

Volume 65 • Number 2 • Fall/Winter 2013

# Saskatchewan HISTORY



# The Saskatchewan Archives Board



*Trevor Powell, chair of the Saskatchewan Archives Board (and former provincial archivist) chats with Minister Responsible for SAB, the Honourable Nancy Heppner (right), during the Harvest Fair. Joining the discussion is ministerial assistant Tennile Olson (centre).*

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# Saskatchewan HISTORY

Volume 65 • Number 2 • Fall Winter 2013

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Visual artist and author Arnold Isbister painted this espe-  
cially for SAB as illustration for his reminiscence (begins  
page 12). You can purchase this and other art by Arnold,  
as well as his books, by contacting him at [aji@shaw.ca](mailto:aji@shaw.ca). See  
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## Frank Korvemaker retirement



Frank Korvemaker celebrated his retirement in May after more than 45 years with the civil service, both federal and provincial. His long and esteemed career with the Saskatchewan government started in 1979 with the Heritage Branch of the Department of Culture and Youth. Passionate about built heritage, Frank was instrumental in the establishment of the Saskatchewan Heritage Foundation and served as its first manager. He also served as the Foundation's research and restoration advisor on architectural and restoration

projects. Additionally, Frank devoted twelve years as development coordinator of the Claybank Brick Plant National Historic Site. In 2004, Frank switched from appraising built heritage to appraising documentary heritage when he joined the Appraisal and Acquisition team at the Saskatchewan Archives. Frank's passion for the preservation of our province's history remained strong throughout his career and his knowledge, as well as his cheerful and easy going manner, will be missed by his colleagues and clients alike.

After 45 years in public service, Frank Korvemaker retired in May. Be sure to read Frank's review of Bernard Flaman's new book on historical Saskatchewan architecture beginning page 38.

## Original northern journals repatriated to Saskatchewan

In the spring/summer 2013 edition of *Saskatchewan History*, we featured a book review of *Distant Summers: P. G. Downes' Journals of Travels in Northern Canada, 1936 - 1947*, penned by Les Oystryk. We are excited to report that, thanks to the encouragement of journal editor R. H. Cockburn, the Downes family has donated the Saskatchewan-related documents to SAB - and what a treasure trove of northern history they contain! Be sure to check our spring/summer 2014 edition of *Saskatchewan History* for a full feature article regarding the original journals and how they found their way back Saskatchewan.



P. G. Downes on one of his northern adventures. SAB uncatalogued.

Corrections - In the spring/summer 2013 edition, the article entitled, "Sophie and August: A love story" contained several errors: on page 5, the couple are referred to as "the Dubnyks" instead of the Mutalas; moreover, they were married near Hafford and moved to Kenaston. And on page 8, the illustration caption should state the house was near Hafford, and the home pictured on page 10 was purchased in 1938, not 1928 as stated. Finally, Marion Mutala's award-winning book is called *Baba's Babushka: A Magical Ukrainian Christmas*.



# Harvest Fair celebration



Left: Nadine Charabin, manager of SAB Reference Services and publication coordinator for Saskatchewan History, and reference archivist Tim Novak, showcased archival materials to guests at the Harvest Fair.



Right: Linda McIntyre gets some assistance from FOSA member, Barr Gorkin, to draw for door prizes at the Harvest Fair.

On September 23, SAB hosted a Harvest Fair in the Regina reading room. The fun event was well-attended, with more than 60 guests gathering to hear greetings from Provincial Archivist Linda McIntyre, and Minister Responsible for SAB, the Honourable Nancy Heppner. Guests sampled food and spirits produced in Saskatchewan, and had the opportunity to study archival documents firsthand. SAB staff and Friends of

the Saskatchewan Archives (FOSA) were on hand to explain archival practice and the event culminated in a draw for several amazing gift baskets filled with home-made Saskatchewan treats – pickles, preserves, and more. The ultimate door prize was a framed copy of a photograph that resides in the SAB permanent collection, won by Edie Finkeldey.



## Obituary: Douglas Bocking, 1925 – 2013

We note with sadness that Douglas H. Bocking, former associate provincial archivist and long-time *Saskatchewan History* editor, passed away on October 18, 2013 at the age of 88. Having worked as a high school teacher in Melfort, Bocking received his Master's degree in history from the University of Saskatchewan in 1959. He joined the staff of the Saskatchewan Archives Board on July 1, 1957, and served in a number of positions at the Archives during his career. Mr. Bocking was the editor of *Saskatchewan History* from 1962 until his retirement in 1986.

*Douglas H. Bocking, editor and archivist, at his desk, 1980. SAB S-B6536.*

"Two men standing waist-high in a wheat field on unidentified farm. A tractor and swather are at the edge of the field. 1920s?" Photo credited to J. James Studio, Prince Albert. A framed print of this panoramic photo was given as a door prize at the recent Harvest Fair. SAB R-D1192



## Diverse storytellers: diverse perspectives

One of the most gratifying aspects of my work editing this journal is my interaction with the diverse mix of authors whose work we publish. They all come from different backgrounds and submit very different perspectives on our history – and it is with the greatest respect that I strive in each edition to allow the storytellers to speak with their own voices.

Let me say how proud we are to publish Nelson Wiseman's scholarly look at the long-term impact socialism has had on our provincial outlook. In addition to being an acclaimed political scientist, professor and book author, Dr. Wiseman is a frequent and sometimes controversial commenter on our national political scene.

We also proudly present the work of another scholar, Dr. Franklin Foster, an author and educator who in addition to operating Foster Learning Inc. (based in the Alberta side of Lloydminster) has published a book on Lloydminster: *Bordering on Greatness: A History of Lloydminster's First Century*.



Above: Journal editor Myrna Williams and SAB executive director of Archival Programs and Information Management, Lenora Toth, at the Harvest Fair. Lenora Toth also serves as general manager for Saskatchewan History. Below and opposite page: SAB S-SP-A21090-2 and SAB S-SP-A21090-4: Swedish family in Saskatoon celebrating Christmas. December 13, 1983.

This edition also presents book reviews from two staff archivists at SAB, and from a librarian with a keen interest in local history, Kam Teo. Each book review author has provided interesting analysis of new books that discuss various aspects of our history: our literature and architecture – and some dire politics of the past.

No author's work has had more impact on this issue than that of Arnold Isbister, whose personal reminiscence is told with both a child-like voice and some very adult analysis of the events he describes. I don't think I have ever been more touched by a story in this journal than I have been from working with Arnold on his glimpse of the life-changing decision made by Fred Sasakamoose – the first indigenous NHL player -- back in 1954. Not only did Arnold Isbister submit his inspirational story of recognition and gratitude, but he also custom-painted the beautiful painting we have showcased on our cover to illustrate his story.

Since Arnold's story of childhood wonderment takes place at Christmastime, it inspired me to work with SAB archivists to share more historical stories and photos from the winter solstice. Thus we are excited to present selected Christmas reminiscences told by some of our earliest homesteaders, and a selection of archival photos that show some of the ways diverse Saskatchewan people have weathered the cold, dark season: a photo essay showcasing outdoor winter activities, and, dispersed throughout the journal, a selection of festive photos from the mid-twentieth century, photographed by and featured in Saskatoon's daily newspaper, the *Star Phoenix*.

You might say that the articles and images tucked inside this issue are as eclectic as the gifts found in a child's stocking on Christmas morning – and we hope you enjoy them all in this, our final edition of 2013.

*Myrna Williams*  
Editor, Saskatchewan History





## A Visit from Christmas Past



R-A 18800: Percy's Butcher Shop in Broadview, decorated for Christmas, circa 1912. Percy Whitemouth and William Quail posed together, no identification of person on the left of photo posing with the poultry.

*We thought you would enjoy reading how some of Saskatchewan's earliest homesteaders celebrated the festive season. And thanks to Saskatchewan Archives reference archivists, who uncovered a treasure trove of pioneer reminiscences, we proudly present some wonderful winter stories.*

*In 1954, provincial archivist Lewis Thomas sent out a questionnaire intended to gather Christmas reminiscences from Saskatchewan homesteaders, to be shared through a radio broadcast (SAB, S-X2, File 2664). The questionnaire asked about preparations, special foods, and company for the special day, as well as gifts, activities, and how the respondents felt about their modern, mid-century Christmas celebrations as compared with 'the old days.' We chose (and lightly edited) some of the most-descriptive responses, and hope they remind you of special winter-time celebrations in your own past.*

### *Christmas in the Old Days*

*H.A. Anslow of Stony Beach, SK, wrote his memories like a story, even including a title for his reminiscence:*

**H**ow well I remember as a small boy the Christmases of long ago. How we used to count the days for at least a month to the most important day of the year. The plum pudding and mince pies that mother used to make well in advance. And the arrival of the big box from the mail order house in Toronto that contained not only the necessities for the winter months but some things that were not entirely essential.

At last the great night came and we went to bed early only to wake in the middle of the night to feel our stockings, which were always hung at the head of the bed, and speculate what the various objects in them might be.

At last morning would come and after the excitement had subsided a bit, Mother would begin bustling about preparing because our neighbours the Chattertons, who were old friends of my parents in England, would arrive about 11:30 and there would be more presents for us kids.

How well I remember the smell of the roast beef – we didn't have turkey in the Old Days. Anyway, the English seemed to prefer beef.

The buzz of conversation as my father and Mr. Chatterton would discuss politics in the old country and world affairs in general. It must have been hard to keep up with events in those days: no radios, phones or cars. But then, there were letters and papers from "home," which were timed to reach us about then.

After the dinner had been disposed of, us kids would go outside and toboggan for an hour or so if it was not too cold, coming in later for nuts, candies and perhaps an orange or apple.

After that, we would play "Crokinole," "Parcheesi," "Old Maid" or "Authors," while the older folks would play whist or just talk.

Supper would now be in the offing, and how we managed to stow away another meal of mince pies, fruit and cake I shall never know.

After the dishes were done, we might sing and when a few years later, we were able to afford a piano, we would gather around and sing, "Hark the Herald Angels Sing," "Good King Wenceslaus" and many others. Sometimes when we got tired of singing, I would play my accordion or show my magic lantern slides. In later years, we young folks would dance for a while.



As I think of the many presents I received, two stand out especially. One was a red sled which I treasured for years, and another was a watch, which by the way still keeps excellent time.

About 11 o'clock, the neighbours would think of going home, the horses would be brought out of the pole and straw stable, hitched to the bob-sleigh or "jumper," and away they would go through the frosty night.

We kids would go off to bed feeling a little sad that Christmas was gone for another year.

And what of Christmas now? Our "children" are all grown up and have young ones of their own, and it is difficult or sometimes impossible for us to get together but I am sure that in spite of the many changes, the Christmas spirit is still there.

*Submitted by Chas. C. Bray,  
Wolseley SK:*

Looking back to the old time Christmases and New Years' celebrations, I am reminded of the informal character of the proceedings on those occasions, and everyone was welcome whether invited or not. Nearly all brought presents for the children – nothing elaborate but all done up in coloured papers and ribbons.

There was always a Christmas tree fully decorated and I've seen trees of native poplar with every limb wrapped with green tissue paper, which really looked as fancy as any evergreen and as fully enjoyed by the wee ones.

There would be a bag of candies or something for everybody handed out by a real Santa Claus with a white beard and long hair and big corporation and hearty laugh. Nowadays, who would think of barging in on a house party of that kind without an invitation!

In 1899 we were ranching and lived sixty five out of town and had a prairie road only sixteen miles of the way. To avoid winter travel, all our groceries were teamed in before severe weather set in. It



*R-A4808: In 1903, John P. Swedberg and his family celebrated their first Christmas in Canada, at Marchwell, 1903: daughter Alida, shown holding the zither, was blind.*

*R-A 21770: Staying warm by the fire, taken in 1913 at 2805 McCallum Avenue, Regina. Seated in the chair at right: Mrs. Rigby, with Bruce Rigby at her feet; Marie Rigby next to Bruce on floor; Merle Rigby beside Marie, Fred ?? next to Merle (he was killed in WW1), on the chair to the left is Percy Musgrave, a family friend. The woman seated at Percy's feet may be Marion Rigby; Eric Rigby is seated with his back to the fireplace.*

took three days for the round trip. That year, and just about Christmas time, a good friend and fellow rancher rode in to rest his horse, and to tell us he had covered the range and invited everyone on our behalf (!) to come to the celebration we were planning for the New Year. "Yes," he said, "I think I've seen them all within a radius of twenty miles and they're all coming, young and old, and cowboys, and all the instruments they have."

Well not to let a good friend down nor disappoint all our neighbours, we rose to the occasion and preparations started. Mincemeat puddings and pies were made. We had poultry and all sorts of game and a dandy four-year steer hanging up. I never knew before that my wife was an expert candy maker, but she was. She had taffy and nut mixture, peppermints and fudge and even chocolate.

The big day arrived and so did the countryside. They came in sleighs and on horseback. Our stable and sheds could accommodate all the horses but where would we put the people? We just had two houses and it was turning into a cold stormy day promising a regular blizzard which would stop anyone from returning home that night.

