weather and devastating economic conditions of

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the Depression. As Bruce Kidd has noted: "In a land so inescapably and inhospitably cold, hockey is the dance of life, an affirmation that despite the deadly chill of winter we are alive."<sup>14</sup>

The drive to excel on the part of the Saskatoon Quakers and the unwavering support they received at every turn continued in 1933 even after they returned from the Allan Cup finals. All accounts indicate that as a group, the players and their managers embodied teamwork, dedication and a single-minded pursuit of success on the ice. That these principles were so evident, translated into support and admiration on the part of their many fans, be they business owners, city officials, or ordinary citizens appreciative of a strong and energetic team for which to cheer, particularly in the throes of a Depression. Ultimately it was this culture of drive and support within and from outside the team that encouraged its manager, Johnny Walker, and several players to approach the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association requesting that the Quakers play at the International World Amateur Championship in Milano, Italy since Moncton had relinquished its rightful spot citing financial difficulties brought on by the Depression. The CAHA agreed to allow the Quakers to go, however, it offered no financial support. Walker asked Quaker Oats if it would become the

team's sponsor. The team received \$400 and team jerseys emblazoned with the little Quaker Oats man and the group headed for Europe. Walker remembered the trip: "To pay our expenses, we started in Prince Albert and played games all across Canada traveling on CPR sleepers. I paid them from the gates."<sup>15</sup> Playing in eight countries, the Quakers won thirty-six games, lost two, and tied one. They won the championship over the U.S. with a 2-1 finish.

The team won the provincial crown in 1938-39 and in 1941-42. The war effort took many of the players away from Saskatoon, and until 1945, only a junior Quakers (albeit a very successful) team existed. The Western Canada Hockey League, formed in 1945 after the war, helped to re-establish senior hockey in the city and the newly formed "Elks" changed to the "Quakers" once more. The league itself did well, winning two Allan Cups. In 1951, the Quakers switched to the professional Pacific Coast Hockey League, playing against teams from Seattle, Tacoma, Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, Calgary, and Edmonton, and ultimately winning the League championship. Cam McKenzie in the *Star-Phoenix* wrote that the team gave Saskatoon "much excellent entertainment and publicity, and wherever they went they always played the game for all it was worth, proved themselves good sports and



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*A crowd greets the Saskatoon Quakers on their return from Winnipeg,  
April 6th, 1962.*

goodwill ambassadors of the highest standard.”<sup>16</sup> The PCHL became the Western Hockey League, and the Quakers remained in this league until 1956. In 1959-60, the amateur Quakers became a part of the Saskatchewan Senior League, which was to later evolve into the Western Canada Senior Hockey League. Even in these years, with rapidly changing leagues and managers, the Quakers remained a strong team, attracting supportive crowds and even touring Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Sweden playing popular exhibition games.

It was in the late 60s and early 70s that many problems—which had been only minor or occasional in earlier years, escalated into the major difficulties that finally destroyed the Senior Quakers whose last league was the Prairie Hockey League. John Cherneski, sports writer for the *Star-Phoenix*, argued in 1970 that the Quakers were problematic both on and off the ice. In an article entitled “Quaker optimism necessary,” Cherneski suggested that behind-the-scenes conflicts and childish attitudes were hindering the team’s progress. Allowing for obvious interfering factors such as job commitments, injuries, and routine illness, Cherneski hinted at undisciplined play and contempt for the coaching staff as part of the problem:

Let’s face it. Penalties hurt. And misconducts for mouthing off to a referee hurt the most. There isn’t a cheaper penalty to be taken today by a hockey player. Teachers used to threaten kids who talked too much in school with the use of tape on the mouths. Perhaps coach [Don] Wilson would be interested in some extra-strong binding for some of his charges. If the problems aren’t external, then could they be internal? But you never find internal strife on a hockey team. It’s worded differently. Everybody today calls it dissension.... I am not saying that there are individuals of this sort affiliated with the Quakers, but on occasion I have had the opportunity to see where disrespect has been shown from an individual on the team to the coach.... Thus attitude is a problem, but I hope it’s not one with the Quakers. They’re a little too old to be experiencing the problems of the minor hockey leagues.<sup>17</sup>

Cherneski was not the only one to perceive immaturity within the ranks. Merv Unger, manager

of the team, sent out memos to the players prior to road trips, beginning with the reminder, “You are all adults.”<sup>18</sup> The rest of the communication focused on the need for the team to concentrate more on rest and healthy living and less on enjoying themselves off the ice. There were off-ice antics even between periods during home games. If a player had to leave the ice because of a minor injury and rest in the dressing room, it provided the opportunity for the trainer and the player to play the occasional trick on the young female program sellers who worked for the Quakers. One included trying to shock the girls by calling them into the dressing room on the pretext of a tour and then surprising with the injured player standing completely undressed inside. Players who lived several miles out of town often quit the team, saying that the drives to practices and games from home were too long; that the times of the drives were only an hour or so strongly indicates that dedication to the team was dwindling.

Attendance at home games, nonetheless, remained relatively strong, the team sometimes even drew up to 2500 fans. Although the Quakers were eliminated early in the play-offs, they finished first overall in the standings of the Saskatchewan Senior Hockey League. Merv Unger attempted to generate more interest in the team in 1970 by holding various events including Kids’ Night—an event that saw the Quakers give away hockey equipment to young players and free admittance to those fourteen and under accompanied by an adult. In an attempt to attract female attendees, Unger also created the Mrs. or Miss Quaker contest that involved draws and presents for the winners. A lack of sincere interest in the game on the part of the players and changes in management and coaching staff notwithstanding, the team continued.

Ironically, it was a former Quaker owner and his Saskatoon team, the Junior Blades, that contributed to the further deterioration of the Quakers. Jim Piggott, who had owned the team when it was in the Western Hockey League, brought the junior franchise to the city in 1964. The Blades had come to Saskatoon because Piggott wanted a junior team in his home town. The Blades were not strong contenders in the first few years of operation; in fact, they finished no higher than fifth place among eight teams from 1964-1969. After 1969, however, Jack McLeod (interestingly, someone else with a Quaker history: he played for the Quakers in 1962-63 when they toured Europe) was brought in to buoy up the Blades. Through McLeod’s efforts, the Blades



Two young "rink rats" watching the Saskatoon Quakers play the Mouse Jaw Pla-Mors, October 24th, 1964.

improved their play and increased their profile within the community. The Blades Booster Club was formed, which sponsored juvenile hockey around the city. As the Blades became more popular, the team's management also began creating and selling banners, pucks, and other souvenirs bearing Blade logos. In retrospect, it is easy to understand the appeal of the Blades: they were young, strong, and many had serious dreams of playing in the N.H.L. In the early seventies, Saskatoon was home to approximately 126,000 people, many of whom were baby boomers either interested in playing hockey themselves or watching and cheering for their own age group on the ice. Saskatoon was beginning to modernize, and sitting in the cold and dingy Arena (where both the Quakers and Blades played their home games) was less than pleasant even for the most diehard of fans; what they did watch had to be exciting and fast-paced. The fans recognized, too, that by watching the Blades, they might also be watching future N.H.L.ers. The Blades, increasingly more so than the Quakers, provided a high caliber of entertainment and attendance often reached over three thousand.

By contrast, the 1971-72 season proved catastrophic for the Quakers. As *Star-Phoenix* sportswriter Bob Strumm noted, "This season was certainly a one-way proposition from start to finish—downhill. Attendance declined; player interest declined; financial resources declined."<sup>19</sup> Even the future of the Prairie Hockey League itself appeared shaky. It was action in the stands rather than on the ice that sometimes elicited the most crowd reaction. During a particularly abysmally attended game, two middle-aged spectators (one of whom was a former local hockey player and part of a large, well-known Saskatoon hockey family) carried on a spirited conversation from opposite ends of the rink. Indulging in humorous banter and exchanging good-natured barbs, the men drew hearty laughs as the lackadaisical hockey game below was largely ignored. In another game, the sparse crowd was entertained by a goalie from the opposing team. The Quakers were on their way to a decisive win, and the visiting goaltender was getting little support from his teammates. In frustration and disgust, the goalie finally gave up trying to stop the Quaker shots and began moving out of the

way to allow the Quakers to score. At some points he even gestured to the Quaker to indicate the whereabouts of the easiest shot. Although funny and entertaining for the fans, both incidents highlight the lack of commitment towards the game from both the public and the league.

This precarious Prairie League showed even more signs of weakness in January 1972. Despite the fact that the Quakers were playing well and had acquired some younger players to revitalize the team, the financial situations of the League's teams in general could not be ignored. The Calgary team pulled out of the league because of significant debt, leaving only four teams. After an emergency meeting, the manager of the Quakers, Bob Stayner, announced that his team would also withdraw, noting, "We felt that Saskatoon would not accept a four-team league...and with the financial problems we were encountering through lack of fan interest we felt forced to make the decision."<sup>20</sup> Sportswriter Jack Cook blamed part of the problem on a lack of good players; he observed that as the N.H.L. expanded, there were more lucrative teams for which to play.<sup>21</sup> A quality player would thus be attracted to the expansion teams rather than the Quakers. The creation of the World Hockey Association, which was to begin play in fall 1972, also made senior hockey on the prairies less attractive to fans.

