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**Government House** with the Manitoba Legislature in the background, 2008.

Source: G. Goldsborough

Early twentieth century movie posters on the back cover, clockwise from top left: *The Life of Buffalo Bill* (1912); *The Mystery of "13"* (1919); *The Mating of Marcella* (1918); *The Wild Goose Chase* (1915); *The Oyster Dredger* (1915); *Daddy Long Legs* (1919); *Flirting With Love* (1924); *Victory* (1919).

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# “One of Our Own”: Ethnicity Politics and the Medicalization of Childbirth in Manitoba

by Hans Werner, Department of History, University of Winnipeg  
and Jenifer Waito, Department of Education, University of Winnipeg

**B**y 1895, the process of medicalizing childbirth was well underway in North America. It was characterized by an increase in physician-attended births, increased reliance on medical technology and science, and a slow but steady decline in midwifery. In fact, by the end of the nineteenth century, it was becoming the norm for physicians to attend to birthing women.<sup>1</sup> The increase in physician-attended births is directly correlated to the steady decline of popularity and numbers of midwives at that time. However, the practice of midwifery did not disappear uniformly across all strata of society. As Wendy Mitchinson suggests, the few remaining midwives that held out against the increasing domination and authority of the medical profession remained active in isolated or immigrant communities, in maternity homes for the poor or unmarried, and in Aboriginal communities.<sup>2</sup>

In Manitoba, the speed with which childbirth came under the domain of licensed medical doctors was uneven and was tempered by ethnic politics. This paper examines a

specific instance of an attempt to bring medical childbirth to the Mennonite block settlement in South Central Manitoba known as the Mennonite West Reserve. The case of Katharina

Thiessen’s prosecution by Morden doctors and the College of Physicians and Surgeons points to the dynamics of making childbirth and illness the exclusive domain of licensed practitioners. In contrast to Adam Scarena’s analysis of the contest between licensed doctors and chiropractors and osteopaths, which argues that economic motives played a lesser role in Manitoba than in other jurisdictions, Thiessen’s case suggests that the medicalization of childbirth was an economic issue for individual doctors who had a license to practice.<sup>3</sup> The presence of folk remedies, midwives and other purveyors of traditional medicine represented a loss of revenue for them. Doctors also made every attempt to medicalize childbirth

by emphasizing their gender and social superiority in order to gain control of the lucrative medical market of the Mennonite West Reserve. Further, Thiessen’s case illustrates how an ethnic group was able resist the intrusion of the doctor, an ethnic outsider in the 1890s, into the private realms of illness and childbirth. Finally, the case of Katharina Thiessen suggests that giving doctors exclusive domain over illness and childbirth was a precarious project in the 1890s. The intervention of ethnic politics forced the College of Physicians and Surgeons to abandon the project of medicalizing childbirth among Mennonites because of the risk of jeopardizing their goals in the province more generally.



Mennonite Heritage Centre Archives, Peter G. Hamm Collection, #44-8.

**A group of Mennonite children**, some of whom were probably delivered by unlicensed midwives, pose in an undated early twentieth century photograph.

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The practice of midwifery was based on traditional views of childbirth as a natural process. Midwives relied on their practical experience to guide them as to whether or not they should intervene in the birthing process. Physicians, however, had formal training at medical schools that gave them social esteem and allowed them to project an air of intellectual and practical superiority over midwives. Further, most midwives were female and most doctors were male, and thus, as Judith Leavitt points out, an element of gender-based status differences existed that put men at an advantage over women regardless of skill or education.<sup>4</sup>

Doctors emphasized their superiority over midwives in part because doctors had an economic interest in showing that birthing was a medical process. Wendy Mitchinson's research has shown that obstetrics was a foot in the door to a larger and much more lucrative family practice.<sup>5</sup> Contact doctors made with a family during childbirth helped to familiarize the family with what physicians had to offer and gave them the opportunity to gain the family's trust. This in turn led to the possibility of the doctor being called on for other medical concerns of the family. Thus, Mitchinson shows that if a midwife was called instead of a physician to help a birthing woman, she was not only depriving the doctor of his medical fee but also denying him the opportunity for career advancement.<sup>6</sup> Midwives capitalized on this process of familiarization and building trust through birthing practices in the same way physicians did, so major competition between doctors and midwives understandably developed.<sup>7</sup>