The matter was solved by allotting one house to the women and children, and the other house, with a large room for dancing, to the men.

All the blankets and fur robes were packed in. All the women turned in and helped with the dinner. Liquor was prohibited but choke cherry wine was served with meals. It was a day and lasted into the wee small hours. The women made up the beds in their house and the men did the same in theirs, using blankets, robes, and what have you, spread on the floors, and peace and quietness settled down.

Near noon Jan. 2nd, the men rolled out and did the stable chores and the women prepared a substantial noon-breakfast. The storm had eased up but the drifts were deep. Everybody sleepy but happy. Those who had the longest way to go started home first, while others stayed to "help with the clean-up job."

Those were the days and the country where good fellowship prevailed. I never knew any class of people as generous and friendly as the ranchers in that part of the country and in those early days. That's where I learned to be a good cooperator, for of necessity, we had to work the range together. There were no fences then, and the round-ups, and branding, and dipping, and trailing cattle to market was a community affair.

*Submitted by Mrs. M.M. White of Cawston, BC:*

Christmas of long ago was a wonderful time in our home when, as children, my brothers and I looked forward to Santa Claus coming and all the extra activity and good things to eat. I do not recall any decorations or even a tree. Of course, at our Sunday school concert, there was the tree, but it had to come from away up north and was ordered in good time.

But for weeks before, preparations for the cakes, plum puddings, and the luscious mince pies began. The raisins for them all had to be seeded by hand, and the bigger of us children had to help at it in the evenings. A large bowl of raisins, which had been covered by boiling water to 'plump them' and water then drained off, was set on the table and we children, with hands fresh from soap and water had to squeeze out the seeds. Often when the parental eye was turned, these seeds were shot with thumb and finger across the table at an unsuspecting child. Many a raisin found its way down the little red lane, and many a reprimand we got, with a threat of "no cakes" if we did not stop. It was a happy day indeed when we got our first raisin seeder, bought at an auction sale by one of our bigger brothers. Currants had to be picked over and washed. Orange, lemon and citron peel were bought in chunks and had to be cut up. Today you can get the seeded raisins, seedless raisins, cleaned currants and cut-up peel in packages but cakes, puddings and pies do not taste one bit better. If in or around the house when the puddings were being made, everyone had a stir at them for good luck, even to the wee toddler who stood on a chair and had its little hand grasping the spoon, guided by Mother. I have and still use

*R-B 10074 (1): Icelandic immigrants recreate the Nativity scene for the Icelandic pageant at Wynyard Federated Church, 1926.*



that recipe, only instead of boiling it tied in a floured cloth, I pack mine into pint sealers leaving an air space, fasten the top down and boil it in a pot of boiling water.

As the day of Christmas drew nearer, shortbread was made, doughnuts were made and fried in our own home-made lard. Mince pies, good and rich with plump raisins, ground beef, chopped suet and apples (which were quite often dried or evaporated) were made and frozen. And it just would not have been Christmas without one of our own raised turkeys, all stuffed and trussed up and ready for the morning oven, if our company was to come to us.

Mother's brother and family lived about four miles in the country in a large old farmhouse and we alternately had Christmas. We youngsters liked it best out there. There was lots of room for play without getting in the way of our elders. Then there were pets, calves, pigs, colts which we could not have in town. At last, Christmas Eve had come. Every last child had a bath in the washtub near the kitchen stove and hustled off to bed earlier than usual to keep in with Santa but not before the stockings were all hung in a row and leaving a lunch for good old Santa, while the boys would sometimes leave some oats under a tree for his reindeer. What a mad rush in the morning to get those stockings with a few candies, an apple, an orange, and some little gift for each. My doll was no Eaton's Beauty but a very plain wax doll with matted hemp for hair – and oh, how I loved her. My parents could not afford much but I honestly believe the children in those days were much happier with the little they got than the children of this day and age. The boys earned their money by

sawing wood or herding cattle and I was given some so we were able to buy little gifts for our parents and each other.

If we were going to the country for dinner, we all piled into a big sleigh with hay and robes, and with the sleigh bells jingling we dashed through the frosty air. There was a piano there, so we often gathered in the parlour and had a singsong. "Jingle Bells" was always a favourite. "Oh Come All Ye Faithful" and "Silent Night, Holy Night" were among some of the carols I remember. One song the older ones sang I never forgot: it was "The Mistletoe Bough." We gave and also got the usual cards – much smaller and plainer than we have now but the greeting was just as sincere. As we grew older, we used to dance the square dances with our cousin playing on the mouth organ. We played games -- "drop the handkerchief," "scissors crossed or uncrossed," "I wrote a letter to my love," "syllables and scenes" and others. We did have a few toffee pulls but that was found too messy for the small children.

Yes, I do remember one Christmas we awoke to a real Saskatchewan blizzard and bitterly cold. We kiddies did want to go so badly but our folks exerted themselves to give us a pleasant day at home and ere long, our disappointment was forgotten and all were happily playing crokinole, fish pond, or shooting caps from a toy pistol to see the other fellow jump.

Between Christmas and New Year's, we had our Sunday school concert when each child in the district got a bag of candy and a small gift off the tree, and Santa was there in person. What a thrill that was, as we younger ones really believed in him. There was always a program of recitations, dialogues and songs.

SAB R-A 7438: A pioneer Christmas gathering in Crane Lake, 1900. Looks like a mild Christmas day, given the lack of coats and bare ground. Lucy Sommer of Gull Lake identified all those in the photo: back row, left to right are: H. Bohman, Geo. Donegan, (?) Sealou, E. Williams, Jack Clark, Jimmie Speirs, (?) MacIntyre, and Mrs. Newbury. Front row, left to right are: Geo. Robinson, B. Oxley, Mrs. Jones, Mrs. Chase, A. Newbery, C. Jones, E. Chase (cook of cow camp), Fred Craig (cowboy foreman), and Mary (the skivvy). "Skivvy" was a primarily British term for a maidservant.



In those days, everyone was on a level and parents could not cater to their childrens' whims by giving elaborate gifts to out-do the Jones but all were happy and content with what they got.

Times have indeed changed and the youngsters of today get just about what they ask for, whether their parents can afford it or not. The parents are to blame for this themselves and I do not think the children are nearly as happy or contented as we were back in the pioneer days of 1886 – 1895. THOSE WERE THE GOOD OLD DAYS.

*A joint reminiscence submitted by WHS Gange,  
Red Deer Hill, SK, with Mrs. Ruth Giles of Prince  
Albert*

Our first Christmas in the NWT, 1899. Preparations: first the house had to be white-washed, inside and out. Then we children spent evenings making tissue paper chains, cut in inch strips, and in red, white and blue stuck together with flour paste, while Mother was busy cooking and sewing. The house was decorated with spruce boughs and paper flowers my mother made. We always had a Christmas tree, and decorated it with paper chains, rose hip chains, and popcorn strung on thread (corn came in our Xmas box from grandmother in Ontario).

We generally had a suet pudding with raisins and currants and spices. We always had both apple and mince pie; apples came dried in Christmas box, and the mince pies made with lean beef, cooked and chopped, suet, apples, raisins, currants and spices. She always made cookies, ginger snaps and doughnuts, and a Christmas cake (at least we called it that). It would be a white cake with raisins and currants and molasses to darken it and spices. We would have roast barnyard chickens with dressing and good gravy and lots of garden vegetables (we had hickory and butter nuts from the box).

Sure we always looked for Christmas mails, which was once a week from Qu'Appelle and came by horse stage and often got parcels from the east.

[For gifts,] Mother, Father and we seven children would all have something off our Christmas tree, something from the box: they made popcorn balls and taffy and pulled it, and made birds and twisted canes, some big and some small to suit the size of the children. Even we older girls made hankies and jewel boxes and strung beads and made pin cushions out of silk or velvet. There were mitts and stockings and scarves knitted from yarn from the box when we were away in dreamland. (Our school closed the last of October).

We always had singing; we had brought an old Melodium out with us. My mother played it. We sung mostly hymns, such as "Away in a Manger" and "Glory to God in the Highest," "While Shepherds Watched Their Flock by Night," and others, also school songs. We would have a little programme of songs, recitations, stories – Mother was a wonderful storyteller. There were mouth organ selections and also my father played his fife.

The neighbours often put on a Christmas Eve party, with singing and dancing. And games, --like "Jolly Old Miller," "Guessing Games," "Dropping the Handkerchief," and "Grunting Game" (telling by the sound of voice when they grunt who has been caught in the ring).

The old time Christmas: we made our own fun and amusement and I think the real reason of Christmas was more stressed than now. The Christmas of today is too commercialized and people buy more than they can afford. I think we were happier then than now at Christmas.

R-A 20095: Togo School concert, circa 1910 at the Presbyterian church: Mrs Thompson, on the left in the back row, and Mr. Jim Franklin.





SAB S-SP-A26518-54; City crews decorating the streets of downtown Saskatoon for the festive season, 1986.

## Fred Sasakamoose: Free to choose

By Arnold Isbister

I remember the first time I ever saw him play. I was five years old at the time, living on an Indian Reserve we called Sandy Lake but technically and legally, by Government and Treaty, the correct name was Ahtahkakoop, meaning a “blanket-of-stars.” I came with my parents into Debden, a village nearby where Fred and his wife -- my older sister Loretta -- lived. It was Christmas time and we had come to visit while they were there -- and Fred was going to play for the Sandy Lake Chiefs in a hurriedly arranged exhibition match against some all-stars. I can't remember who the opponents were -- I was just excited to be going to Debden to see the “city lights.” Hockey? At that period in my life I really couldn't care less about people chasing a puck or a frozen horse turd on the lake or river, but the action to follow would change my view of him. Fred did something wonderful, I knew this, but just what it was remained a mystery to me until I was older.

We pulled into Debden in our Caboose: a small cabin on a sleigh with tiny windows to look through and warmed by a miniature self-made wood stove. The reins to the horses were fitted through small holes below the two front windows or ‘windshield’ (a set of glass panes) that could be opened when you wanted or needed air-conditioning. Smoke from the miniature heater trailed into the night air as we entered Main Street. Overhead in the twilight were rows of red, blue, green and yellow lights that sparkled through moulded glass; the air bustled with the activity of horses, cars, people and the sounds of carols coming from some loudspeakers placed on top of business roof tops. There was a hardware store, its window decorated with sprayed snow, coloured stencils of holly -- and a Chinese-owned restaurant with rows of Chinese red lanterns. The grocery store had stacks of wooden crates of Japanese oranges; beside them were bins of Christmas nuts and ribbon candy that looked like wrapping paper. I was in heaven! I slid open the window on my side and stuck my head through to get the full picture unfolding before us. Mom and Dad pulled over, tied the team while I stood there in awe, speechless, staring in wonderment at the lights. They did their shopping while I tailed in a slow trance, often stopping, to my parents' annoyance. The holiday smell permeated the atmosphere and I drooled at the enticing arrangement of pastries, baking and bon-bons. Too soon we were finished shopping and exited the fantasy, back to our world of cabooses and horses. The team stood waiting, sleeping as they stood with icicles, frost dangling from their nostrils, maybe dreaming they're reindeer, I thought in amusement. Then, with a jerk, they came to attention as Dad unhooked their reins from a post. The traces chimed along



*Fred Sasakamoose hockey card. Courtesy the author.*

with the jingling bells on the collar harness as the horses shook themselves awake, their massive heads bobbing in anticipation. A stream of vapour rushed from their noses, dislodging some of the built-up icicles as they turned to the street. The sleigh runners creaked as they broke the ice formed under the metal and we were off to Fred's.

The team trotted on past Main Street and down another when Dad pulled on the reins halting them. “I think this is the house.” Dad said looking at Mom. “He's got electricity!” Mom exclaimed. I wondered at her statement: then it dawned on me as I peered into the house and saw lights blazing. All we had were kerosene lamps -- coal-oil lamps, we called them -- and the gas lamps that you pumped air into to make the flame brighter, used only for special times when relatives might come over to play cards. Wow. I had seen stores in town with lights, but for a home to have them was -- to me -- miraculous.

We got out, climbed the four steps to the door, knocked and waited. The door opened with a jubilant shout of Christmas blessings and a nice-looking man shoved us in. It was Fred, who I recognized from before, probably when he was dating my sister: now they were married and she was expecting. Freddy, as I called him, was stout with wavy black hair, dark eyebrows that arched over shining coal eyes, and a smile that charmed. My sister, Loretta, was pretty with beautiful long hair that reminded me of the models in Eaton's catalogue. She and my Mom looked alike: later I would discover they were sisters – that my real mother had died when I was born and my oldest sister had raised me. At this time, though, I didn't know the whole story and Loretta seemed to lavish undue attention on me. I cowered behind my Mom, hiding as they bent forward to 'inspect' me, oozing words of compliment, "Isn't he cute? My, how he's grown." That soon subsided as they gossiped, rehashing news that was old and updating on old relatives.