Despite all these factors, the team and its supporters did not go down easily. The Quakers approached the Saskatoon City Council for credit on their arena costs and were well-received. The public response was also heartening, and the *Star-Phoenix* reported that if it printed all the protests about the team's withdrawal, "it would make the Quakers feel like they were the only hockey team in the world...[R]est assured that many people are genuinely concerned."<sup>22</sup> Local fan Roy Bird wrote in a letter to the editor that the players had recently been struggling through difficult road trips, cold weather, and grueling schedules and had given up a month's meager salary because the proud team had "a reputation to uphold."<sup>23</sup> Bird condemned the city's citizens for their lack of support of the noble team that "was let down and let down badly by the city of Saskatoon."<sup>24</sup> In response to the outcry, the Quakers were revived once more. Because of the public response, city council's decision to agree to the team's request, and the mayor's decision to appeal to the community for financial support, the team completed its season. In what was to be their final few games, the Quakers played well, although attendance at home games remained low. Playing coach Ron Willy complained

after a 6-4 win in front of only 657 fans that "it's a little hard getting worked up in a morgue....When we skated out for pre-game warm-up it felt like a practice....If we had 3000 people cheering when we skated on the ice I think we just might have got going a little faster."<sup>25</sup>

The inevitable occurred in early March. The Quakers found the newly announced play-off schedule unacceptable: they were required to wait at least eighteen days until they played (and might have to play as many as seven games in ten days.) The suggested schedule, arranged in part to accommodate other teams, was too costly financially, psychologically, and physically. By the middle of March 1972, the Quakers were finished as a senior team. Merv Unger was overheard by one of the program sellers to say, "It's all over but the crying"; actually, no one cried. The players, many of whom held other jobs, retired from hockey and returned to work full-time as businessmen, salesmen or farmers. Others who were attending university resumed their studies in earnest and pursued other careers. Some players moved south to play for various American leagues. Interestingly, the next place Saskatoon fans were to see the Quakers together on the ice again was the big screen: several of them were bit players in *Paperback Hero*, a 1973 low-budget hockey movie filmed in Saskatchewan.

The team name of "Quakers" did not fade into obscurity, it has been used since for minor hockey teams in and around Saskatoon. The senior team, however, by any name, is all but forgotten. The old Arena in which the Quakers played was torn down in 1989 and a modern facility now hosts the junior Blades. The team is gone, but some questions remain. What led to the demise of the senior Quakers? At first glance, at least, McLuhan's comment about the necessity of both spectator and participant is revealing. As the years went by, many of the players and management stopped caring about their performance; this slowly but surely led to fan disinterest. The latter, of course, leads to poor attendance, which reflects negatively on both the financial and psychological ability of the team to rejuvenate itself. The maintenance of team loyalty and community support requires the public to perceive good will and effort by the players, a respectable number of wins, and not much real competition from other teams in the same sport. The Blades grew in popularity after the Quakers folded: they were young, energetic and exciting to watch. Even today the Credit Union Centre, the new hockey facility, attracts a large number of dedicated fans.

Other factors played a part in the death of the Quakers as well. Opportunities to see better teams play presented themselves in the form of N.H.L. expansion teams. Had the Quakers performed strongly, the expanded N.H.L. might not have been such a distraction, however, the dark and antiquated arena, coupled with the lackluster Quakers, did not make for an enjoyable evening out, especially in the dead of winter. There were other options for entertainment available in the form of increased television channels, more movie theatres, a new shopping mall, an increase in restaurants and bars, and a growing theatre culture. As Richard Gruneau and David Whitson observe, “globalized leisure markets and...communications technologies” have given the general population more of these entertainment options, whether they are out in the city or right in one’s own home.<sup>26</sup> These options have certainly increased in the past few years, but they were beginning to be felt even in the early 70’s. In addition, the audience that knew the Quakers in their heyday (some of the Quakers in the 70’s were sons of the players in the 30’s) was aging and was less likely to make the trip to the Arena. This group was replaced by a younger crowd who had no memory of the team at its finest. The Quakers of the 30’s also offered a chance to escape the sometimes horrifying reality of the times; while Saskatoon as a city never soared economically, in the late 60’s and 70’s it was doing well, and its citizens did not need the escape that the earlier manifestation of the Quakers provided.

Canada has a fascinating hockey history that is still being written. Nevertheless, it would not be so enthralling were it not for Saskatchewan’s history of the game. The Saskatoon Quakers are definitely an integral part of that story—the larger-than-life heroes of the 30’s as well as the last senior Quakers who left the city almost unnoticed in the early spring of 1972.

#### Endnotes

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3. Bob Strumm, “Quaker Problems,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 11 March 1972, NP.
4. Ken Dryden, and Roy MacGregor, *Home Game: Hockey and Life in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, Inc., 1989), 20-21.
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6. *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 31 March 1933, 1.
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8. *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 15 April 1933, NP.
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11. Ibid.
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13. Ibid.
14. Bruce Kidd, *The Death of Hockey* (Toronto: New Press, 1972), 10.
15. Brenda Zeman, *88 Years of Puck-Chasing in Saskatchewan* (Regina: WDS Associates, 1983), 45.
16. Ibid, 393.
17. John Cherneski, “Quaker Optimism Necessary,” *Saskatoon Star Phoenix*, 11 December 1970, NP.
18. The following incidents are remembrances of the author, who worked for the team during the early 70’s.
19. Bob Strumm, “Quakers,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 11 March 1972, NP.
20. Brian Mainman, “Quakers withdraw from Prairie League,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 18 January 1972, p.6.
21. Jack Cook, “A sticky wicket,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 29 January 1972, NP.
22. *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 26 January 1972, NP.
23. Roy M. Bird, “Last road trip tells story,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 26 January 1972, NP.
24. Ibid.
25. Brian Mainman, “Home, sweet home kind to Quakers,” *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, 10 February 1972, NP.
26. Richard Gruneau, and David Whitson, *Hockey Night in Canada: Sports Identities and Cultural Politics*. (Toronto: Garamond Press, 1993), 204.

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#### Correction

In the previous issue of *Saskatchewan History* (Volume 29, Number 1) the following errors appeared in the article, “Was Eckhardt Kastendieck one of Saskatchewan’s most active Nazis?” by Grant Grams. With apologies, these errors are the fault of the editor.

The last line of paragraph two, page eight, the sentence should end with “life was *better*.”

The first line of paragraph three, page ten, should end with “being looked after *by* Nazis”

The second last line of page thirteen incorrectly states that “Even in 1977, twenty two years after Nazism was defeated ...” This should be thirty two years.

# The Hyas Doukhobour Settlement

by Jonathan Kalmakoff

Among the first settlers in the Hyas district of Saskatchewan were a group of Independent Doukhobors. Attracted by homestead lands and the promise of a railroad, the Russian pacifists arrived in 1902 to establish the village of Vozvyshenie. For five years, they lived, prayed and worked there under the motto of "Toil and Peaceful Life", transforming the prairie wilderness into productive farmland. By 1907, however, the village experiment was abandoned, owing to the lack of railroad facilities and difficulty of getting goods to market. The story of Vozvyshenie illustrates the role of the traditional Russian village model, cooperative organization, homestead policy and the location and timing of railroad construction in the early settlement of Independent Doukhobors on the Prairies. The following article examines their little known contribution to the history and development of the Hyas district.

## Origin and History

The Doukhobors were a religious group founded in 18<sup>th</sup> century Russia. They rejected the rites and dogma of the Orthodox Church and denied the authority of the Tsarist State, refusing to swear allegiance to anyone but God. Their practical, commonsense teachings were based on the belief that the spirit of God resides in the soul of every person; therefore, to kill another person was to kill God. The Doukhobors were frequently persecuted for their faith by Imperial Russian authorities and forced to live in the frontier regions of the Empire.

In 1895, the Doukhobors refused to perform military service and burned their firearms in a symbolic demonstration against violence. Their pacifist stand was met with renewed persecution by authorities and many were tortured, imprisoned or exiled. Their plight attracted international attention, and with the assistance of Russian novelist Leo Tolstoy and the Society of Friends (Quakers), the Doukhobors sought refuge by immigrating to Canada.

In 1899, over 7,500 Doukhobors arrived in Canada, settling on three large blocks of land reserved

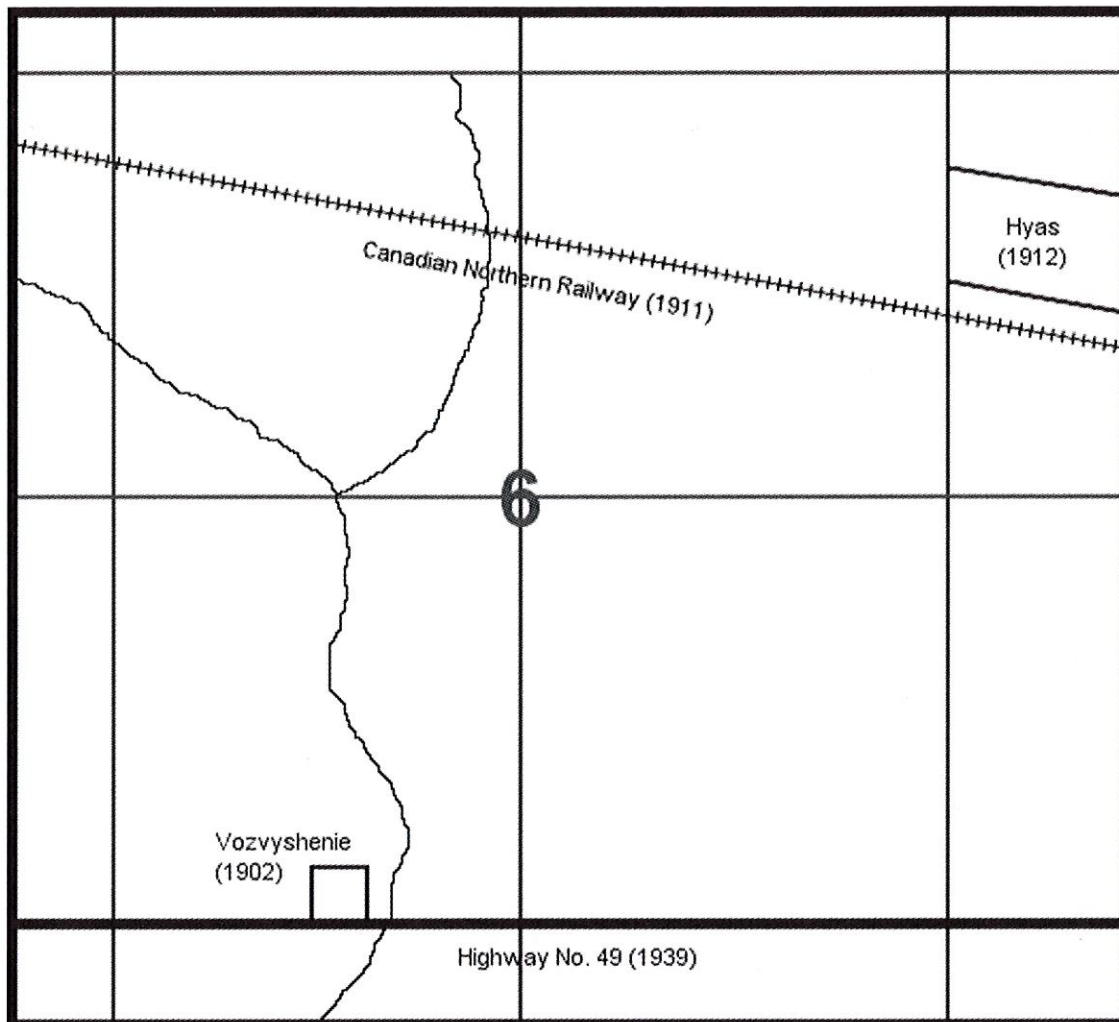
for them by the Dominion Government in the Northwest Territories, in what are today the districts of Pelly, Arran, Kamsack, Verigin, Canora, Buchanan, Langham and Blaine Lake, Saskatchewan. Following the motto of "Toil and Peaceful Life", they cleared, broke and farmed the land and established over sixty villages, as well as flour mills, elevators, saw mills, brick factories, trading stores, roads, bridges and ferries in these areas.