I let my eyes wander and there in a corner stood a Christmas tree – with electric lights radiating in many colours! Oooohh! I could not take my eyes off this mirage. Slowly, with tenuous steps, I approached it with sanctity. Never had I seen such a sight of beauty! I was close now, close enough to touch it -- but I didn't for fear of breaking the spell. I saw the colors twinkle off the garlands and glow in the angel hair. Balancing on the branches were round and elongated bulbs glossed in brilliant paint, embossed in intricate designs. At one point I snuck under, laid down and looked up. It was amazing! I sat before the tree in glorious adulation for what I thought were hours when a sound of frenzy interrupted my reverie.

A group of men came into the room, all excited, shaking Fred's hand and patting him on the back. Soon they were gone, taking Fred with them. We kept visiting, the adults doing all the talking. I was happy to wander and wonder. The house was adorned for Christmas: garlands of tinsel, hand-made red and green streamers hanging from the ceiling, pine wreaths on the doors with the smell of fresh pine enveloping the house. It wasn't long after when I was informed we had to go.

"Go where?" I asked in dismay.

"We're going to go see Fred play?" my Mom stated in a question as we left.

I ran to the team, now unharnessed with blankets on them, "We're not using the team!"

"Why?" I asked. I always had a why for every statement adults made.

"Because we're not!" My Dad sounded disgusted, fed up with all my 'whys.' "Come on, let's go." He offered his hand and we walked together, my legs trying to keep up with his. Soon he would reach down (like always) and pick me up.

We walked to the rink, just down the street and visible from Fred's house. This was the biggest building I had ever seen: a ceiling way up high with lights that came down on long wires dangling with frost, and space – so much space in a building! And on the floor – ice! How could that be, ice for a floor! I was amazed beyond description staring at the floor as I pondered on why anyone would do this. I could hear distant echoes as if we were in a valley, and then noticed people way down at the other end, rows of people piled on top of each other. I wondered how many there were, too many for me to count, maybe a hundred! Hundred was a number I could not yet perceive and I remember someone saying, "The whole town is in here!" A town in one building! Unbelievable!

Since all the rows had been taken, we jostled for a place to stand, elbowing our way into a corner spot. We were in the 'corners' as they say, where the players often congregated to fight over the puck.

There was a buzz in the air, a constant hum filled with murmurs, whispers too low to distinguish. The air was electric with anticipation. I didn't know why, but I could feel it as I squirmed in my Dad's arms, twisting, turning to look around me for the answer. It seemed forever before anything happened. Suddenly a bunch of men clad in funny clothes came onto the ice to a ruckus of boos. They were gliding on these metal things called skates. The crowd settled into a restless silence; then a roar began slowly, growing louder then erupted to a crescendo of screams. "Fred's on the ice!" someone screamed. All mayhem broke loose! It shook me, scared me so that I put my head into my Dad's neck and clenched him. It was a crowd gone crazy, I had never seen people act like this and it scared me. "Look, look!" my Mom said, "there he is!" She pointed to a person and sure enough this huge guy comes to the corner on those skates and smiles at us. It was Fred! Numerous times he skated by smiling and the people around us screamed, "Freddy, Freddy!" A wind seemed to swirl from the circling skaters as Fred led the pack, going round and round, getting faster – swoosh, swoosh! The air, both physical and psychological, gave me the chills as my body senses heightened -- like I was part of a hunt. The exhilaration grew in me, a passion rose from the loud rush I could hear ... but in this noise there was a silence to his movements.

Amidst the growing excitement, a murmur came through the crowd, "Fred cannot play due to NHL sanctions!" The audience droned. In an instant, it seemed the life of the crowd died: their eyes glared to their cups of coffee in abject dejection and a dull gleam filled the space where child-like anticipation had burned: like kids without a Christmas. The crowd was dead silent, anxious with anger. After a boring first period came to an end we went inside a large room where it was warm, a huge stove was burning and a layer of smoke clung to the ceiling. There wasn't much talking, just warming

up then going out again. The game continued into the second period; the opposing team kept scoring goals: the score was now 5 to 0. The second period ended and we went back into that room, with people cramped side by side. The excitement was gone. Standing on the floor I turned around and around feeling lost amongst these people; I looked into their faces while they smoked cigarettes, drank coffee, all in a kind of acquiescence that they saw Fred on the ice but they didn't see him play. Quiet resignation prevailed.

Third period. We muscled our way back into our spot. The action stopped, and some guy from our team skated into a separate box looking mad, with the guy in a striped shirt following him. There seemed to be an argument; the Ref motioned to him and he walked off to the dressing room, real mad. Our team, which had only two lines to begin with, were now dog-tired. The crowd went crazy yelling at the Ref and calling him some bad names and saying that, he should have glasses... or that maybe the other team had given him money. My Mom told me not to pay attention, but I thought a bit then said, "Well maybe he does need glasses and the other team was going to buy them for him?" They all laughed, even some strangers beside us.

The Ref went over to the team bench and they talked for a long time – suddenly, there was a commotion in the stands. "Look, look! Isn't that Fred talking to the Ref?"

A whisper went through the crowd and that exhilarating feeling came over me again as I watched and listened to the people in anticipation. Something was happening. Everybody was watching in silence as the Ref went to the bench of the other team: a look of wide-eyed apprehension filled their eyes as they look at each other. The whisper got louder. The excitement electrified the air; people looked at each other in amazement. Suddenly the building shook with a collective scream. I grabbed my Dad again, this time with a fear of the sound that vibrated in my chest. The thunder subsided and I looked to see what happened. There on the ice was Fred – he was going to play!

As if ordained, the puck came to him and he cradled it softly, maneuvering it while he skated slowly in a circle measuring the players and space before him. The crowd grew louder. At the end of this loop, Fred gained speed, flying across his blue line, past an opponent, then another at centre, stickhandling so swiftly that they stood still -- shocked, wondering what just happened. The crowd erupted. This was in a wink of an eye, a microsecond, and the stick made no sound as he shifted the puck from side-to-side mesmerizing the opponents as they went to one side while he went the other way.

Now he dug in, picking up more speed. His skates tore down the ice, his sweater flapping in the wind he created as he flew through the silence that now pervaded the arena. All you could hear were those skates grinding the ice, the audience

felt the ground rumble and shake as he sped past them -- everyone held their breath. An opponent rushed towards him but he stopped and swerved, letting the guy flutter into nowhere. Calmly, effortlessly, Fred skated around the face-off circle with his body so close to the ice, his shoulder almost touched.

Only one opponent was left. Fred skated straight at him; you could see dread in the player's eyes. The opponent crouched, spread his legs for strength to block the check he thought was coming. Instead, Fred sidestepped him, threading the puck between his legs before he could move; you could see the resignation of a beaten man. Fred embraced the puck on the other side of the player and with a snapshot (not a slapshot) he put it high in the corner. The crowd exploded! The fans had been drowning, holding their breath; now, in a collective rush of air, they blew the roof off the arena. Observing the mass hysteria around me, I let out a holler too!

Fred scored repeatedly, tying the game at 5 - 5. Viewers were in shock at his display of skill. They couldn't believe a person could be that good -- but he had more to come. The game was nearly over; time was winding down: one minute to go.

Fred had played the whole third period without a break; in the future he would do this constantly, sometimes on the ice for a whole game! He received the puck at the centre red line; with a simple shoulder dip he beat their centre, then easily sped around defence and coming into the corner. He stopped and waited for his team to get into position for a pass but none made the effort, probably too tired at this point. He did a half-turn, looking up to see where everyone was; seeing no one open, he skated behind the nervous goalie to our corner, stopping in a spray of ice. The wave of tiny little spikes of ice flying off his skates sprayed my face. He was right here! I could touch him! Someone said, "Go Fred, beat 'em!" and he was gone in a mini-second, his blades digging in, ripping the ice. "Where's he going?" someone asked.

Fred skated to the centre line, seemingly nonchalant -- no hurry -- then he turned and the crowd began to cheer. He did a couple of strides to the blue line and let go a slap shot -- but there was no loud 'slap,' just a tick. The throng of people cheering became silent, their mouths open but nothing came forth as they held their scream in expectation and watched a legend take place before them. It was a shot no one saw, not even the goalie, who reacted after the puck was in the net. There was a hush, a stillness born of awe like when something sacred has happened. Did we just see that...or not see that? There was a puck there, in the net, but how? There had been barely a sound - like a sniper with a silencer. We didn't see it fly; all that occurred was a movement and the puck ended up in the goal. Unbelievable! Again the mob ignited in a deafening roar that hurt my ears. This time I didn't turn away but watched the madness.

"Dad - what happened?" I asked in confusion.



He laughed...then yelled, "We won! We won!"

Following the Christmas holidays of 1954, in the New Year '55, Fred Sasakamoose made a life-changing decision. Despite repeated invitation to return, he did not go back to the Chicago Blackhawks but instead played amateur and stayed close to home.

Fred was finally free.

He was born in a time of subjugation when the old ways were gone-- only memories were left of the open nomadic life his grandparents had led. He, along with thousands, were imprisoned in a small parcel of land, and were then forcefully educated, in captivity, by the Church and Government Residential Schools that dictated his culture was sinful. A great athlete would emerge from this mayhem of tyranny, moulded by the pain inflicted by oppressors who interred his passion for freedom.

Fred had not known that, in his final year at St. Michael's residential school in Duck Lake, his team had been scouted by the NHL during their successful bid to win their division championship. But late in the summer of 1949, having completed his compulsory grades and thinking he was free at last, the NHL scouts would find him and his family in a dusty field, far north of his Reserve, harvesting happily (and by choice) for farmers. His parents, advised by these strange men who they thought had his best interests at heart, persuaded Fred to sign on as 'property' of the Chicago Blackhawks via their farm team, the Moose Jaw Warriors. Again he found

himself caught in a system, contracted and bonded to do someone else's bidding. Fred would escape multiple times from Moose Jaw and ironically (or paradoxically) in his last game of his last year in the Junior Championship he was ordered to report to Chicago the next day for active duty with the NHL Blackhawks. He was honoured, excited to go but with the trepidation of leaving behind his family and culture for a world he was alien to and a feeling that his life was not his. This aspect would haunt him continuously, gnaw at him while he was away, proving to be his nemesis. This was pivotal later when he married Loretta, who was not sentimental to any plans of living in Chicago either. Now in his adult life he would rebel and choose freely the path he wished, breaking ties with authorities that 'owned' him.

Later he said that he had regrets and felt like he let his people down by not staying in the NHL. But we, the People, the fans, thought differently because he brought what we had been missing – hope. We had an icon, a real-life hero to look up to and provide a direction and meaning. Freddy doesn't know it but countless hordes of kids were affected and made mindful positive choices on account of him. He was not someone removed, distant, and unreal, like a figment on TV: Fred was real, a person we could touch...and we did.

He was born on Christmas day and we always stopped by if he was home, to say Happy Birthday and Merry Christmas. You know, I can't remember what material things I received that Christmas of 1954 but I will forever remember Fred's 'presence,' which was the gift that he ultimately gave us. Thank you, Fred.

*Arnold Isbister comes from the Ahtahkakoop Band in north-central Saskatchewan. In addition to being an accomplished visual artist, Arnold is the author of two books, Stories Moshum & Kokum Told Me (2005) and Stirbugs and Screws (2011). Many of his stories are reminiscences of his early years on the Reserve, including tales, legends and historical stories from his parents and culture. CBC Radio's Legacy series has aired one of Arnold's stories, and he has hundreds more he hopes to share with the public.*



*Left: Fred Sasakamoose hockey card. Courtesy the author Right: Fred and Loretta: they were newly married and expecting a child when Fred decided to quit the NHL in 1954. Courtesy the author.*

Saskatchewan is known for long, cold winters – but Saskatchewan people are equally known for coping with winter. How? By bundling up and enjoying outdoor activities in spite of the cold. Hockey – both playing and watching – has long been a popular winter pastime; we’ve selected some early hockey photos to share with you. Kids don toques and mittens and go sledding, snowmobiling and tobogganing: just look at the Dalmeny schoolkids out tubing – makes one chilly just to see the photos. How about a winter parade? Many of us over the years have taken our kids and braved the elements to welcome Santa’s arrival. And good old Saskatchewan ingenuity helped people figure out how to get around in winter – from the “caboose” in Arnold Isbister’s story (illustrated in his painting on our cover) to the early snowmobiles that were created here, sometimes called snow tractors and sometimes snowplanes.



SAB R-B 5658: A hockey game outside the newly built Saskatchewan Legislature, 1912.





SAB R-B 565: First ladies' hockey team in Regina, 1896. Opposite page top: SAB R-B 10383: Davidson's hockey team, 1907. Opposite page bottom: R-A 18674(2): Santa float in Regina, no date.







SAB S-SP-A21084-17 and also SAB S-SP-A21084-20: Grade 6 children from Dalmeny School being pulled behind a snowmobile on an inner tube across a field at a Christmas party held at the farm of their teacher, Mrs. Walker, December 13, 1983. Below left: SAB R-A19974: Joe Baker's snow tractor, 1942, Nipawin. Below middle: SAB R-A 16611: Lizer's snowplane, Gravelbourg: 1946-47.

# Lloydminster mayor pioneers crucial step toward Medicare

By Franklin L. Foster



SAB S-B 152: A view of Lloydminster, founded in 1903, in its early years. Photo undated.

*It is not too great a stretch of the imagination to argue that Medicare may have been born in Lloydminster and that the father of collective health care could be the town's mayor, D. G. Tuckwell, supported by his elect[ed] councilors.<sup>1</sup>*

While these experts, and others,<sup>2</sup> have correctly given credit to former mayor D. G. Tuckwell, they need to understand the unique character of the Lloydminster community in order to better appreciate how this important step came about. It is the purpose of this article to flesh out something of the community culture which channeled and supported Tuckwell's important contribution.

Lloydminster was founded in 1903 by a group of over 2,000 British colonists. They considered themselves standard bearers of the world's most advanced culture, one whose legal, political, linguistic, and scientific achievements they believed were vital to building a new and better civilization. Not least among these British achievements was medical care, both with regard to scientific advancement of treatment and new standards of patient care and community support.

The colony's founding father, Rev. Isaac Barr, had among his detailed plans for the colony a subscription-based health care co-operative. Over 300 colonists paid the £5 fee, which entitled them to the services of doctors, nurses, and hospital care for the first year.<sup>3</sup> Barr's untimely exit from the community allowed his rival founding father, Rev. George Lloyd, to denigrate Barr's idea as only an "iron cot, with mattress and pillow, and one leg broken."<sup>4</sup> However, Barr could not fairly be blamed for the fact that the two medical doctors he had recruited literally abandoned ship in Liverpool when they saw the crowded and chaotic conditions on board the *S. S. Lake Manitoba*.<sup>5</sup> Nurses rendered valiant service along the way of the colonists' epic journey, who travelled by ships across the Atlantic, and then by a series of trains across most of North America. The tent hospital Barr had arranged for saw much service in Saskatoon while the colonists were camped there and before they moved on by horse or ox-drawn

wagon to their homesteads over 200 kilometers from the end of the rails.

The new community of Lloydminster was unique in several ways. First, there was the large number of people who arrived all at once: almost 2,000 arrived where there had been nothing before. Secondly, they arrived as a group, having shared the experience of the epic journey to bond them together. Thirdly, whether they settled in the town, or in the surrounding districts, they still had this sense of belonging to the one group. There was no distinction in the early days between town and country folk, with many moving back and forth. Thus, the term 'Lloydminster and District' was appended to many local organizations and groups, and remains so to this day.

So it was that within weeks of arrival, hospital-type services were being dispensed from two of the early lumber homes by two nurses: Mrs. Beveridge and Miss Drewe. These nurses also led the campaign for a "proper hospital" and so a flurry of church picnics, box socials, dances and other community fund-raisers ensued. In April of 1906, the first stand-alone hospital opened. It was a wood-frame structure on land donated by the Town to the governing Lloydminster Hospital Association Board.

Meanwhile, in 1905, the two provinces, Alberta and Saskatchewan, were created by the federal government and this bureaucratic fiat threatened to split the community of Lloydminster asunder. The Town of Lloydminster, Saskatchewan, and the Village of Lloydminster, Alberta, were both incorporated by fall 1907 – but the people still thought of themselves as one community, as illustrated by their co-operation on a joint fire brigade, weed control, sidewalk



construction, the community water well, a night constable and the local flour mill. Included in this list, and often the thorniest problem, was the financial support of the hospital.

Repeated requests came to the Town Council for financial aid to the hospital. At times there were actual closures of the hospital for want of funds. These closures were a serious community problem. Many began to look for a 'once and for all' solution. At one of the regular joint meetings between the Town Council and the Village Board in early 1912, a proposal was put forward by the Town, recommending that the Town and the Village should jointly underwrite the operating costs of the hospital and, in return, they would take joint ownership of the land. The Town proposed that the costs be shared 3/5 by the Town and 2/5 by the Village, the same portion as they appointed delegates to the Hospital Board. The Village Council countered that they would undertake to pay only 1/7 of the costs. This led to the Town Council lashing back with a proposal to undertake all the costs but remove the Village delegates on the Hospital Board and replace them with its own nominees.<sup>6</sup>

Cooler heads prevailed but the financial problems did not go away. The next proposal was for the Town to float a debenture for \$2000, then give the money to the Hospital Board for the operation of the hospital. At the same time the Town would enter into an agreement with the Village for repayment of the debenture on the basis of a per capita formula. This plan was put before a special meeting of ratepayers on Monday, April 15, 1912 at 8 pm in Wood's Hall. It was at this meeting that D. G. Tuckwell emerged into a leadership role in Lloydminster.<sup>7</sup>

David Grieve Tuckwell was born in Chesham, Buckinghamshire, England, on January 8, 1865. In the 1881

Census of England, although only 16 years of age, Tuckwell is listed with the occupation of "Printers Reader:" that is, he was already in the newspaper business. After some years in the newspaper trade in England, he sailed in January, 1892, aboard the *Orizaba* with his wife and two small children to Australia where, in the community of Bathurst, New South Wales, he became Editor of the *Daily Free Press*. In 1903, the family, now with two more children, arrived in Canada for David to join the editorial staff of the *Manitoba Free Press*, then Western Canada's most prestigious newspaper. However, he left there later to become a newspaper proprietor, first of the *Rainy River Gazette*, then the *Yorkton Times*, and finally, along with his son Ronald,<sup>8</sup> in early 1912, purchasing the *Lloydminster Times*.

Ironically, in light of later events, D. G. Tuckwell emerged at that April 15, 1912 ratepayers' meeting as a leader of those opposed to the hospital financing debenture. On the strength of his performance, and his influential role as owner and editor of the *Times*, he was elected to the 1913 Town Council.<sup>9</sup> During the campaign, he used the pages of the *Times* to fully lay out the situation. He described how Nurse Beveridge had worked so hard to keep the hospital afloat that it had burned out her own health and he gave details of the precarious financial situation.<sup>10</sup>

The financial prudence that helped him win a seat on Council did not solve the ongoing financial problems of the Lloydminster Hospital. However, the seeds of a broader solution had already been laid. It was usual in Lloydminster to look beyond the Town and the Village themselves for partners. Thus, in May of 1914, an Agreement in Principle was concluded in which Town and Village ratepayers would support the hospital with a per capita tax levy and the surrounding rural municipalities of Wilton and Britannia

1906 Lloydminster hospital: Lloydminster's first stand-alone hospital opened in April of 1906. In this photo, you can see the hospital matron, in white, on the steps: at that time, it was Miss Alice Hunter. Photo courtesy Provincial Archives of Alberta (A1242).



on the Saskatchewan side, and Streamstown and Oxville on the Alberta side, would be taxed at a rate of one cent per acre, and jointly own the Hospital property.<sup>11</sup> This kind of arrangement would come to be known as a 'union hospital,' that is, a hospital supported by a union of the municipalities whose populations it was likely to serve.

This idea immediately caught the notice of other communities. Lloydminster joined the Saskatchewan Association of Urban Municipalities in 1915,<sup>12</sup> and Tuckwell (Mayor in 1914 and 1915) presented a paper at the SUMA Convention in 1915. As Dale Eisler has pointed out in his recent book:

*Up to that point, the municipality where a hospital was located, with the help of a small per patient grant from the provincial government, paid much of the hospital care costs for patients who often came from other municipal districts. Tuckwell [emphasis added] called for all municipalities to pay for hospital care, which took financial pressure off the province and led to the 1916 legislation opening the door to municipal union hospitals. The union hospital system capital costs were financed through the sale of municipal debentures, while maintenance and operating costs were paid for through user fees and taxation.<sup>13</sup>*



SAB R-A 1527: Tuckwell's persuasion for "union" hospitals was so successful that Lloydminster had a new hospital by 1917.

Reflecting Lloydminster's bi-provincial influence, both Saskatchewan and Alberta passed enabling legislation in 1916 to provide for such joint action by a group of municipalities. The approach solved a number of problems. It provided a means for provinces to deflect calls for them to finance area hospitals; and it provided a larger tax base for

support of local hospitals. The "union hospital" idea was also a large step on the road toward general taxpayer funded support of health care. The idea worked so well in Lloydminster that a new hospital was built and opened in 1917.

Tuckwell moved to Regina in 1916 where he took a job with the provincial government helping to implement the Union Hospital approach across the province. By 1948, eighty-eight municipalities provided their residents with hospital service at municipal expense. By this time, though, D. G. Tuckwell had retired to Victoria, British Columbia, where he died on June 6, 1941.

The system that Tuckwell had played such a large role in creating provided hospital care to those who would otherwise not have had it. As Tuckwell himself described it in his Canadian Medical Association Journal article in 1917:

*As an indication of the esteem in which these institutions are held where they have been established, the following quotation from a letter written by the secretary-treasurer of one of the contributing municipalities may be of interest: "Before the inauguration of the present system (that is of free hospital accommodation) only a small percentage of maternity cases passed through the hospital, the women cheerfully taking a chance on their lives for the sake of helping the farm along. During the past five months nineteen women from this municipality have been in the hospital. We are saving the lives of our women at the small cost of three quarters of a cent per acre."<sup>14</sup>*

Lloydminster residents can take pride in the accomplishments of their former Mayor. However, it is also thanks to the unique character of Lloydminster and District – an area which from the beginning prospered because of co-operation, volunteerism and the necessity of over-coming bureaucratically imposed obstacles. Local political leaders, and indeed all residents, thus share recognition for this pioneering effort that laid the groundwork on which the elaborate structure of tax-payer funded hospital and health care was later built in Canada.

*Endnotes begin page 43.*

*Franklin L. Foster is a double graduate of both the University of Alberta and Queen's University. Dr. Foster authored a biography of Alberta Premier John Brownlee, plus works on Lloydminster (his hometown) including Bordering on Greatness: 1903 – 2003. Currently, he does contract research and writing, in print and web formats.*



SAB S-B 8765: Tuckwell with his wife, son and daughter, and two grand-daughters, in Regina, 1940.

# The Socialist imprint on Saskatchewan politics

By Nelson Wiseman

Saskatchewan's socialist party, the Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) and its New Democratic Party (NDP) successor, held office in all but 16 of the 63 years following its first triumph in 1944. Recurring election victories led academics to label it as Saskatchewan's "natural governing party."<sup>1</sup> The CCF's victory was surprising to many because Saskatchewan had relatively small cities and a small labour movement; Saskatchewan was the heart of Canada's prairie wheat belt. The CCF-NDP's staying power also proved exceptional, deviating from developments elsewhere in North America where most socialist movements and parties waned and wilted during the Cold War.

What accounts for social democracy's rise, its triumphs, and persistence in Saskatchewan? This article's dual objectives are to answer this question by accounting for the origins of Saskatchewan's socialist legacy as well as the perpetuation of that legacy. The starting point for disentangling the socialist threads woven into the province's political and institutional cultures is to see Saskatchewan at the turn-of-the-twentieth century as a new society. This article builds on and modifies Louis Hartz's idea of the transplantation and congealment of ideological genes from an older imperial to a newer colonial society.<sup>2</sup> In Saskatchewan, immigrant urban Britons radicalized by late nineteenth century industrialism carried their old country labour-socialist inclinations with them and exerted political influence disproportionate to their numbers in the province's formative years. Unlike Ontario, Manitoba, Alberta, and British Columbia where socialist parties also had some purchase, British labour-socialism proved particularly potent in rural Saskatchewan because of its many Britons there.

To account for the persistence of the socialist legacy, the article cites critical political, policy, and contextual events. It points to the province's unique ethno-cultural mix, its cooperative tradition, urbanization, and the logic of the parliamentary and single-member plurality electoral systems. Declining ethnic prejudice, a more equitable electoral map, and paradoxically, in light of the party's origins as the Farmer-Labour party, a steadily diminished farmers' movement contributed to the CCF-NDP's durability. In the first three decades of the century, the cooperative tradition embedded itself in Saskatchewan's culture; in the subsequent three decades, the province's social democratic political culture congealed. Social democracy so implanted itself that its partisan opponents have felt compelled to accept much of its legacy.



SAB RA 8802: Woodrow Lloyd and Tommy Douglas, taken in 1956.

## Contextualizing Lipset's 'Agrarian Socialism'

Although the prairie provinces shared agrarian foundations, divergent political cultures and party systems evolved in them. Nevertheless, many observers, especially those from beyond the prairies, generally depicted the region's politics in all-embracing terms such as "prairie populism," "prairie revolt," "prairie progressivism" and "western alienation." Some federal legislation too – the *Prairie Farm Rehabilitation* and the *Canadian Wheat Board Acts* -- designated the region as cut from a single piece of cloth.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1950s, three studies rooted in three different disciplines – history, sociology, and political theory – explored the political cultures of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta respectively. *Manitoba: A History* by W.L. Morton, *Agrarian Socialism* by Seymour Martin Lipset, and *Democracy in Alberta* by C.B. Macpherson devoted little attention to comparing the provinces.<sup>4</sup> Morton explained why coalition governments had dominated Manitoba politics for decades, Lipset detailed the CCF's triumph in Saskatchewan, and Macpherson discussed why one party consistently won overwhelming parliamentary majorities in Alberta.