During the first years of settlement, the Doukhobors adopted a communal way of life. Organized as the "Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood", they held all land, livestock, machinery and other property in common. All work in the fields was performed jointly, all produce went into a communal granary and all proceeds, including outside earnings, pooled into a common treasury. Virtually all aspects of Community life – spiritual, social and economic – were organized according to the utopian communal vision of their leader, Peter V. Verigin.<sup>1</sup>

As time passed, however, many of the younger Doukhobor men withdrew from the Community and entered for individual homesteads. These men had traveled around the country working for Canadian farmers and had imbibed some independent ideas. They came to resent the narrowness and rigidity of Community life and grew tired of throwing their wage labour into a pool and getting very little out of it. They retained the essentials of their religion, particularly pacifism, but rejected the central leadership and communal lifestyle as being not essential to true Doukhoborism.<sup>2</sup> Most of these "Independents" settled on their individual homesteads after leaving the communalism of the Community villages. A few, however, sought to retain the traditional village form

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(Author's Collection)

Map of Vozvyshenie Village site in relation to the present day Village of Hymas

of settlement.<sup>3</sup> Such was the case of the Independent Doukhobors who settled in the Hymas district.

### Arrival and Settlement

In the spring of 1902, a group of twenty-nine Doukhobors in the Buchanan district broke away from the communal lifestyle to farm independently. As all of the desirable homesteads had been taken up in that district, they were obliged to search elsewhere for land. After careful investigation of the countryside, traversing it from west to east and from south to north, they chose lands situated twenty-five miles to the northeast, a day's journey by horse and wagon, in the Hymas district.<sup>4</sup>

The Hymas district was a wilderness of rolling prairie covered with scattered poplar and scrub, interspersed with spruce, when the Doukhobors arrived.<sup>5</sup> Much of the land was still unsettled. It was unsurveyed and there were no roads save for a deeply rutted pack trail, a branch of the Fort Pelly Trail, which ran through

it.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the land met the settlers' essential requirements: excellent soil, a good water supply and accessible timber to build.<sup>7</sup>

A significant factor in their decision to locate was the Canadian Northern Railway Company's 1902 proposal to extend a branch line from Swan River, Manitoba west through the district.<sup>8</sup> When the Doukhobors inquired with the Dominion Lands Branch office about homesteads in the vicinity, they had been promised the branch line within a year or two. It was well understood at the time that rail access to distant markets would be essential if they were to prosper on their homesteads and farms in the hinterland.

To this end, the Russian speaking settlers filed homestead entries on Section 6 of Township 34 and Sections 30 and 34 of Township 33, all in Range 2, west of the Second Meridian along the proposed railway route.<sup>9</sup> Under the *Dominion Lands Act*, they could obtain patent for the land provided they cultivated



at least thirty acres on each quarter-section, became naturalized subjects and swore an oath of allegiance to the Crown.<sup>10</sup>

Ordinarily, homesteaders were required to build a house on their quarter-section and reside there for a period of time, usually six months a year for three years. However, the Doukhobors were granted the modifications of the "Hamlet Clause" under the *Dominion Lands Act* which allowed them to fulfill the residence requirements in their traditional village form of settlement and fulfill their homestead obligations without actually living on their individual quarter-sections.<sup>11</sup>

The Doukhobors thus selected a suitable place on the southwest quarter of Section 6 to establish a village.<sup>12</sup> It was located so that it would be more or less central to their homestead entries to minimize the travel distance between their homes and their fields. It was adjacent to a small unnamed stream which offered a reliable source of water. Stands of spruce trees were situated nearby for use for building and heating. As it was built on a rise of land, relative to the swampy lowlands to the south, it was named *Vozvyshenie*, from the Russian for "elevation" or "rising ground". It was the first organized settlement in the district, predating the village of Hyas by a decade.

The village initially consisted of five 18' x 30' houses constructed of hand-sawn logs with low-pitched

gable roofs thatched with grass.<sup>13</sup> They were built in two rows facing each other across a wide central street, laid out in the *Strassendorf* (street village) pattern used in Russia. Behind each house was a large garden plot for use by each family. Numerous outbuildings were also built, including barns, stables, granaries, a bathhouse (*banya*), blacksmith's shop (*kuznitsa*) and outdoor clay oven (*pech*).<sup>14</sup> A row of spruce trees was planted along the central street of the village.

The original families comprising the village of Vozvyshenie were those of Wasyl Swetlishnoff, John Salikin, Alexei Barisoff, Peter Negraeff, John Rilkoff, Joseph Derhousoff, Peter Sookorukoff and Semyon Kalmakoff. In the ensuing years, they were joined by the families of Alexei Katasonoff, Efim Bedinoff, Alexei Derhousoff and Zakhar Derhousoff from the Arran and Runnymede districts.<sup>15</sup> Most of the village families were related to one another either directly or through marriage.

### Village Life

The Doukhobors of Vozvyshenie lived together on a free and voluntary basis, without formal leadership or institutions. Village meetings (*sobranie*) were held from time to time at which women and men participated equally in the decision making process.<sup>16</sup> The elders (*starichki*) provided advice and direction for the affairs of the village. Disagreements were

To wit :

I, *Alex Alexey Barisoff*, do solemnly ~~swear~~ <sup>affirm</sup> that the answers to the foregoing questions are true and correct in every particular. That I claim a Patent for this Homestead under the provisions of the "Dominion Lands Act."

That I obtained an entry, and claim a Patent for the same for my own benefit, and not in the interest or for the benefit of any other person or persons whomsoever.

SO HELP ME GOD.

*Alexey + Barisoff* <sup>is</sup> mark.

*H. Paul Burschel*  
Sub Agent of the Dominion Lands, or  
Homestead Inspector for the **YORKTON** District.

*Carver*  
before me at this *7<sup>th</sup>* day of *October* 19*07*  
having first been read over and explained to the said applicant.

Patent form for Alexei (Alexey) Barisoff.  
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, Homestead File 878895 for Alexey Barisoff)



*A line of spruce trees marks the central street of Vozvyshenie.*

rare and the Doukhobor values of love, non-violence, hospitality, simple living and justice prevailed in day to day relations.

Agriculturally and economically, the villagers organized themselves along broad cooperative lines, as they had in Russia.<sup>17</sup> Homesteads, village lots, buildings, livestock and machinery were considered the private property of each household. Each family worked its homestead independent of the others. At the same time, they cooperated in common undertakings, sharing labour, draft animals and implements whenever they could be spared from their own work. To some extent, such mutual assistance was a practical necessity in the early years of Prairie settlement, when survival was paramount.

The Doukhobors were almost entirely self-sufficient in food production. They grew potatoes, cabbages, tomatoes and other vegetables in their gardens; picked wild berries, nuts and mushrooms in the forest; consumed milk and dairy products from their cattle; slaughtered their cows, pigs and chickens for meat;<sup>18</sup> caught fish in the nearby rivers and streams; and grew wheat which was milled to produce flour for baking.

The villagers also manufactured most of their own cloths, tools and furniture.<sup>19</sup> The women wove cloth and made garments, rugs, shawls, and hangings from homespun fabrics. The men produced furniture, boots and shoes, ladles, harnesses, horseshoes, spades, spinning wheels and various tools. Store-bought items consisted of those few items which could not be made, grown or produced in the village, such as salt, coal oil, glass, sugar, tea and soap.

As with all new settlers, the Doukhobors struggled to increase their cash income. In summer, the able-bodied men left the village to work as railway labourers and farmhands at subsistence wages while the women, children and old men managed the lands and households.<sup>20</sup> It was this collective sharing of responsibilities which made their continued existence possible.

Clearing and improving the homesteads was a slow, difficult process that took the majority of the villagers' time and labour. Before crops could be sown, the settlers had to remove trees and scrub, drain sloughs and clear the fields of rock. Using axes, hoes and sickles along with teams of horses hitched to walking plows, the Doukhobors could only clear ten to fifteen acres at



*Log farmhouse of Alexis Barisoff. The last remaining building of Vozvyshenie.*

the most in a year. All villagers old enough to work contributed towards this effort.

As parcels of land were cleared, the Doukhobors cultivated and sowed it to produce rye, barley and oat crops. They put much of it into grass for pasture and hay. As more feed was produced, additional livestock were acquired. At first, the villagers were limited to subsistence farming, with nearly all of the crops and livestock raised used to survive, leaving little, if any, surplus for sale or trade.

Diversions from the arduous work were few. Leisure was not a concept known to the Doukhobors since, according to their teachings, people were not supposed to be idle. All the same, the villagers socialized as they worked together in the village and in the fields. Work and leisure thus formed an integrated whole.<sup>21</sup> Prayer meetings (*molenie*) were a major weekly social event on Sunday morning. Other less formal social gatherings were held from time to time.

Generally speaking, the Doukhobors shared many of the same experiences as other settlers. Isolation, loneliness, harsh weather, deprivation and adversity were met with persistence, optimism, thrift, resourcefulness and the acceptance of unremitting hard work. At the same time, their life was made easier in

that they were a close-knit community and worked together, whereas a single homesteader often lived by himself, far from other neighbours.