Personal backgrounds, disciplinary orientations, and the politics of the authors coloured their studies. Morton, whose father had sat in coalition cabinets for over three decades,



SAB R-A375: E.A. Partridge, and the other officers of SGGGA, posed in an auto. Partridge organized the first prairie farmers' cooperative and then helped to organize the Farmers Union. Photo circa 1909.

was an Oxford-educated historian and a classical conservative thinker. Bringing an “imperial orientation”<sup>25</sup> to his narrative, he wrote with intimacy about events he had lived through, stressing Manitoba society’s organic unity. Lipset, a Trotskyist sociology student at Columbia who had never ventured more than a few miles west of the Hudson River, sympathized with Saskatchewan’s farmers, particularly its radicals. His study had an exploratory bent: ‘Why socialism in Canada and not in the United States?’<sup>26</sup> Macpherson, a Marxist outsider to the region, used the lens of political theory to discover why Social Credit theories appealed to Alberta’s farmers.

Unlike Morton and Macpherson, Lipset undertook some comparative analysis but his primary comparative case was North Dakota where the socialist-tinged Non-Partisan League (NPL) won office in 1916. Demonstrating his distanced orientation to Saskatchewan, none of the 64 footnotes in his introductory chapter refers to anything about it or Canada’s agrarian experience. Unlike his references to NPL governor William Langer and NPL Congressman William Lemke, neither John Brownlee, Alberta’s premier in the 1920s and 1930s, nor John Bracken, Manitoba’s premier between the 1920s and 1940s, appear in his story. While Macpherson wrote of the false consciousness of Alberta’s farmers and their penchant for agrarian capitalism, Lipset wrote of the socialist

proclivities of Saskatchewan’s class-conscious statist- and cooperatively-oriented agrarians.<sup>27</sup>

### *British Labour-Socialism in Rural Saskatchewan*

Lipset noted that the CCF adopted much from the British Labour Party’ program, but he did not account for this influence and underplayed it. Rather, he took the NPL as the model for agrarian socialism in Saskatchewan. His introductory chapter “The Background of Agrarian Radicalism,” for example, contains no references to British Labour nor does it note the exceptional presence of Saskatchewan’s British-born farmers. My thesis is that it was the British Labour values of British-born farmers, more so than the NPL modal, which prevailed in Saskatchewan. The NPL’s experience in Saskatchewan and North Dakota highlights the contrast between the two adjacent jurisdictions. Although NPL candidates appeared in Saskatchewan’s 1917 election soon after their North Dakota triumph, they garnered less than four percent of the vote.

Deeply embedded anti-statism and rugged individualism were not as prominent in Saskatchewan’s political culture as they were in North Dakota or elsewhere in the United States. Steeped in neither populism nor agrarianism, Saskatchewan’s



SAB RB 4315: A founder of Cooperative Commonwealth Federation, M.J. Coldwell succeeded J.S. Woodworth as president of the national CCF party, 1942 - 1960; he also served as MP for Rosetown-Biggan, 1935-58; photo is undated.

socialist leaders approached public policy quite unlike the North Dakotans. Had Lipset's introduction been "The Origins of Saskatchewan Socialists," it might have reoriented his study from rural North Dakota to the CCF's urban British roots. Saskatchewan's socialist leaders had much "less mud on their boots" than those in North Dakota.<sup>8</sup> Lipset presented the CCF as the "culmination of a half-century of political and economic efforts by western grain farmers."<sup>9</sup> That movement had included the Saskatchewan Grain Growers Association (SGGA) whose first secretary, Fred Green, was a Lancashire socialist, but ardent anti-socialists subsequently took control of the organization.

A critical difference between Saskatchewan and North Dakota farmers lay in their backgrounds, something Lipset did not explore. Of North Dakota's larger population – 577,000 compared to 492,000 in Saskatchewan in 1910-11 – less than one percent, just 4,766 souls, had emigrated from England and Scotland. In contrast, 16 percent, or 71,000, had emigrated to Saskatchewan.<sup>10</sup> Most of them came in the century's first decade when the province's population exploded by 440 percent. Indeed, the number of Saskatchewan's British-born in 1911 approached Saskatchewan's total population of 91,000 in 1901. North Dakota had fewer than 1,000 farmers from England and Scotland and their political impact was marginal; Saskatchewan had many more such farmers and they proved

pivotal to socialism's fortunes. Moreover, twice as many of Saskatchewan's Britons were men as women; Lipset, in a later work, documented men's greater affinity for socialist politics.<sup>11</sup>

Lipset's crucial analytical flaw was in not differentiating in his ecological correlations among those he termed Anglo-Saxons,<sup>12</sup> between those born and politically socialized in Britain and those born and socialized in North America, between those from Lanark county, Ontario (like W. R. Motherwell, Saskatchewan's and later Canada's Liberal minister of agriculture) and those from London, England (like M.J. Coldwell, Saskatchewan's and later Canada's CCF leader). Just as Saskatchewan's Ontarians had brought their partisan Liberal and Conservative inclinations with them from Ontario, Saskatchewan's Britons brought their labour-socialist inclinations from Britain.

Saskatchewan had fewer Britons than either Manitoba or Alberta, but it had as many British-born farm operators as those provinces combined and they hailed overwhelmingly from England's largest cities and the urban-industrial belts around Glasgow and Edinburgh.<sup>13</sup> British-born Scots such as CCF premier Tommy Douglas – politically socialized during Winnipeg's General Strike, which was led by metal trades workers such as his father – and Coldwell, a middle class teacher and member of London's Fabian Society – became prominent in Saskatchewan politics.

Aiding their political ascent was that, unlike Britons in the United States, Britons in Saskatchewan enjoyed a privileged status, sitting atop an ethnic pecking order as British North American colonists from the mother country. Laws and customs confirmed their elevated station including their right to vote in elections. Indeed, Saskatchewan is the sole Canadian jurisdiction that still extends that right to non-citizen British subjects who arrived before 1971.<sup>14</sup> And, unlike Americans, Saskatchewanians, especially their British-born, were grounded in British parliamentary institutions.

Despite the agricultural failures of many of the British-born farmers, officialdom eagerly sought their continued migration as a provincial Royal Commission made clear:

*It is, in our opinion, much to be desired that steps be taken to fit many more British-born to enter into our national life. We admit the apparent failure of some of the schemes so far tried for this conversion of city-bred people of Britain into capable Canadian farmers, but refuse to accept this as final.<sup>15</sup>*

Because of their numbers and status, many rural Britons in Saskatchewan's formative years became farm leaders. Louis P. McNamee, for example, an old country railway worker and trade unionist, served as the founding president of the United Farmers of Canada (Saskatchewan Section). Many of the UFC (SS)'s women also had a British pedigree: Annie Hollis, for example, was the UFC's first woman president.

Two planks in the UFC's platform spoke to its British labour-socialist orientation: "Abolition of the competitive system and substitution of a cooperative system of manufacturing, transportation, and distribution," and "Free trade with the mother country."<sup>16</sup> Informing the UFC's socialist disposition had been former members of the radical One Big Union, which had founded the UFC's forerunner, the Farmer's Union of Canada and whose leadership had been largely British-born as well. After the UFC overpowered the SGGA, it coalesced with Coldwell's Independent Labour Party to form the Farmer-Labour party and became the official opposition party in 1934.

### *Ethno-Religious Forces*

In addition to its unusual concentration of urban-born British farmers, Saskatchewan had an exceptionally large concentration of central, eastern, and Nordic Europeans and Catholics, making it the most ethnically diverse and Catholic of English Canadian provinces. Typically, some media had maligned the early Europeans as "crude," "ignorant," and "unenlightened."<sup>17</sup> The Orange Order claimed their large numbers were the product of a conspiracy between the federal Liberal government and the Catholic Church.<sup>18</sup> To avoid the suspicions of established Saskatchewanians, largely transplanted Ontarians, most in the ethno-religious minorities deferred politically, voting for the governing Liberals in Regina and Ottawa. Notwithstanding such deference to authority, many in authority held them in contempt: the future Minister of the Interior, Liberal Frank Oliver, considered Slavs a "millstone...hung around our necks in our efforts to build up, beautify and improve the country."<sup>19</sup> Another federal cabinet

minister, former SGGA vice-president and Liberal premier Charles Dunning, opined:

*[H]e is not friendly to immigration from Central Europe. He says the country doesn't want any Poles at all. Ruthenians [Ukrainians] are a good deal better but he seems to think that they deteriorate in this country particularly if they are educated. He says they can be educated all right but that they cannot be civilized, at least not in one generation; and that the educated Ruthenian is a menace to his own countrymen and to the community. He is also dubious about Swedes. Those who come to this country are, he says, almost without exception, just one remove from anarchists.*<sup>20</sup>

Oliver and Dunning expressed widespread public opinion. The 1925 election featured only six non-Anglo-Saxon, non-Scandinavian candidates, a reflection of the low status and deference of the Europeans. With the anti-Catholic Ku Klux Klan boasting at least 125 locals, the 1929 election centred on issues of nationality and religion.<sup>21</sup>

Pivotal to socialism's eventual success was the shift in allegiance of large numbers of continental Europeans, many Catholic, to the CCF. This occurred partly because the party and its predecessor farm affiliate, the UFC, had opened themselves to the Europeans in a way that the established SGGA, the Liberals, and the Conservatives, who in 1928 had prohibited Catholics from holding executive positions in their party,<sup>22</sup> did not. Three significant figures exemplify the CCF's relative openness: Danish-born Sophia Dixon served as Hollis's successor as president of the UFC women;

*SAB S-SP-B4694(2) Sophia Dixon succeeded Annie Hollis as president of UFC's Saskatchewan section. Photo taken November 9, 1959.*





SAB SB 5528: Annie Hollis was the first female president of the United Farmers of Canada (UFC) Saskatchewan Section. Undated photo.

Swedish-born Frank Eliason was the UFC secretary, its “single most important individual” and the secretary of the Farmer-Labour party; and Louise Lucas, known as the “Mother of the CCF” and the daughter of German immigrants, gave speeches in German in support of the Farmer-Labour party.<sup>23</sup> The relatively large numbers of Europeans in the UFC and the CCF led the party to print its Regina Manifesto in German and Ukrainian.<sup>24</sup> Saskatchewan had fewer Americans than Alberta, but it had more Scandinavian-Americans than Alberta,<sup>25</sup> and they were more sympathetic to socialism than were most Americans. Eliason, for example, had come to Saskatchewan via Pennsylvania and Minneapolis. He had voted for socialist presidential candidate Eugene Debs in 1908, as did three of the four Americans in the first CCF caucus.

At first, opposition by the Catholic hierarchy stymied the CCF’s growth: in 1934, the Archbishop of Regina attacked socialism as contrary to the faith. Not long before the CCF’s 1944 breakthrough, however, the Church expressed concern for social welfare, declared support for the co-operative movement – Saskatchewan had the continent’s most vibrant – and told the faithful they were free to vote for any party save the Communists. With a lowered Catholic barrier and the appearance of more confident and secure second generation Europeans, support for the CCF rose dramatically, by 22

percent in rural areas between 1938 and 1944 and by 218 percent in Regina’s most European district between 1934 and 1944.<sup>26</sup> The salience of ethno-religious cleavages weakened further with time as the European minorities acculturated, integrated, intermarried, and assimilated. By the 1980s, the “ethnic” label conveyed neither stigma nor advantage; elected as the first non-Anglo premier in 1991, NDPer Roy Romanow’s Ukrainian heritage merited little notice.

After radical Methodists in the social gospel tradition helped to inaugurate the United Church in 1925, it had more members in Saskatchewan than in either Manitoba or Alberta. The church’s humanitarian ethic fed the socialist impulse. Driven to improving man’s worldly conditions, not just saving his otherworldly soul, the church’s highly trained pastorate reinforced the labour-socialist message of the rural Britons. The United Church’s anti-capitalist stance in the 1930s aided the fortunes of the Farmer-Labour party and then the CCF. Of Saskatchewan’s various denominations, the party fared best among the Church’s members.<sup>27</sup> Douglas, a small town Baptist preacher, gave eloquent voice to the gospel.

Aboriginals represented a later source of social democratic support. Although the CCF’s “interventionist modernization” efforts in the Aboriginal north paralleled developments elsewhere in northern Canada, the party earnestly believed destroying the power exercised by northern priests, bootleggers, and “fur sharks” would improve Aboriginal conditions.<sup>28</sup> Signifying the NDP’s subsequent relative popularity in the region, both of Saskatchewan’s first male and female Aboriginal MLAs ran on the party’s ticket, as did the first Aboriginal cabinet minister. Party support among urban Aboriginals is also disproportionately high.<sup>29</sup>

### *Urbanization, Labour, Gender, and Economy*

Wrapped around the cover of Lipset’s updated edition of *Agrarian Socialism* is a photograph of a wheat sheaf. His attention to farmers’ cooperatives was logical: Saskatchewan had 368, one-third of all of them in Canada.<sup>30</sup> “No other political entity in North America has so completely accepted the principle and organizational forms of cooperation.”<sup>31</sup> Lipset exaggerated, however, the CCF’s character as a farmers’ party and understated the province’s rapidly changing economy. Even before his arrival, the numbers of farms and farmers had shrunk, by more than a tenth between 1941 and 1946.<sup>32</sup> Agrarian radicalism was giving way to agrarian conservatism, corporate agribusiness, and urbanization.

Socialist kinship with the cooperative movement was particularly strong. Socialist E. A. Partridge had organized the first prairie farmers’ cooperative and then helped to organize the Farmers Union. CCF-NDP premier Woodrow Lloyd, a product of the cooperative movement, believed “Man is born to live cooperatively.”<sup>33</sup> However, as the rural cooperative movement weakened, the party did not. Paradoxically, it was





SAB R-A9178: Woodrow Lloyd and M.J Coldwell at the CCF picnic, Pike Lake. Photo undated.

during its tenure in 1996 that the Saskatchewan Wheat Pool, whose origins are in the 1920s, became a publicly traded company.<sup>34</sup> Yet, the cooperative legacy persists: Saskatchewan hosts Canada's oldest academic centre for the study of cooperatives.

From its very first triumph, voting reflected the CCF's urban strength. Only seven of the legislature's 52 seats were urban, but all seven voted CCF in all five elections between 1944 and 1960. By 1952, the party's urban votes had exceeded its rural votes even though the province's four largest cities, Regina, Saskatoon, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert, constituted only 19 percent of the population.<sup>35</sup> Agriculture was reduced from more than three-quarters to less than a tenth of the provincial economy between 1944 and 2006, when the NDP was still wielding power. The agricultural workforce declined from nearly 60 to six percent. CCF-NDP caucuses mirrored the changes: 60 percent of the 1944 caucus had been farmers and only six percent were professionals or other businesspersons; by 2006, the ratio had reversed.<sup>36</sup> The NDP's urban strength was such that, although the party outpolled the Conservatives in 1986, it lost the election because its votes were inefficiently concentrated in the cities.<sup>37</sup> In 2003, the NDP's last victory, urban support for the NDP was twice

what it was on farms<sup>38</sup> and, in all 23 urban ridings save one, the party's vote percentage exceeded or equalled its provincial percentage. A more equitable redistribution of ridings benefitted the NDP. In 1944, it had taken one and a half urban votes to equal the weight of one rural vote. By the 1980s, the difference between them was marginal.

Compared to the party's competitors, the CCF-NDP has always exhibited more affinity for wage earners and women. During the CCF's first term in office, trade union membership increased by over 118 per cent.<sup>39</sup> Raised three times between 1944 and the early 1950s, the minimum wage became Canada's highest. The party enacted the country's first 44-hour workweek, its most liberal workers' compensation benefits, and it ensured employees two weeks of annual paid vacation. At the insistence of the party's women activists, Saskatchewan's Bill of Rights, Canada's first, included a provision prohibiting sexual discrimination. Social policies attracted women to the CCF-NDP. It elected three female MLAs by 1964, compared to none for the opposition, and in 1991, it had 11 elected with four elevated to cabinet, including one as finance minister. In the 1990s and 2000s, the NDP appointed almost as many women as men to government agencies and it introduced a range of programs to advance the status of women.<sup>40</sup>

Within a year of the publication of *Agrarian Socialism*, the national CCF publication, *Comment*, in touting Saskatchewan's Crown corporations, "socialist enterprise," devoted more ink to them than to agriculture.<sup>41</sup> The party created the largest stable of crown corporations in the country and together they became the largest employer in the province.<sup>42</sup> To be sure, like all similar parties, the CCF-NDP made its peace with capitalism. Actually, it had never opposed small business. It had always favoured using the instrumentality of government to manage the economy. If government's regulatory powers and indirect management could not achieve a desired result, public ownership or participation continued to be an option. In the 1970s, for example, the NDP acquired much of the provincial potash industry, intervened in the development in the oil and gas sector, and entered joint ventures with private firms in new northern mining projects.

As the world changed, as globalization, the information age, and the knowledge economy came to the fore, government could no longer shelter Saskatchewan by building ramparts against them. The Romanow and then Lorne Calvert NDP governments adopted a variation of British Labour's Third Way thinking, even before Labour's return to power in 1997, by scaling back attempts to direct and restructure economic development. They settled for trying to foster a favourable private investment climate.<sup>43</sup> Saskatchewan's social democrats, like social democrats elsewhere, shifted their focus from guiding economic development to preserving,



*S-SP-B14361(2) Frank Eliason was the UFC secretary, its "single most important individual" and the secretary of the Farmer-Labour party. Photo taken February 10, 1952.*

defending, and extending the social welfare regime they had constructed.<sup>44</sup> The effect on their electoral fortunes was mixed: four consecutive victories beginning in 1991 followed by two resounding defeats since 2007.

### *Institutions: Parliamentary, Electoral, Bureaucratic, and Non-Governmental*

Primaries had permitted North Dakota's NPL to capture the Republican party machinery. However, unlike the United States, where a bipartisan farm bloc of Republicans and Democrats could shape policy, Canada's parliamentary conventions impeded policymaking by trans-partisan alliances. The conventions of responsible government dictate tighter party discipline. Saskatchewan's socialists, therefore, patterned their strategy for winning office and fashioning policy on Britain and its parliamentary and electoral models, not on those of the United States and the NPL. As British labour-socialists streamed into Saskatchewan, Britain's Labour

party was taking shape, its avowed purpose to displace the Liberals and accentuate Britain's left-right political dynamic. Labour governments in the 1920s, much more so than that of the NPL, served as the template for the CCF's electoral strategy, policies, and orientation to institutions of government.

A cultural difference between the NPLers and the CCFers, including its farmers, was the North Dakotans' plebiscitarian impulse. Recall legislation and constitutionally binding referenda, alien to the British- and subsequent Canadian-born leadership of the CCF-NDP, remain part of the NPL's legacy in North Dakota.<sup>45</sup> The CCF never embraced plebiscites. When the governing Conservatives held three plebiscites in conjunction with the 1991 election, the NDP said they would not implement them if they passed, which they did. In this respect, the plebiscitarian orientation of the Conservatives in 1991 was similar to that of the NPL. The NDP, in contrast, characterized the plebiscites as diversions from determining who governs and whose agenda prevails.

The first-past-the-post electoral system, in the context of parliamentary government, benefitted the CCF-NDP by encouraging strategic voting where, in order to defeat the other major party, a voter chooses not his party of choice but the second strongest contender.<sup>46</sup> Since 1938, the party has always placed first or second in the popular vote. As in Britain, the CCF displaced a major party, in this case the Conservatives who subsequently won only one seat in the ten elections between 1934 and 1971. Unlike Alberta's consensual or quasi-party system, Saskatchewan developed a fiercely competitive two-party system. For voters wanting a change in government, the most logical choice is the strongest opposition party. After the demise of the Liberal government in the 1970s, the Conservatives simply replaced the Liberals as the right-wing alternative to the NDP with the Liberals becoming the rump party, losing all their seats in the 1978, 1982, and 2003 elections.

Through his American lens, Lipset wrote of the resistance that established bureaucrats might exert against a new government; he referred to officials who had been intent on undermining Roosevelt's New Deal policies.<sup>47</sup> The CCF, however, inherited a literally scorched policy and administrative record in 1944 because the outgoing Liberals burned all government's records in bonfires behind the legislative building.<sup>48</sup> Douglas's CCF had to begin governing afresh. It attracted and cultivated bureaucratic talent from elsewhere, most notably British socialist George Cadbury, "The Fabian catalyst in Saskatchewan's 'good public administration.'"<sup>49</sup> Others included the future cabinet minister and premier Allan Blakeney from Nova Scotia, British Columbian Tommy Shoyama, Saskatchewan's own Al Johnson, and Manitoba's Meyer Brownstone.

Shoyama and Johnson helped create the provincial and then national public hospital and medical insurance regimes. “[A]ccclaimed in government circles across Canada,” the CCF’s merit-based public service sharply contrasted the patronage machine of the preceding Liberal administrations.<sup>50</sup> Under Cadbury, a central agency of super-bureaucrats sympathetic to social democratic values became the nexus between the collegial “institutionalized cabinet” with its cabinet committee system and line departments, which delivered programs.<sup>51</sup> Ottawa and all the other provinces subsequently adopted this model.

Media and the academy were two non-governmental institutional barriers impeding the CCF’s rise. Regina’s conservative *Daily Star* vilified the fledgling party in the 1930s and the liberal *Leader-Post* continued to do so in the 1940s. As relatively neutral radio and television broadcasting media appeared, newspapers were compelled to temper their partisan narrowcasting. Broadcasting benefitted the CCF-NDP with the expressive and charismatic Douglas, for example, speaking directly to the public on radio. Simultaneously, arbitrary dictates of conservative university officials came undone. In 1938, for example, as the CCF strove to spread its reach, the University of Saskatchewan president had ordered faculty member Carlyle King, the future CCF party chairman, to cease speaking publicly on international affairs.<sup>52</sup> As universities grew in the 1950s and 1960s, the rise of organized faculty power led them to become bastions of CCF-NDP support.<sup>53</sup>

## Conclusion

Conditions change, people come and go, paradigms shift, and culture evolves. Saskatchewan changed dramatically but the socialist imprint on the province persists, despite predictions of social democracy’s demise and despite its apparently weak current condition. Elected as an NDP MLA three years after he wrote of the party’s “decline and fall” in 1968, John Richards conceded four decades later that he had been wrong.<sup>54</sup> To be sure, social democratic thinking evolved and the NDP moved ideologically closer to its original archenemy, the Liberals. However, an ideological evolution in Liberal party thinking from the opposite direction, from negative to positive liberalism, similarly recast that party, as evidenced by the party’s legislative leadership joining the NDP caucus in 1999 to convert an NDP minority into a majority government.

On the surface, the 2007 and 2011 elections suggest that social democracy is a fading force in Saskatchewan. Below the surface, however, social democratic values persist. As one measure, the province’s farmers voted to maintain the cooperatively owned Canadian Wheat Board’s monopoly on barley sales while Alberta’s farmers voted to end it.<sup>55</sup> As another gauge, although the NDP won no seats in Saskatchewan in the 2011 federal election, its popular vote, 32 per cent, equalled its support in British Columbia – another historical mainstay of Canadian social democracy. The federal NDP’s Saskatchewan vote exceeded the party’s vote in every other English Canadian province as well as the party’s national vote.

The Saskatchewan Party, espousing a neo-liberal ideology, has governed since 2007 but it hesitates to undo social democracy’s legacy. Indeed, when the party swept the NDP from office, it disavowed designs to privatize the provincial crown corporations and the health care system and it promised to pursue a non-confrontational, cooperative approach to organized labour.<sup>56</sup> Responses to surveys conducted during the NDP’s worst showing ever in the 2011 provincial election help to explain the victorious Saskatchewan Party’s disinclination to erase Saskatchewan’s socialist imprint: nearly six in ten respondents opposed privatizing any crown corporations and fully two-thirds of them favoured policies to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor. More believed that “the best way to deal with major economic problems” was “more government intervention” than believed it is best left “to the private sector,” and while many respondents agreed that unions “generally ask for too much,” more agreed that, “strong unions are needed to protect employees’ working conditions and wages.”<sup>57</sup> Saskatchewanians’ opinions, strikingly, are congruent with socialist hallmarks: favouring an active governmental role in reducing income disparities and in macroeconomic management.

Saskatchewan’s socialist party has lost power but socialist ideas remain imprinted on the provincial political culture. Like a recessive gene or an impulse in remission, the diminished NDP and its social democratic ethos may well resurface as the people’s choice.