### **Growth and Prosperity**

In spite of the initial hardships of pioneer life, Vozvyshenie grew and even prospered. By the taking of the Census of Northwest Provinces in 1906, it was a bustling village of forty-five people living in eleven households.<sup>22</sup> Now the villagers had eighteen horses, thirty-seven milk cows and forty-seven horned cattle.<sup>23</sup> They had brought a large area surrounding the village under cultivation and had begun to produce a surplus of agricultural products.

By this time, the Doukhobors were no longer alone. Following the Dominion Lands Survey in 1904, in which sections and quarter-sections were laid out, hundreds of new settlers poured into the district. The vast bulk of these people were Galicians from Western Ukraine and Scandinavians, Swedes and Norwegians, who arrived via the United States. Other groups included English and Scottish settlers from Ontario and Russian and Ukrainian Evangelical Protestants who, like the Doukhobors, fled Tsarist Russia to avoid religious persecution. They all came seeking a better

way of life, bringing with them a diversity of languages, manners and customs.

It was evident that the Doukhobor village was a gathering place for many of the newcomers where they met to discuss local news, weather conditions and matters relating to the land and its settlement. To some extent, the newcomers were dependent on more established settlers for advice and direction to start their own homesteads, and the Doukhobors were foremost in offering hospitality and generosity to all who came to them for assistance.

For instance, when the first groups of Russian and Ukrainian Evangelical Protestants arrived in the district, they stayed at Vozvyshenie for several days, and with the help of the Doukhobors, got to their homesteads.<sup>24</sup> The two groups of settlers, being able to converse in their native language, remained on friendly terms, visited one another's homes and engaged in lively philosophical discussions.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, one Evangelical Protestant settler, Pavel Skripnik, was so impressed by the Doukhobor way of life that he converted to their faith and took the surname "Skripnikoff".

With the influx of settlers, regular mail service became available in 1903 as the Plateau post office was opened on Fred Wright's farm on Section 16 of Township 33.<sup>26</sup> In 1905, it was moved to the general store belonging to Adolph Kennedy on Section 20 of Township 33 and renamed the Ulric post office.<sup>27</sup> Then, from 1909 to 1911, it was re-opened as the Cokato post office on Tom Tetlock's farm on Section 26 of Township 33.<sup>28</sup> Mail was conveyed fortnightly by stage from Kamsack via Fort Pelly. With this convenience, settlers were better able to transact business and maintain correspondence with friends and relatives in outlying parts of the country.

Despite the rapid growth of the district, however, the settlers were disadvantaged by the lack of accessibility and distance of markets. The main supply route, the Fort Pelly Trail, provided a tenuous link to the outside world and was often impassible by horse and wagon. Although supplies could be obtained locally at Kennedy's or at the Hudson Bay Company store at Fort Pelly, fourteen miles to the east, the nearest market for livestock and grain was the town of Canora, located twenty miles to the south, which was too far away to be practical and economical.

The railway had been promised, but each autumn, when it came time for grain hauling,<sup>29</sup> there was no sign of a railway and the settlers had to haul their grain to Canora. The Doukhobors hitched two teams of

horses to a sleigh and hauled up to sixty bushels per load. The entire trip consumed two days.<sup>30</sup> During the relatively mild winters of 1905 and 1906, the journey was bearable. However, during the severe winter of 1907, the heavy loads often got upset in the deep snow and it was several days before they got back to the village. Similar long and arduous journeys were made to drive the cattle the Doukhobors raised overland to Canora.

### **Abandonment and Dissolution**

By the end of 1907, many of the Doukhobors had grown dissatisfied with the lack of railway facilities, the difficulty of getting goods to market and the resulting unprofitability of their farms.<sup>31</sup> After much deliberation, most decided that the economic benefits of relocating closer to the railhead outweighed the limitations of staying at Vozvyshenie. Consequently, eight of the eleven families abandoned their homestead entries, left the village and relocated to new homesteads which had been thrown open in the district north-east of Canora.<sup>32</sup> Their partially improved homestead entries were eventually taken up by new settlers.

The departure of the majority of families led to the dissolution of the village. The remaining families - those who were unwilling or perhaps unable to abandon their efforts and relocate to another district - moved out onto their individual homesteads. As houses and barns were removed or dismantled for building materials, the physical structure of the village was reduced to the farmstead of the family homesteading the village quarter-section.<sup>33</sup> Thus, the Doukhobor village of Vozvyshenie, which only a year before had bustled with activity and promise, disappeared from the map.

### **New Beginnings**

The families who stayed behind, those of Alexei Derhousoff, Zakhar Derhousoff and Alexei Barisoff, continued to improve their entries on Section 6 of Township 34. In due course, they obtained patents to the land.<sup>34</sup> They were joined by another Doukhobor family, that of Ivan Nahornoff, who arrived in the district from Russia in 1910 and purchased the southeast quarter of Section 35 of Township 33.<sup>35</sup> The 1911 Canada Census reported twenty-one people in these four families.<sup>36</sup> Their mixed farming operations were amongst the most prosperous and successful in the district.

Ironically, in the end, the railway eventually did arrive. In late 1911, the Canadian Northern Railway Company completed the Thunderhill Branch

Line through the district.<sup>37</sup> Its construction made life significantly easier for the local settlers, ending their isolation, giving them direct access to markets, stimulating agricultural and economic growth and acting as a catalyst for local improvements, including the construction of a modern road system.<sup>38</sup>

The following year, the railway company constructed a siding, with a boxcar station and loading platform, on the northwest quarter of Section 5 of Township 34. A hamlet was surveyed there, which soon boasted a post office, school, two general stores, restaurant, elevator, bank, hotel, blacksmith and livery stable along with numerous residences.<sup>39</sup> It became a small commercial centre where local farmers came to ship livestock and grain to market, transact business and pick up necessary supplies and also collect mail. Thus the community of Hyas, as it came to be known, was established as it is today.

Ironically, the district's earliest settlers, the Doukhobors, did not long remain to enjoy these modern developments. As land values soared and land grew scarcer along the new branch line, the Barisoff, Derhousoff and Nahornoff families, unable to expand their landholdings, and desiring to live closer to their coreligionists, sold out in 1914-1915 and relocated to the Kamsack district, a predominantly Doukhobor-settled area, where they purchased new farms.<sup>40</sup>

## Epilogue

Time has erased most, but not all, traces of the Doukhobor village of Vozvyshenie. A line of spruce trees, now part of the shelterbelt surrounding the Serdachny family farm, still marks the central street of the village. A solitary log farmhouse nearby stares silently at the traffic passing by on the highway west of Hyas. Little else remains except in old records, yellowed photographs and in the memories of the villagers passed down to their descendants. Yet, the story of Vozvyshenie offers a unique perspective of the history of the district, the Doukhobor contribution to its development and the myriad factors which led to the founding of some Prairie settlements and the demise of others.

As well, the story of Vozvyshenie offers an interesting counterpoint to previous interpretations of Independent Doukhobor settlement on the Prairies. In the past, scholars had interpreted the Independents' abandonment of communal villages as an outright rejection of that form of settlement. In the case of Vozvyshenie, however, while these Independents

rejected communal ownership and living, they did not abandon the concept of "community". Instead, they sought to maintain a community in the context of cooperativism and individual land ownership. In doing so, they opted for a form of settlement more akin to that which they had left in Russia, than either the utopian communalism of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood, on one hand, or the rugged individualism of "Canadian" settlers on the other. It was only later, when increased wealth and economic opportunity made them less dependent on each other, that the Doukhobors of Vozvyshenie discarded the traditional Russian village model as being no longer necessary for either their physical survival or the preservation of their spiritual life.

## Endnotes

1. Peter Vasilyevich Verigin (1859-1924) was the leader of the 'Large Party' of the Doukhobors in the Caucasus, Russia from 1887 to 1899 and the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood in Canada from 1899 until his death in 1924.
2. Woodcock, George & Ivan Avakumovic, *The Doukhobors* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1968), p. 240.
3. Almost nothing has been published of the few Independent Doukhobors who rejected communalism but retained the old-world Strassendorf village plan and operation.
4. These original Doukhobor settlers hailed from the villages of Novo-Goreloe and Kirilovka in the Buchanan district. The latter village had been located in the Hyas-Tadmire district from 1899 until 1901, when it was relocated to the Buchanan district in order to be closer to the railway facilities proposed by the Canadian Northern Railway Company. Hence, many of the settlers were already familiar with the Hyas district, and were no strangers to land speculation based on rail expansion.
5. Saskatchewan Archives Board, File I.73, Edgar Bray, Surveyor's Note Book, November 16, 1903.
6. *Ibid.*
7. In choosing their land and village location, the Doukhobors in the Hyas district were guided by the same essential considerations as their brethren in the North Colony, South Colony and Saskatchewan Colony. See Carl J. Tracie, *Toil and Peaceful Life: Doukhobor Village Settlement in Saskatchewan, 1899-1918*. (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 1996), pp. 44-50, 67-69, 84-87.
8. In 1902, the Canadian Northern Railway Company petitioned the Dominion Government to have its charter amended to allow an extension of the line "from a point on the Company's line at or near Swan River in Manitoba, thence along the Swan River valley and in a generally westerly direction to a point on the Company's authorized line at or near the crossing by that line of the Saskatchewan River." The petition was authorized by Statutes of Canada, 1903, Chapter 97.
9. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Homestead File Nos. 878895, 1416184 and 1410052. See also Library and Archives Canada, RG 15, V1166, F5404684, Vozvishennie Village File.