*Nelson Wiseman is an associate professor in the Dept. of Political Science at the University of Toronto. His books include In Search of Canadian Political Culture, Social Democracy in Manitoba, and The Public Intellectual in Canada.*

*Endnotes begin page 43.*



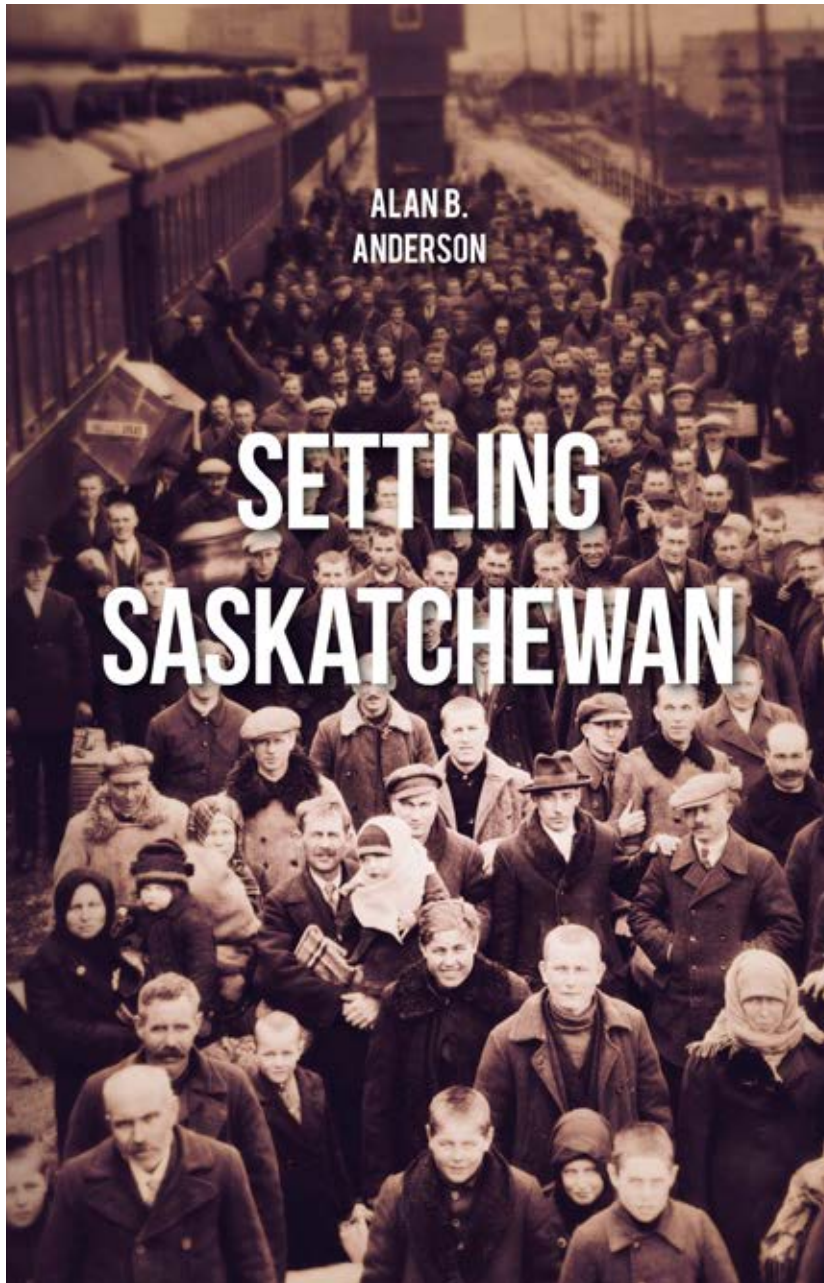
SAB S-SP-A24789-11: This little girl's face shines with concentration as she paints festive pictures onto a window. Notice the rather ghostly snowman or Bonhomme behind her. December 7, 1985.





Top: SAB S-SP-B13505: Betty Dodge, Carol Thomson, Diane Naish and Marilyn Prosko, the Teacher's College snow queen and her princesses at the Christmas dance, Saskatoon. December 18, 1959.  
Bottom: SAB S-B1467: Chanukah party for the Kindergarten class at the Saskatoon Talmud Torah, 1959.

# UNEARTHING OUR ROOTS



***Settling Saskatchewan*** offers the most detailed and comprehensive description of ethnic settlements in the province. Discover the Denesuline, the Cree, and the Métis; the Oklahoma Blacks, the ubiquitous Scots, the people of German origin, Icelandic origin, the Lebanese, the Sudanese, and the Filipinos, among many others. Combining historical, sociological, and demographic perspectives, Alan Anderson enlightens us as to the many people who now comprise Saskatchewan's diverse cultural mosaic.

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**University of Regina Press**

## Architecture of Saskatchewan: A Visual Journey, 1930-2011

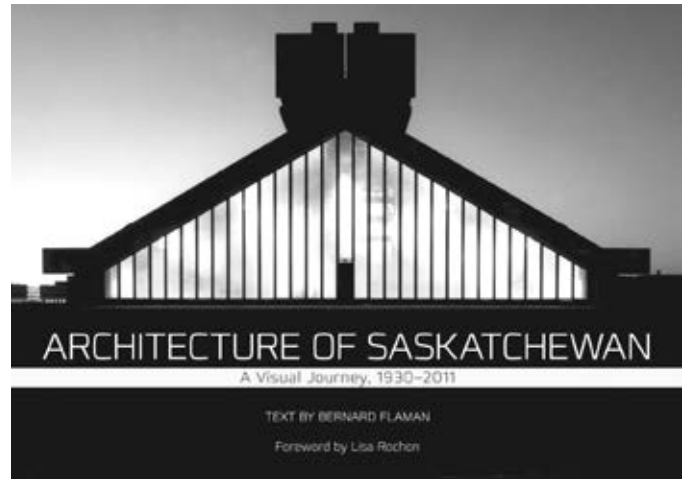
By Bernard Flaman. Canadian Plains Research Center Press, 2013. 234 pages

With the publication of Bernard Flaman's *Architecture of Saskatchewan: A Visual Journey, 1930-2011*, there is now a trilogy of works that document the evolution of Saskatchewan architecture throughout the 20th century. Moreover, each book of the trilogy is written by a Saskatchewan architect. That process began in 1969, when E.J. Gilbert released the booklet, *Up the Years with the S.A.A.: A brief history of the Saskatchewan Association of Architects*, with biographies of some of the founding members, which laid the foundation for two subsequent works.

In 1986, the SAA produced a second publication, this one compiled by an editorial board chaired by Alex Hermann but driven primarily by Wayne Zelmer, entitled: *Historic Architecture of Saskatchewan*. This coffee-table book was heavily illustrated, and included an overview history of architectural styles and trends in Saskatchewan from the late 19th century until the mid-20th century. A highly successful publication, it was the first book to laud the variety of architectural styles that can be found throughout Saskatchewan.

However, a lot of architectural design changes occurred in the mid and late-20th century, and it fell to Bernard Flaman to document these in *Architecture of Saskatchewan*. This book is specifically designed to complement *Historic Architecture*, and for anyone who has read the 1986 publication, that attention to compatibility will be appreciated. Together, the three books stand as key resources for people studying Saskatchewan's architectural heritage.

That said, *Architecture of Saskatchewan* has some marked differences from its predecessors. The text appears to be aimed more toward an academic audience, rather than the popular one targeted for *Historic Architecture*. Another difference is that the text is not extensive: some may argue that more information should have been provided. However, in a book aimed to document the diversity of modern architecture in Saskatchewan, the large number of high quality photographs that illustrate this heritage offsets such concerns.



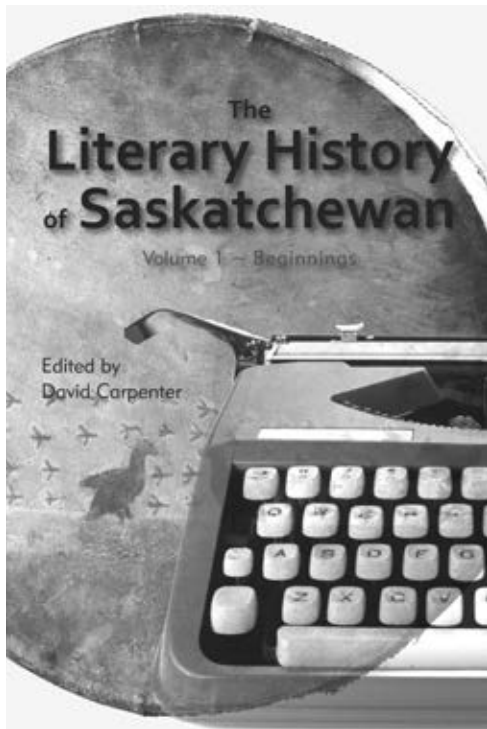
The book's chronological division reflects the changes that occurred around the world from decade to decade, as older styles and building materials were gradually set aside for the new. At times, those changes were deemed too harsh, especially in the aptly termed Brutalist style of the 1960s. This resulted in a certain return to the well-tried and tested designs of the past, as reflected in adaptations of classical building elements, such as columns, capitals, rounded arches and triangular pediments. The book also features buildings of varying sizes and complexity of design, from a small private residence in post-war Saskatoon to the expansive First Nations University of Canada in Regina. There are also some surprises, like the Wynyard Civic Centre – a complex much larger and diverse than one would expect to find in a community of 2,000 people.

*Architecture of Saskatchewan* includes a fine mixture of photographs, architectural drawings and images of models, which help to illustrate the variety of media employed by architects in their profession. As with any publication, it has some minor glitches, which can readily be corrected in later editions. Perhaps it is a reflection of my own aging, but the size of the photo caption text seems particularly small, –like the fine print in legal contracts. And, as with *Historic Architecture*, some captions are too scant, and cry out for more information.

Bernard Flaman's objective was to document and interpret the new architecture that now extends throughout Saskatchewan. In that regard, he has clearly succeeded, and readers will leave this book with a much more informed understanding of how modern architecture has been expressed in the province. This book, like the best of Saskatchewan's modern architecture, will stand the tests of time.

Reviewer Frank Korvemaker is a retired SAB archivist.





## *The Literary History of Saskatchewan Volume I - Beginnings*

*David Carpenter, editor. Coteau Books, 2013. 271 pages.*

This first volume of David Carpenter's projected two-volume anthology, *The Literary History of Saskatchewan Volume I ~ Beginnings*, contains fifteen chapters that trace the development of Saskatchewan's written heritage. Beginning with the Cree tradition of storytelling, and its development into a written tradition after contact with settlers, the anthology goes on to provide a comprehensive introduction to Saskatchewan's literary culture and past, from the writings of the early traders and missionaries, to the innovative poetry of the Moose Jaw Movement, and from playwrights to non-fiction writers. Touching on a wide variety of genres and periods from the perspectives of a diverse group of essayists, Carpenter's anthology offers something for Saskatchewan literature enthusiasts of all types.

The first part of the anthology examines literature in Saskatchewan more or less chronologically from the pre-contact era until the 1950s; these essays are formal and academic. Well-researched and informative, they highlight several key authors of the era and give a brief introduction to their major works. Because many of the writers in this section will be unfamiliar to contemporary

readers, the scholarly style of these essays provides a breadth of historical context and detailed references that will help readers further explore the subject. Several important authors, such as Edward Ahenakew and Sinclair Ross, are examined in more than one essay, offering valuable divergent perspectives on their work. The latter part of the anthology devotes a great deal of attention to the literary boom in Saskatchewan after the 1960s. These essays are more intimate, often written in the first-person by authors who participated in the movements; in their reminiscences, the reader experiences the excitement of the times and events. Throughout the anthology, the essays are concise, offering introductions that will inspire readers to further explore those topics which are of interest to them.

While the creativity and importance of established Saskatchewan authors is emphasized throughout the book, opportunities for aspiring writers in the province are also highlighted. In the anthology's final chapter, "Eminent Migrants and the Community," Martin Winquist discusses writers who have chosen to live and work in Saskatchewan. Winquist illustrates that this province's arts community differs from larger centres because in Saskatchewan, artists depend on each other to succeed; this creates a co-operative rather than a competitive environment that makes this province a unique place to launch an artistic practice.

Several of the essays build to Winquist's last word in the anthology by recognizing the development of literature-based organizations in the province; as writers became determined to develop a strong artistic presence in Saskatchewan, organizations such as the Saskatchewan Writers Guild, the Sage Hill Writing Experience, Coteau Books, Thistledown Press and myriad others blossomed. The essayists' interest in the development of these organizations presents the essential and thriving relationship between the literary and business communities. More than explorations of Saskatchewan's past, these discussions inform young writers of established opportunities in the province and invite them to get involved in today's dynamic literary community.

In the anthology's foreword, Carpenter states that this book is intended for all audiences: writers and readers, university professors and high school students. True to his word, the anthology offers historical analysis for the academic, inspiration for the reader, and encouragement for the aspiring writer. Volume II of this anthology, which will focus on genre in the late 20th century, will be highly anticipated. *The Literary History of Saskatchewan* is time well-spent for anyone with an interest in learning about Saskatchewan.

*Reviewer Lisa Long is an SAB staff archivist.*

## Keeping Canada British: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan.

By James M. Pitsula. University of British Columbia Press, 2013. 308 pages.

James M. Pitsula has crafted a lucid, well-researched, and provocative work that sheds necessary light on the history of Saskatchewan in the 1920s. *Keeping Canada British: The Ku Klux Klan in 1920s Saskatchewan* challenges the popular ethos that suggests racism north of the 49th parallel was somehow more palatable and benign than its American variant. However, the University of Regina historian declares that, in spite of eschewing the violence of its American origins, the Ku Klux Klan's purpose – in what was the third most populace Canadian province – was to preserve a “white Protestant nation of British stock.” (1) Pitsula also demonstrates that this era of rising reactionary nationalism and sectarianism occurred during a time of economic growth: a thesis that confronts the conventional wisdom that xenophobia increases solely during times of economic decline, which was not the case in thriving 1920s Saskatchewan. Pitsula presents historians with a fresh interpretation of the rise of prejudice in Saskatchewan: a nuanced analysis of ethnic bigotry during a decade of turmoil within the context of a post-World War I dynamic and within a country that was politically and socially inching from “colony to nation” (1) that gave resonance to the Klan campaign in Saskatchewan to “Keep Canada British.”

*Keeping Canada British* informs the reader that a Klan organizer from the U.S. state of Indiana arrived in Saskatchewan in late 1926 and by June the next year was holding mass rallies in communities including Moose Jaw, where 8,000 people attended. The rally in this Saskatchewan community did not heap racist vitriol on the very small number of blacks in the community but rather Chinese men “who were stigmatized as purveyors of vice and seducers of white women.” (20) Yet, the Klan claimed to be non-violent promoters of “law and order.” Nevertheless, asserts Pitsula, 1928 should have been the death knell of the Klan when its hierarchy “absconded” with membership fees; but it was given ammunition to reinvent itself, ironically, when Liberal premier James Gardiner used its presence as a political wedge issue by touting the KKK's initial tentative ties to the opposition and anti-establishment Conservative Party.

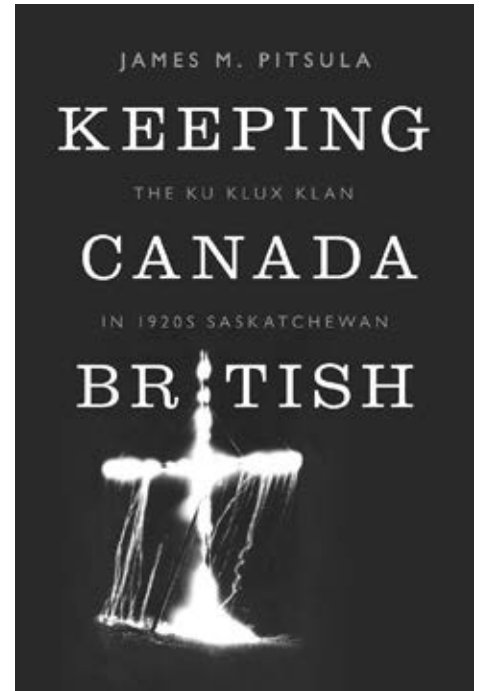
By the 1920s, Saskatchewan residents had seen one party Liberal government rule since 1905, a political dynamic that fostered corruption, complacency, and a societal void that the Klan sought to exploit in its battle for support in a swiftly changing province increasingly settled by eastern European immigrants. Though Pitsula is too facile in describing the Klan as “a lobby group, [and] not a terrorist organization,” (74) the scholar's thesis -- that the late 1920s saw a political and cultural war between the establishment versus members of the working class and the disenfranchised -- is a highlight

of *Keeping Canada British*. The protestant nature of the Klan and the predominantly protestant mindset of Euro-Canadian emigrants from Ontario in comparison to many eastern European immigrants (and French-Canadian emigrants from Quebec), many of whom were Catholic, meant that sectarianism was also a part of this culture clash.

Interestingly, Pitsula all too briefly mentions that American immigrants to Saskatchewan were “more susceptible” to the Klan's message: evidence is provided that “Klaverns” sprung up across southern Saskatchewan communities that brought American immigrants to settle.

Added to this maelstrom of change was a “threat of moral disorder” that was sweeping Saskatchewan (and the rest of Canada), which saw a proselytizing of prohibition (an attack against eastern Europeans and Jewish distillers) and a moral rectitude largely aimed at young women. Many social reformers feared “race suicide” since the birthrate among the middle-class of “British stock” was dropping while those of immigrant eastern European heritage was increasing. The flapper craze among young women of the decade, therefore, “represented a challenge, real and symbolic, to the established order,” (181) claims Pitsula. As such, middle class crusaders saw the need to regulate the moral conduct of working class white girls and young women to ensure they fulfilled “their function as procreators of the race.” (182) This message was not unlike that spread by the Klan. Thundered a Klan leader:

*the girl taken out of that Chinese dive in Moose Jaw under the influence of drugs might have been your daughter, your sister – when the time comes that these people (Chinese men) are preying on the white women of Canada; isn't it time to form an organization such as the Klan to protect the sanctity of your homes and protect your womanhood. (187)*



Note: the cover photograph is from the SAB permanent collection: R-A16411.

1929 marked the apex of Ku Klux Klan influence in Saskatchewan, as the hate group's unofficial alliance with the Conservatives brought down a Liberal government that both the Klan and the Conservatives believed were beholden to the "foreign vote," declares the author. Indeed, evidence is provided that, at a Conservative political rally, leader J.T.M. Anderson invited known members of the Klan to join him on the platform. While asserting that he was not an adherent, Anderson intoned that "he was not ashamed to associate" with members of the Klan and "solicit their support." (239) The year, to use a late Twentieth century term, was one of "identity politics," with a coalition of Conservatives, Progressives, and Independents forming the J.T.M. Anderson coalition government. The Liberals took 19 out of 20 constituencies that had a non-British majority while only 9 out of 43 English-speaking constituencies. Ironically, this cooptation of the Klan's message by the Conservatives hastened the former's need to exist; ultimately, it was the Great Depression that provided its final demise, with the need for immigration ending (which cut off the numbers of immigrant scapegoats), and the real need to survive during the dust bowl years taking precedence over political activism.

Canada in the 1920s was racist by today's standards, avers Pitsula, with Saskatchewan's unprecedented population growth and a stagnant political climate providing fertile soil for Saskatchewan's version of the KKK. In addition to familiar figures like Jimmy Gardiner and J.T.M. Anderson, the U of R historian has also added the less known Klan leader J.H. Hawkins into the historical conversation. Moreover, the Klan's message had a resonance with many non-members, with veterans' groups, labour organizations, and churches among those that reacted vehemently to non-British immigration to Saskatchewan. In due course, the struggle for the hearts-and-minds of Saskatchewan's political landscape was predicated on which political party had the monopoly on whom and how best to Keep Canada British, an argument that may make some squirm uncomfortably or others to proclaim that racism in Canada was not as problematic as in the United States. In the final analysis, even without violence from the Saskatchewan Ku Klux Klan, for this reader, racism is still racism. James Pitsula, in this clear-eyed, well-written and scintillating work of scholarship, has drawn attention to a repulsive chapter in Saskatchewan and Canadian history.

Reviewer Kam Teo is a librarian with an enduring interest in historical scholarship, and the civil rights history of both the US and Canada.

12855

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## PROTESTANT CHILDREN COMPELLED TO KISS THE CRUCIFIX AS FORM OF PUNISHMENT

### In Saskatchewan We Have Only 19 per cent. of Our Population Roman Catholic, Yet They Run Our Affairs

Charges that five newspapers had failed to send their children to Government school in accordance with the School Act were dismissed without costs by Mr. R. L. Hilling, J.P., and Mr. L. B. Bouchard, J.P., at Assiniboia on March 4. Mr. A. Macrae, who appeared for the prosecution, gave notice that an appeal would be lodged against the decision. Mr. J. F. Bryant of Regina, appeared for the defence, and admitted that the children had not attended school and bore his defence on religious and legal grounds. Before the court taken by Mr. Bryant

The evidence given by Miss Jean Lennock, the teacher of the school, was to the effect that the school opened every day with the Lord's Prayer, followed by the singing of "God Save the King." This lady stated that she did not cross herself or instruct her pupils to do so when reciting the Lord's Prayer. Religious exercises were given from 3.30 to 4 o'clock each day, and French was taught from 8 to 2 o'clock.

Here Mr. Bryant, who voluntarily wished to be cross-examined, and asked that "Miss Jean Lennock



MR. J. J. MALONEY  
Director of the Freedman



MR. C. A. LUNDIE, M.A.  
Editor of the Freedman

### A Friend

"The soul of a friend you have won."  
"A friend is one who knows all about you and loves you just the same."  
"If thou hast found a friend hold him to thy heart with shackles of steel for thou hast found a treasure."  
These are some of the words great writers have penned on friendship—the association of hearts, bound together in the bond of eternal love.  
An old sage once said he would far rather have friends than wealth, for you can lose the one but not the other—when they are real friends—for a friend sticketh closer than a brother.  
All of us need advice, sympathy and affection and to whom can we look for more of these than to our circle of loved ones?  
Life would be barren without the joy of a friend

This image shows the front page of the April 5, 1928 edition of Western Freedman, a Klan publication. SAB R-A6902



SAB S-B9245: Minnie Woytiuk and grand-daughter Donna Woytiuk light candles on the Christmas kolachi, possibly in North Battleford, 1971.

**Lloydminster mayor pioneers crucial step toward Medicare**

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**The Socialist imprint on Saskatchewan politics**

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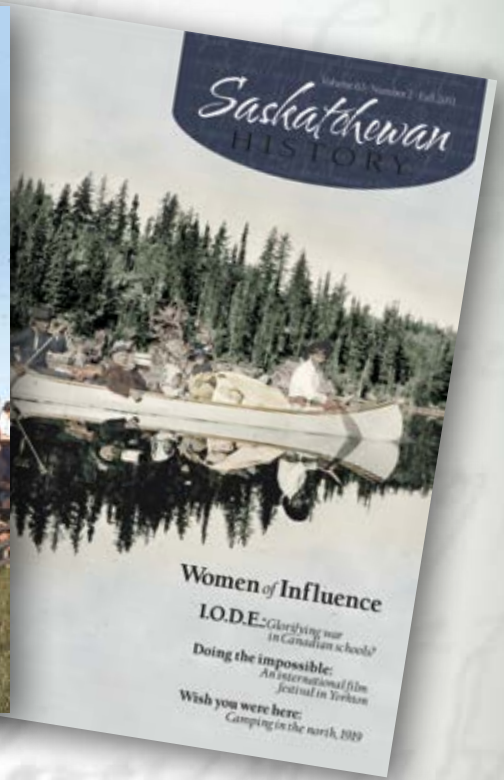
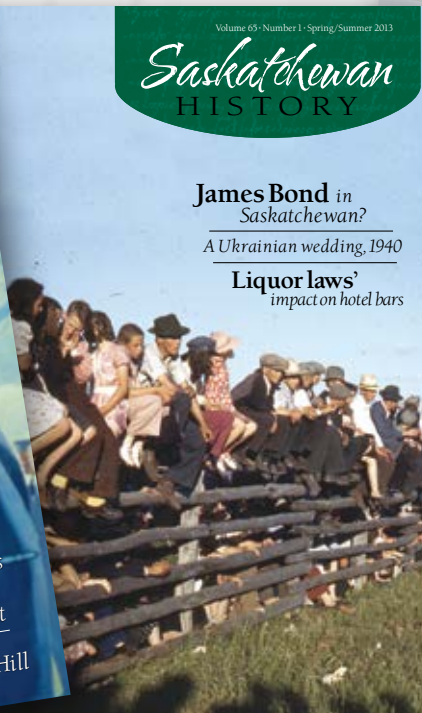
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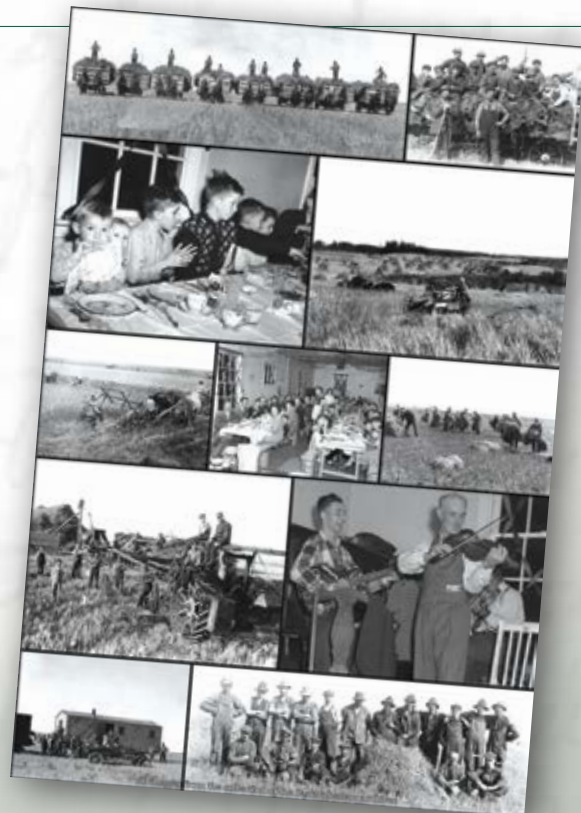
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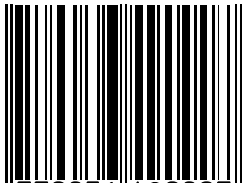
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