10. *Ibid.* Note the requirement to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown violated the Doukhobors' religious beliefs; therefore, they crossed out the reference to an oath and substituted the word "affirm" on their homestead forms.
11. The right to live in villages, as opposed to residence on individual quarter-sections, was covered in the so-called "Hamlet Clause" (Section 37 of the *Dominion Lands Act*).
12. Note the Dominion Lands Branch reserved the village site out of the original Alexei Barisoff homestead entry for the surrounding quarter-section SW6-34-2-W2. See Vozsvishennie Village File, *supra*, note 6.
13. Homestead File No. 878895, *supra*, note 6.
14. Interview with Dan Deduke, Hyas, Saskatchewan (July 3, 2005).
15. These later Doukhobor settlers came from the villages of Kamenka and Truzhdenie in the Runnymede district and the village of Vera in the Arran district.
16. The village decision-making structure was similar to the traditional Russian *mir*; a self-governing council of peasant households in Imperial Russia that held assemblies, voted on matters affecting the village and organized collective undertakings.
17. Prior to the social and spiritual reforms instituted by Peter Vasilyevich Verigin in the 1890's, the Doukhobors in Russia lived together in villages, but worked individual plots of land separately from each other. They cooperated in common undertakings, but only after their own work was completed. This form of settlement offered the Vozvyshenie Doukhobors, at least for a time, a viable alternative to both the utopian communalism of the Christian Community of Universal Brotherhood and the rugged individualism of the isolated homesteader.
18. Unlike their Community brethren, who under the influence of Peter Vasilyevich Verigin became vegetarians, the Independent Doukhobors ate meat.
19. Tarasoff, Koozma J. "Doukhobors" in Paul Robert Magocsi, (ed.). *Encyclopedia of Canada's People*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), pp. 422-435.
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*
22. Library and Archives Canada, Census of the Northwest Provinces, 1906, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie District No. 14, Sub-district No. 27, pp. 1-2.
23. *Ibid.*
24. "The History of Stenen" *The Norquay North Star* (May 20, 1955), p. 6.
25. *Supra*, note 11; Interview with Wilf Belous, Hyas, Saskatchewan (June 15, 2005).
26. Canadian Genealogy Centre, "Post Offices and Postmasters Database". Retrieved June 1, 2006, from <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/archivianet/post-offices/index-e.html>.
27. *Ibid.*
28. *Ibid.*
29. In the autumn homesteaders waited until the ground was frozen before transporting their produce to the railhead. See "Homesteading" in *The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2000 Edition* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2000).
30. For similar accounts, see "Pioneers Came to South Hyas in 1905." *The Norquay North Star* (May 20, 1955), p. 4; and J.F. Paul Barschel, *A History of Canora and District* (Canora, Saskatchewan: Canora Golden Jubilee Committee, 1960), p. 45.
31. It was generally established that grain could not be profitably marketed if had to be hauled by horse and wagon for a distance greater than ten to twelve miles to a railway point. See T.D. Regehr, *The Canadian Northern Railway, Pioneer Road of the Northern Prairies 1895-1918* (Toronto: Macmillan, 1976), p. 192.
32. Vozsvishennie Village File, *supra* note 6.
33. *Ibid.* Note in 1907, following the dissolution of the village, the Dominion Lands Branch added the village site to the Alexei Barisoff homestead entry for the surrounding quarter-section SW6-34-2-W2.
34. Note Alexei Barisoff obtained patent for the SW6-34-2-W2 in 1908; Alexei Derhouseoff took patent to the NW6-34-2-W2 in 1910; and the SE6-34-2-W2 was patented to Zakhar Derhouseoff in 1911. See Homestead Files, *supra*, note 6.
35. By 1910, desirable homesteads were hard to come by in the district, so those settlers who arrived later had to purchase land.
36. Library and Archives Canada, *Census of Canada, 1911*, Saskatchewan, Mackenzie District No. 210, Sub-district No. 25, p. 6 and Sub-district No. 22, p. 33.
37. The Canadian Northern Railway Company completed the 72-mile Thunderhill Branch Line over an eight year period commencing in 1903: the 20.2 mile section from Thunderhill Junction, near Swan River, to the Saskatchewan Boundary was completed in 1906; the 15.4 mile section from the Saskatchewan Boundary to Pelly was completed in 1909; and the 36.5 mile section from Pelly, through the Hyas district, to Preeceville was completed in 1911. See Regehr, *supra*, note 26, pp. 205-207.
38. Saskatchewan Archives Board, Ulric School District No. 2432 File.
39. "History of Hyas Dates Back to 1910" *The Norquay North Star* (May 20, 1955), p.5.
40. Following the arrival of the railway in the Hyas district, the price of farm land advanced from \$5.00 per acre to upwards of \$30.00 and \$40.00 per acre within a three-year period. See Certificate of Title No. MM94, dated October 25, 1910, issued for NW6-34-2-W2 to Zakhar Dergowusoff; Certificate of Title No. 228MQ, dated December 22, 1910, issued for NW6-34-2-W2 to Alec Dergowusoff; Certificate of Title No. 67OW, dated October 2, 1913, issued for NW6-34-2-W2 to Joseph Derhouseoff; Certificate of Title No. 200PF, dated April 14, 1914, issued for NW6-34-2-W2 to Louie Slegel; Certificate of Title No. 37MS, dated January 27, 1911, issued for NE6-34-2-W2 to Alexey Dierhouseof; Certificate of Title No. 129OW, dated October 8, 1913, issued for NE6-34-2-W2 to Joseph Derhouseoff; Certificate of Title No. 204PF, dated April 14, 1914, issued for NE6-34-2-W2 to Louie Slegel; Certificate of Title No. 370, dated 1908, issued for SW6-34-2-W2 to Alexey Barisoff; and Certificate of Title No. 74PU, dated April 23, 1915, issued for SW6-34-2-W2 to Louie Slegel.

# People and Places

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## *The Valley Echo*: Two Decades of Prose, Poetry and Cartoons Related to the Role and Image of Saskatchewan Nurses, 1923-1943

by Sandra Bassendowski

Tuberculosis (TB) was Canada's leading cause of death at the turn of the century, with a mortality rate in 1900 of about 200 per 100,000 population. The "Sanatorium Age" in Canada began in 1896 when the first institution was built in Muskoka, Ontario.<sup>1</sup> In the early decades of the 1900s, Saskatchewan was recognized for its high standard of work in tuberculosis as a result of forward-thinking legislation, a spirit of co-operation, and its "splendid sanatoria" for treatment.<sup>2</sup> The sanatoria were recognized for the isolation and treatment of individuals with tuberculosis but the educational aspect was also an important component of this initiative. As a result, nurses from large and small hospitals in Saskatchewan were sent to sanatoria for education and experience.<sup>3</sup>

The Sanatorium at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan was scheduled to open on October 10, 1917 but according to Dr. Ferguson, a week before the opening there were no beds, kitchens, heat, nor water. By February 1918, all the seventy beds were occupied. On opening day, the staff consisted of Matron E.N. Fraser, Dr. Ferguson, an accountant, two ward nurses, a cook, two maids, and a fireman. There was no ceremony at the opening as all staff members were busy with getting the patients settled in the institution.<sup>4</sup> The sanatorium expanded in numbers and buildings. As space became available, the patient population increased and correspondingly so did the staff numbers. At the end of 1919 there were 14 nurses employed at Fort San.<sup>5</sup>

This article focuses on the sanatorium in Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan and the information written by patients, nurses, and doctors about nurses and nursing in the sanatorium newsletter.

### **Purpose**

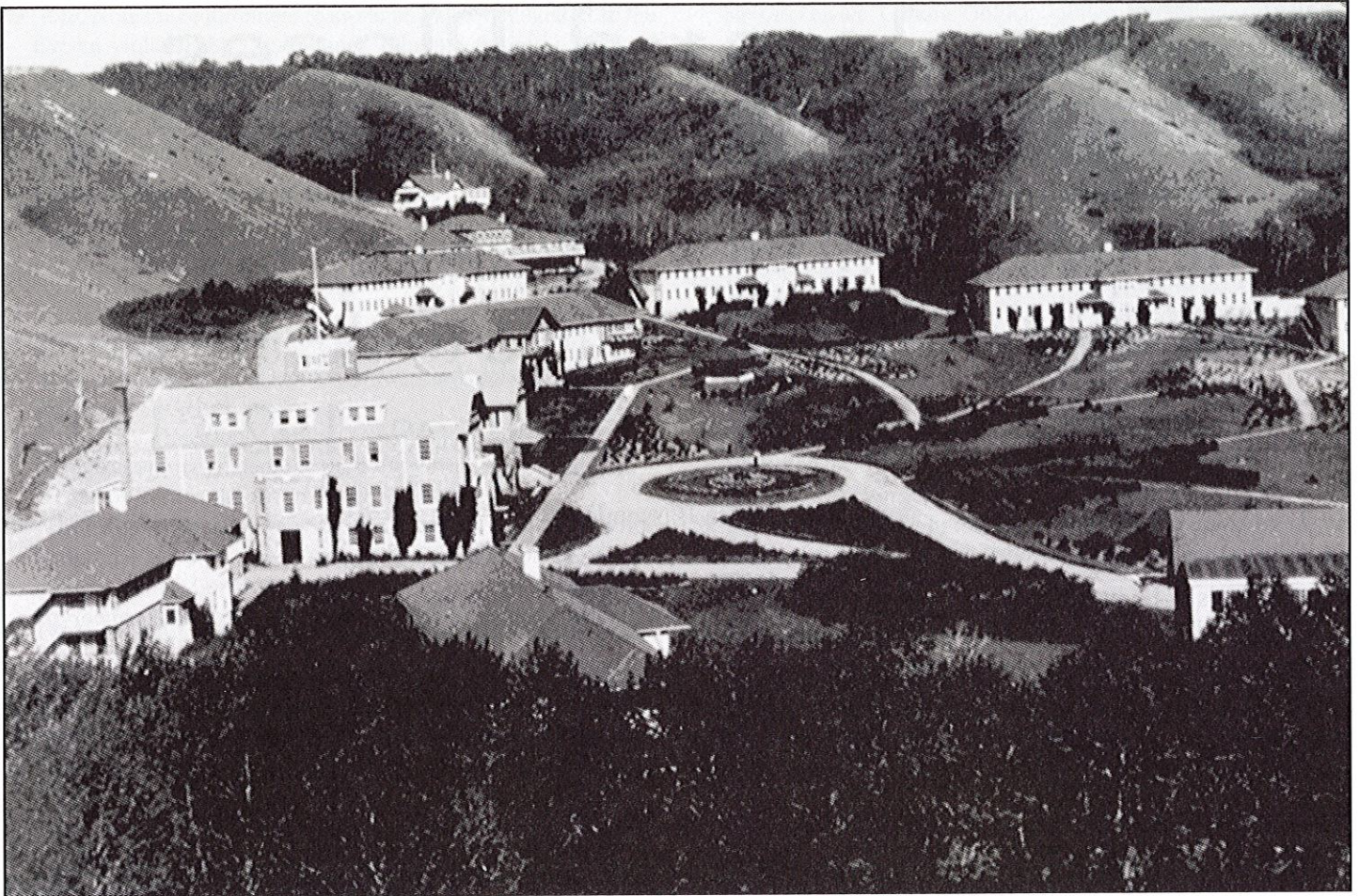
The purpose of this historical study was to review the content of a journal published in a sanatorium to discover if the nurses' role and image experienced any shifts, positive or negative, over a twenty year span of the journal. The Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium was in operation from 1919-1961. The journal of the sanatorium, *The Valley Echo*, contains articles, prose, poetry, and cartoons about the virtues, values, and roles of the nurses employed at the Saskatchewan sanatorium. The journal started in 1923 and lasted until 1961. It contains compositions from patients, nurses and physicians regarding a variety of items, such as sanatorium highlights, activities, songs, poems, cartoons, and stories of life in the 'San.' *The Valley Echo* contains many references to nurses and their professional duties as well as the social activities that nurses were involved in, such as luncheons, teas, travel and dances.

### **Methodology**

A detailed review was completed of each issue that was published over a 20 year span, out of a possible 40 years. Every issue of *The Valley Echo* from 1923 to 1943 was reviewed for prose, poetry, and cartoons related to the image of nurses and the attitude exhibited toward nursing. The time period extends from the end of World War One to the end of World War Two. Different

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*Fort Qu'Appelle Sanatorium*  
(Saskatchewan Archives Board, R-A24671)

categories were used to determine the frequency of articles written by patients, nurses, or physicians. A thematic analysis was completed of the published works. The twenty years of *The Valley Echo* issues that were reviewed totaled more than 700 pages. This article is based on the journal search and is supported with secondary sources on the images and attitudes of nurses during that 20 year time frame.

### **The Time Span: 1923-1943**

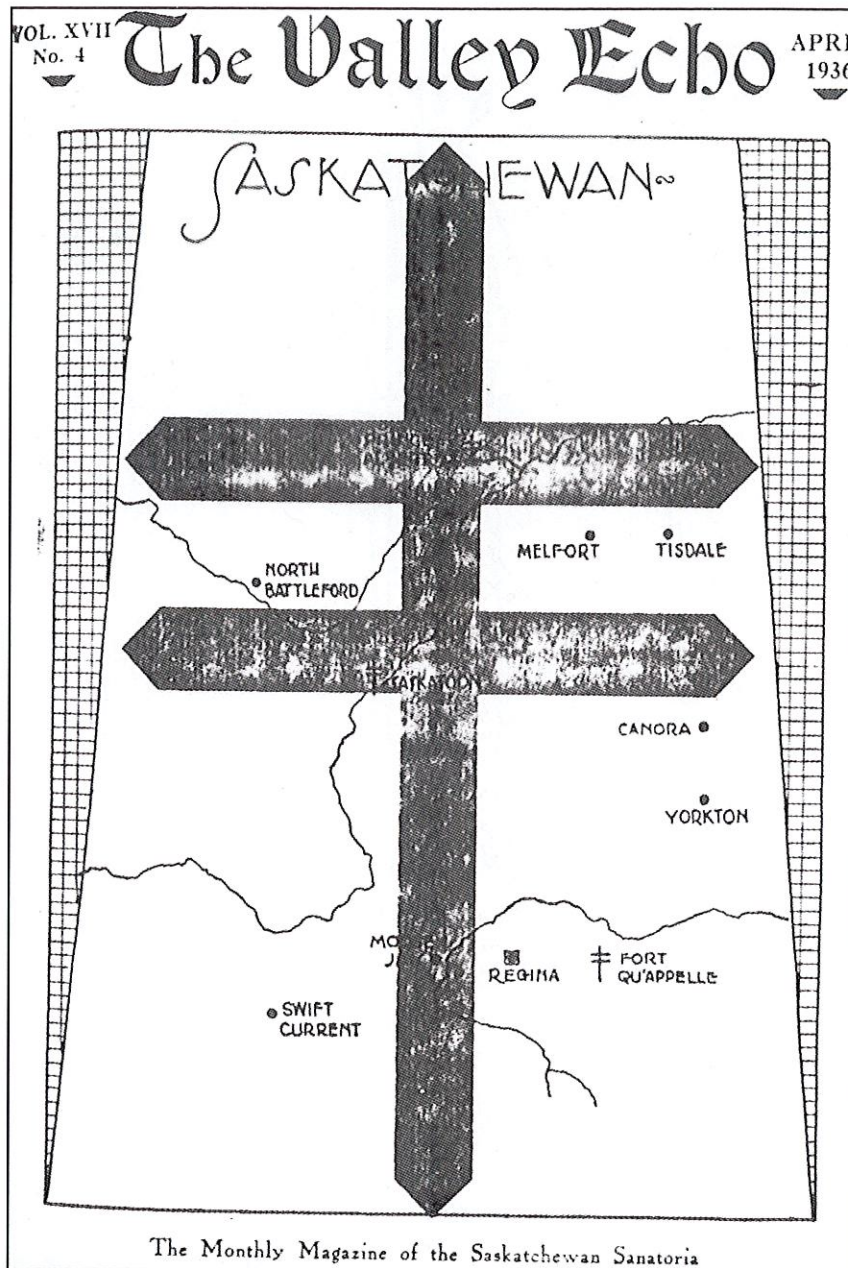
During the early 1920s, women bobbed their hair, wore men's shirts, ties, and felt hats, and flattened their curves with a bandeau that resulted in pre-teen straightness.<sup>6</sup> The nurse of this time was described as a young woman between the ages of 24 – 26 years of age, of medium height, 130-135 pounds, and physically fit. The president of the American Nurses Association, Clara Noyes, stated that if she were to paint a portrait of a nurse, it would portray "...a rather low, broad forehead, brownish hair, with natural wave or straight, parted in the middle in a more or less Madonna-like fashion."<sup>7</sup> The nurses were described as exhibiting strong characters

and possessing courage, patience, willingness to make sacrifices.

The cartoons in *The Valley Echo* from 1923-1927 depict the ward nurses wearing white uniforms with starched aprons and caps. Their hair is bobbed and they are often shown giving orders to patients but taking orders from doctors.

A total of 80 entries of poems and prose during this time period characterize the nurses as happy, caring and desperate to be married. The written material varies widely in tone, but is related to three recurring themes: power and inequality between nurse and patient; power and inequality between nurse and doctor; and the stress imposed by tuberculosis. Many of the poems written by patients make references to nurses and their attraction to the men on the ward. The jokes and verses indicate that nurses worried about their hair, their figures, and their single marital status. The following selection suggests that 'incidences' were occurring on the night shift and it did not take too long until the matron transferred the nurse back to days.





The Monthly Magazine of the Saskatchewan Sanatoria

Cover from the Valley Echo, April 1936.

### “Just an Observation”

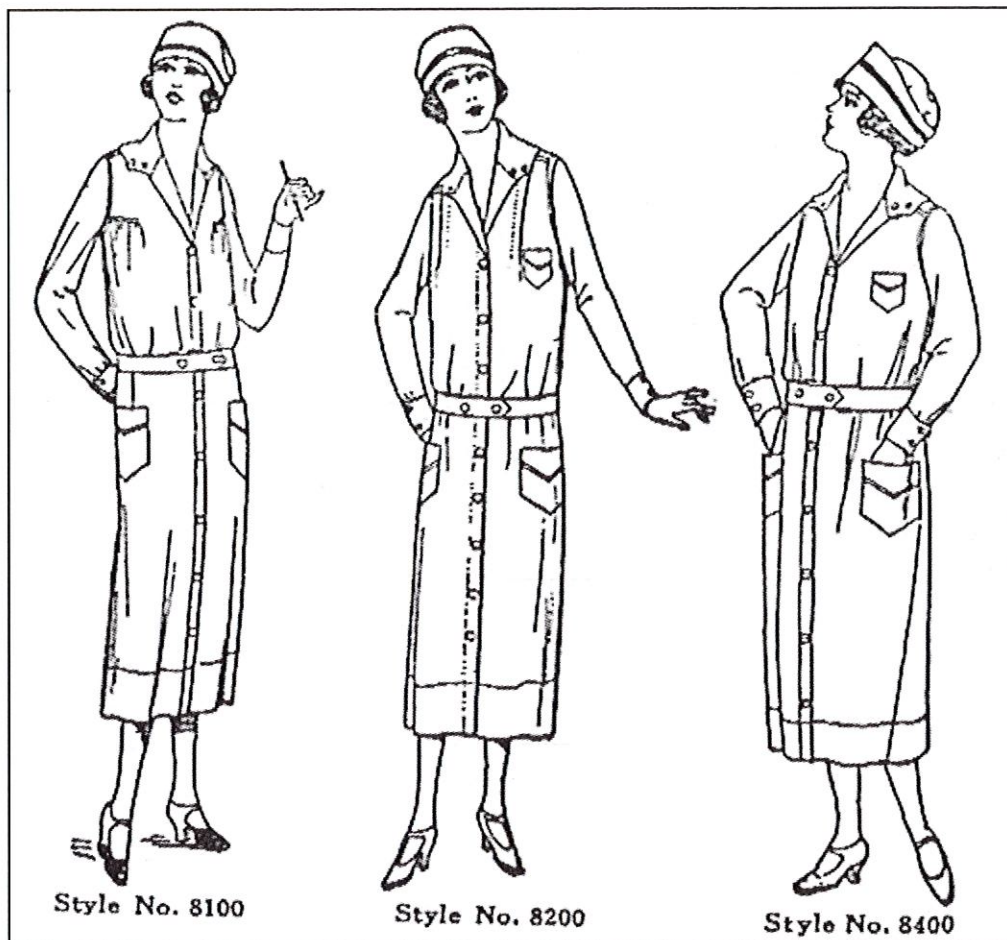
“When night life shows signs of agreement with the nurses, we notice they are immediately changed to a duty where they will do ‘their best work.’ It strikes home, Miss Mac”.<sup>8</sup>

In the majority of the poems, cartoons, and prose, nurses are depicted as being romantically involved with doctors or on the wards taking orders from them. The two-liner jokes between the physicians and nurses are at the nurses’ expense. The jokes depict nurses having limited understanding of the skills and knowledge of the nursing profession. For example:

Dr. Good: “What did you do with the patient’s temperature?”

Miss Fentiman (frightened): “Oh, I left it in the thermometer!”<sup>9</sup>

A poem written by a nurse and entitled “*The Wail of a San Nurse*” laments the fact that things do not happen to nurses as they do in books. For example, “When a nurse in a book gets up to her neck in scurry and hurry and muddle. A handsome young doctor from somewhere appears and rescues the nurse on the double.” The last verse of the poem reads:



(Author's Collection)

Advertisement for Corbett-Cowley Limited in the *Canadian Nurse*, 1927.

“Today on the corridors they were mopping the floors,  
I tripped over a bucket of water.  
The arm that shot out and arrested my fall,  
Belonged to a much worried doctor.  
Did he whisper ‘darling, I trust you’re not hurt,’  
Tender kisses meanwhile bestowing,  
HE DID NOT. The only remark he made was,  
Now then clumsy, look out where you are going.”<sup>10</sup>

The overall mood of *The Valley Echo* during the 1920s was light-hearted and jovial. The articles lacked sophistication in writing style but it is obvious that the patients in the San enjoyed the fun made of staff and other patients. Although there are serious articles, for the most part, only one or two articles per issue are written by the in-house physician about the perils of tuberculosis. The articles written by nurses tend to be a reflection of their working or leisure activities. For example, one of the articles written by a nurse is entitled: “The attitude of patients and nurses to each other.” The article states,

“Are you the kind of nurse you would choose to take care of you if you were a bed patient, dependent on someone else for your comforts? Do you leave your private cares behind you when you enter the sick room? Do you possess those qualities so essential in a good nurse- thoughtfulness, cheerfulness, and sympathy? When in the sick room do you think only of the patients’ comfort and advancement?”<sup>11</sup>

With the collapse of the economy in 1929, the youthful spirits of the flappers disappeared and new models for working women emerged. Idealism and self-sacrifice were the foundations of nursing and the profession stressed high ideals and demanded self-discipline for its students and practitioners.<sup>12</sup> In Saskatchewan, the years of 1930-1939 were identified as the ‘Dirty Thirties’. Unemployment was rampant, and the nurses who provided private duty nursing found it almost impossible to support themselves. The nurses



Cartoon from the *The Valley Echo*, 1923.  
(Author's Collection)

who were employed at Fort San had a somewhat easier time as they had a steady job and were able to maintain a sense of independence.

The nurses' appearance changed as the predominant hairstyle became a short parted bob, neatly waved on top and done up in small curls over the ears and at the back of the neck. Although nursing was seen as an important profession for women, nurses were still not portrayed in a manner that would question a doctor's knowledge or wisdom. Nursing knowledge and expertise is not recognized as part of a professional image.<sup>13</sup>

Upton<sup>14</sup> shares a story about a patient in a sanatorium asking a nurse the following question. "Will you please tell me if it is possible for me to receive a super infection while here, with so many others who are more advanced than I?" The nurse replied, "Ask me that in two months time when I have learned something about it." Both the medical and nursing professions were concerned about the incidence of Saskatchewan nurses who were being diagnosed with tuberculosis and admitted to the sanatorium as patients for recovery.<sup>15</sup> In Saskatchewan, on November 3, 1933, there were 38 nurses and nurses-in training under treatment in the sanatorium. These young women came from large and small hospitals around the province, and irrespective of whether or not the hospital had a TB ward. The proportion

of nurses breaking down from TB was much higher than the proportion breaking down from this disease among those nurses employed in the sanatoriums.

This information was presented to the Saskatchewan Hospital Association (SHA) in November 1933 and the group decided that protective techniques were to be used by the nurses in handling of and caring for patients with TB. A recommendation was made that all probationers be examined before being admitted to nursing programs and that periodic X-rays and examinations be done to them.<sup>16,17</sup> Several years later, it was suggested by a medical supervisor that student nurses and the nursing profession lacked the knowledge in order to protect themselves and prevent the spread of disease.<sup>18</sup> However questionable their knowledge, no one doubted the loyalty and enthusiasm of the sanatorium nurses.

The prose in *The Valley Echo* during the 1930s is more subdued than previously but still reflects a positive image of nurses. In the March 1931 issue of *The Valley Echo*, the following poem was included:

The nurse I love

We have nurses short, nurse tall,  
Nurses slim, nurses stout,  
Some with paint, some without.  
Nurses straight, nurses curly,  
Some who smile, some who frown.  
Nurses dark, nurses fair,  
Some with bright, golden hair;  
But the nurse I love  
With a love that can't fail  
Is the nurse who brings me  
My daily mail.

(Kate, Pavilion 24, Fort San)

During the mid-1930s, the tone of *The Valley Echo* changed considerably and this may have resulted from the selection of a new editor. Although the two line jokes continued (from 1930-1935, about 65 entries), a new section called the 'Saskasagrams' was included in each issue of the journal. This section commented on the social activities of the physicians, nurses and patients. For example, there were reports of nurses who went to Regina, attended a party, or became engaged.

By 1937, the articles in the journal were predominately written by physicians and were very serious in nature. The content of the articles during the mid-1930s relate to tuberculosis and its treatment,

prevention, and follow-up. The light-hearted mood of the previous years disappeared from the pages of the journal. The incidence of nursing students contracting TB continued to be a concern in *The Valley Echo* and references were given to the incidence from a national perspective.<sup>19</sup>

A new section on letters from patients included thank you notes to doctors and nurses. An occasional joke is included about the nurse or her response to a patient request, however, there are no cartoons related to nurses or their antics (especially those with sexual overtones) on the ward. The issues published during the late 1930s include photos of patients in solariums, in the kitchen, and in their rooms. The journal depicts the seriousness of the disease and stresses the importance of contacting a doctor as soon as possible.

Another large section of the journal during this time is related to the activities of the Saskatchewan

Anti-TB League. An occasional poem is included about the nurses but for the most part, the journal has a more professional image. In 1937, for the first time, professional nursing activities were included in the Fort San report. In addition, reports of the annual meetings of the Saskatchewan Registered Nurses' Association (SRNA) indicate the number of nurses who attended the meetings and the discussion that occurred about current practice issues for nurses.

The effect of the depression in the province is reflected throughout the general theme of the issues. Nutrition is mentioned as a factor in the treatment of TB but it is also recognized that good food and sanitation is difficult to obtain in the rural areas of the province. Towards the end of the 1930s, the issues of the journal included posters of nurses encouraging men to sign up for the war effort and to sign up for the fight against TB.



(Author's Collection)

Cartoon from the *Valley Echo*, 1925.



The cartoonist sees the effect of cross word puzzles on the San nursing and cleaning staffs.

Cartoon from the Valley Echo, 1925.

(Author's Collection)

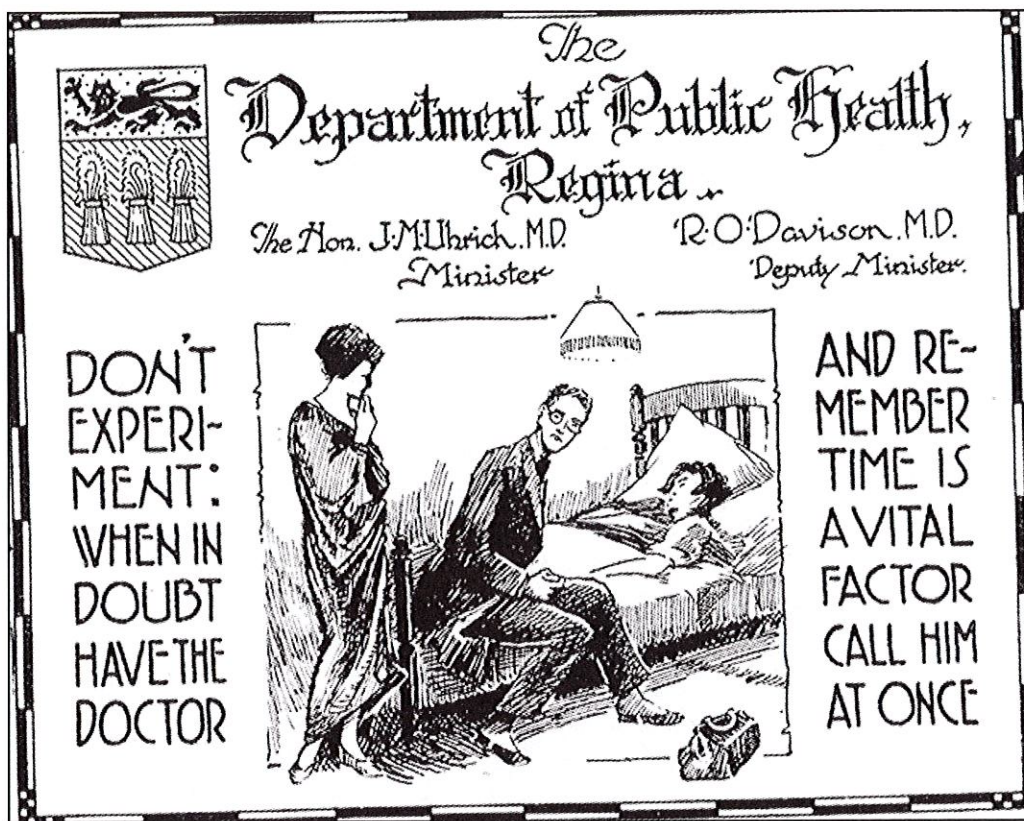
The issues produced from 1940-43 are medically oriented with a short section on news from the war front. At this point in the *Journal*, there are even fewer two line jokes and references to lighthearted prose. The journal focuses on TB and what needs to be done to diagnose and treat the disease.

### Summary

The role and image of nurses change during the years of 1923-1943 as fewer and fewer pieces of prose and poetry are written about them by patients, doctors, and other staff. The tone becomes considerably more

respectful. In the issues from the 1930s, there are very few articles related to nurses and their romantic attachments. Perhaps, some other factors are in effect, as time passed, many patients went home only to return and be readmitted to the San. Other patients stayed year after year waiting for that clear x-ray and the doctor's word that it was alright to go home. Patients formed friendships only to have these friends die from complications or to realize that their own cough and the red stains left on their pillows was a death warrant.

The longer the San was open, the more those patients realized that TB was not an easy enemy to overcome. The majority of patients at Fort San came



Cartoon from the Valley Echo, 1936.

(Author's Collection)

from farming backgrounds and the family left behind on the farm was struggling not to lose the farm given the failing economy. Both the internal and external worlds had an effect on the writings of the patients, nurses, and doctors. The journal from Fort San provides a glimpse of the role and images of the nurses through the prose, poetry, and cartoons that were published in *The Valley Echo*.

### Endnotes

1. Saskatchewan Lung Association, n.d. "Canada's role in fighting tuberculosis." Retrieved from [www.lung.ca/tb/index](http://www.lung.ca/tb/index) (September 24, 2004)
2. R.G. Ferguson, "The Saskatchewan Sanatorium," in *The Valley Echo*, (October, 1927): 16.
3. Ferguson, (1936). "The nursing of tuberculosis patients in a general hospital," *Report of the Saskatchewan Hospital Association*. Regina, SK: Regina Press, 297.
4. *Ibid*.
5. Jean B.D. Larmour, *A Matter of Life and Breath: The 75 Year History of Saskatchewan Anti-Tuberculosis League and the Saskatchewan Lung Association*, (Saskatchewan Lung Association, Regina, Saskatchewan, n.d.): 6.
6. P. Kalish & B. Kalish, *The Advance of American Nursing*, (Toronto: Little, Brown, and Company, 1986): 366.
7. Noyes, as cited in Kalish & Kalish, 1986, 400.
8. *The Valley Echo*, February, 1925: 18.
9. *Ibid*, 1925:15.
10. *Ibid*, June, 1926: 11.
11. *Ibid*, 1923: 14.
12. Kalish & Kalish, 366.
13. *Ibid*, 370.
14. Upton, E. F. (1927, May). Tuberculosis nursing in sanatoria. *The Canadian Nurse*, XXIII, 243-246.
15. Forrest, A. (1931, November). Increase of tuberculosis among nurses. *The Canadian Nurse*, XXVII, 578-581.
16. Rhonda Smith, "The Nursing of Tuberculosis Patients in a General Hospital", in Report of Saskatchewan Hospital Association (Regina, King's Printer, 1939): 33-37.
17. D.Grimes & R. Grimes, "Tuberculosis: What nurses need to know to help control the epidemic", *Nursing Outlook*, 43(4), 1995:164-168.
18. R.T. Washburn, "Tuberculosis in the Nursing Profession," (Report of the Committee on Research to the Canadian Hospital Council, Ottawa, Ontario, 1937), 29.
19. Isabel Stewart, "Tuberculosis in the nursing profession". In *The Report of the Committees on nursing and nurse-training in Canadian hospitals and tuberculosis in the nursing profession, 1937*, Bulletin #22.

# In Memory of Seymour Martin Lipset

By Duff Spafford

Seymour Martin Lipset, author of *Agrarian Socialism*, one of the indispensable books about Saskatchewan, died on December 31, 2006, at the age of 84. Lipset was born and raised in New York City, the son of Russian Jewish immigrants; his father was a printer and his mother a dressmaker. As a student he took a keen interest in left-wing politics. He was interested especially in why socialism did not flourish in the United States, and was intrigued by reports of the growing popularity of a left-wing party, the Cooperative Commonwealth Federation (CCF), in wartime Canada. He was enrolled in a PhD program in sociology at Columbia University when, in 1944, he found his thesis topic in the election of a CCF government in Saskatchewan. The following year, at the age of 23, he set out for Saskatchewan, where he spent altogether some fourteen months doing archival research, circulating questionnaires, and conducting a great many interviews. His orientation to Canadian society and politics was assisted by two years spent teaching political science at the University of Toronto while he wrote the thesis that became *Agrarian Socialism*.



*Seymour Martin Lipset*

*Agrarian Socialism*, published in 1950 by the University of California Press, is an examination of the development and coming to power of the CCF in Saskatchewan and the party's first five years in office. Reviewers generally had high praise for the book's mixture of history, analysis and tables of data, and the word "brilliant" was used more than once. Frank Underhill, who knew both the CCF and Saskatchewan, called it a "masterly analysis" in *Canadian Forum*, noting especially Lipset's account of the high degree of participation in politics and community affairs in rural Saskatchewan, and his treatment of the CCF party's retreat from some of its more radical policies

and professions as it tried to enhance its appeal to the electors in the 1930s. In *Saskatchewan History*, O. W. Valleau, who had been a minister in the government under study, detected a "cynical note" in Lipset's view of the retreat from radicalism, and judged that Lipset was unduly pessimistic in thinking that a socialist government was subject to conservative tendencies that would be hard to resist. All the same, he found "much of interest and value" in the book. H.B. Mayo, of the University of Alberta, wrote that the book was "not to be missed by anyone who wishes to understand the nature of the C.C.F. and western Canadian political movements in general." It is fair to say that, after

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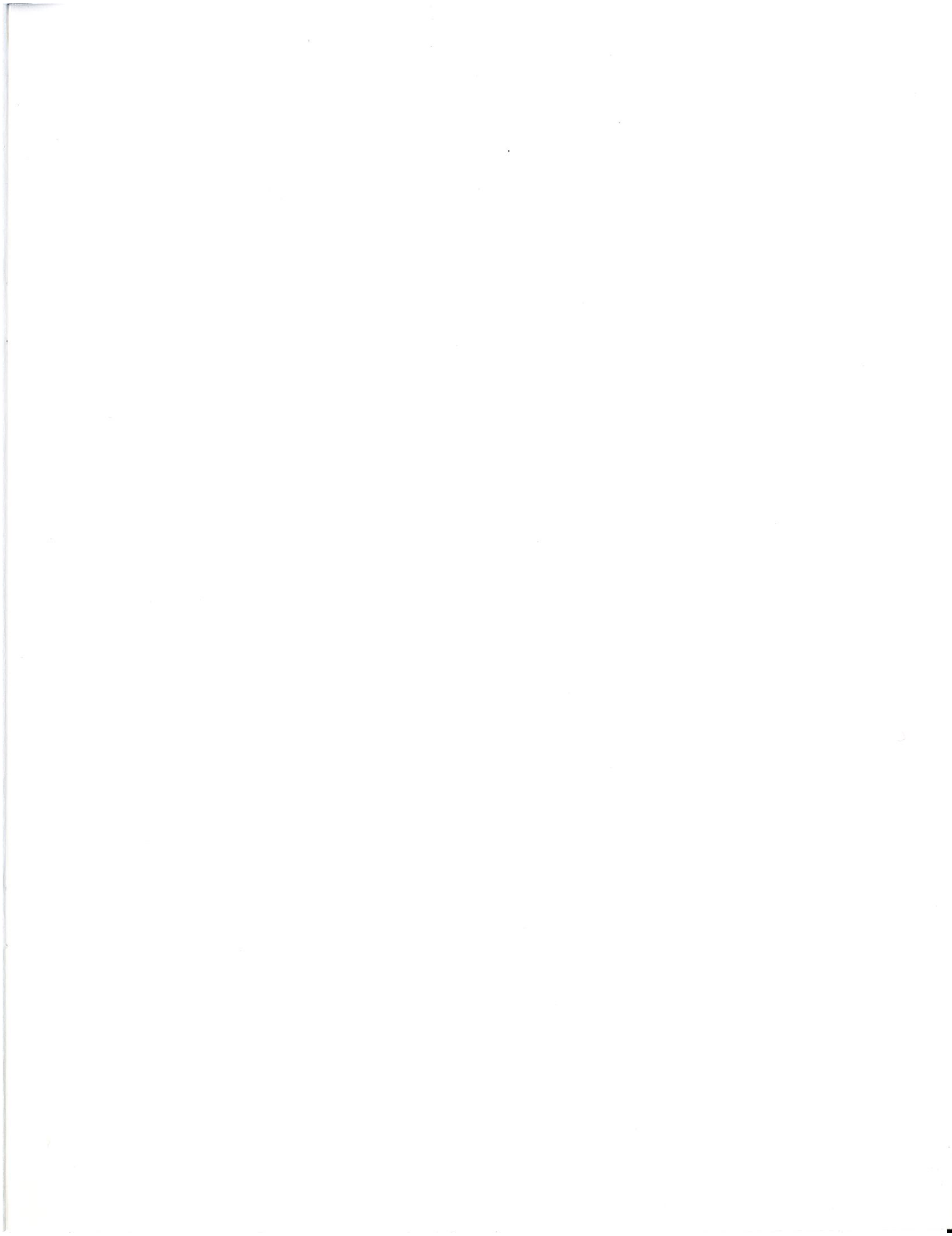
more than half a century, *Agrarian Socialism* remains the standard source on its subject.

Teaching at Harvard, Stanford and other universities in the United States, Lipset was to become one of the best-known and most influential social scientists of his day. He was a prolific writer whose clear writing style and knack for asking interesting questions made him an academic to be read and cited: a British journalist once called Lipset “one of America’s most useful intellectuals.” His name is on the title pages, as author or editor, of close to fifty books and his articles number in the hundreds.

He had the distinction of serving as president of both the American Political Science Association and the American Sociological Association. The theory and practice of democracy made up his principal field of research and writing, but he had a wide-ranging curiosity that extended to public opinion, trade union organization, right-wing extremism, the American political tradition, the sociology of academic life—and, not least, Canada, a country in which Lipset maintained an interest for the length of his career. One of his books, *Continental Divide* (1989) is devoted to a comparison of political culture and values in Canada and the United States. The Seymour Martin Lipset Lecture on Democracy in the World, delivered annually in both Canada and the United States, is co-sponsored by the University of Toronto where Lipset began his academic career.

When a paperback edition of *Agrarian Socialism* was brought out in 1968, Lipset wrote in its introduction: “I still feel a little awed, even at this distance in time and space, that a young man from New York City, who had literally not been more than a few miles west of the Hudson, could think of heading off to the Canadian prairies to study the political behavior of wheat farmers. That the effort turned out reasonably well, I owe...to the patience of the many hundreds of Saskatchewan residents who were willing to try to teach me.” There were, he said, “few political units, relatively small in population, as interesting as the province of Saskatchewan.”





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