Equally frustrating to doctors was that midwives could get away with charging little or nothing for their services because they often had other means of support. Further, in addition to the delivery itself, midwives offered other related services to the family that physicians did not, such as doing chores, preparing meals, and providing after-care to mother and infant. Physicians, however, were forced to charge their patients at least a moderate fee for their services because their profession was their only income. Thus, many people in the community, particularly the poor, chose to rely on the services of a midwife because they seemed to be the "sensible choice."<sup>8</sup> The economic competition that midwives created in the medical profession was very threatening to physicians and therefore was one motivation for doctors to show that birthing was a medical process, not a natural or social process as it had been thought about traditionally.

Doctors also emphasized their gender and social superiority in order to medicalize childbirth. For example, William Buchan, a late nineteenth century physician, challenged women's involvement in the birthing process entirely, suggesting that the labouring mother was the only woman that should be involved. He believed that many

of the difficulties that women had in birthing could be prevented by disallowing women's practice of midwifery "unless they are duly qualified." His statement makes it sound as though he was willing to accept that midwives could provide a valuable service if they were appropriately trained. However, Buchan goes on to ask, "Was any female ever duly qualified? I believe not."<sup>9</sup> While Buchan's attitude towards women may not be representative, it does illustrate some important points. First, it showcases the popular nineteenth century belief that men were intellectually superior to women, and shows that gender did play some part in the push for medicalization. If men with a heightened intellect and formal training rather than an untrained female midwife were to assist birthing women, the logic went that the doctor would naturally be able to make birthing more safe.<sup>10</sup>

The role of gender in medicalizing childbirth also shows that status had a part to play in the process. Physicians paid for their training, spent a significant amount of time in medical school, and had to pass examinations in order to become qualified and registered. Midwives, however, generally had made no such time or financial commitments; for the most part remaining uneducated and untrained except for the practical experience they gained by attending numerous births. As Mitchinson points out, physicians felt that having untrained persons doing the job for which they had been formally trained lowered their collective status.<sup>11</sup>

The lack of formal training and qualifications that Buchan discusses above are another reason that physicians wanted to emphasize birthing as a medical process. Many midwives had little or no formal training, which in some cases may have contributed to injury and death of the infant, the mother, or both. Doctors were concerned that birthing mothers got the best treatment available, treatment that they would not receive from untrained midwives. Wendy Mitchinson suggests that physicians were less bothered by midwives that had at least some formal training, because those women would be aware that they should turn a complicated birth over to a trained physician who would have a better chance of saving the lives of the mother and infant.<sup>12</sup> Mitchinson goes on to illustrate the irony of physicians' serious concerns with midwives' lack of formal training, in that the obstetric education received by physicians was "substandard." Medical students received abundant theoretical knowledge through lectures, but witnessed few, if any, real-life births. In fact, many "trained" physicians of the late nineteenth century received their practical experience in obstetrics using a doll and a mannequin.<sup>13</sup> Poor medical training continued to be a problem into the twentieth century, as noted in 1912 by J. Whitridge Williams, professor of obstetrics at Johns Hopkins Medical School. Williams maintained the

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“average practitioner, through his lack of preparation for the practice of obstetrics, may do his patients as much harm as the much maligned midwife.”<sup>14</sup>

Midwives may have had the practical experience that doctors lacked, but doctors had the scientific knowledge that midwives did not. Paul Starr discusses the impact of trust in science on the medicalization process:

The medical profession has had an especially persuasive claim to authority. Unlike the law and the clergy, it enjoys close bonds with modern science, and at least for most of the last century, scientific knowledge has held a privileged status in the hierarchy of belief. Even among the sciences, medicine occupies a special position.<sup>15</sup>

Medicine’s close ties to science thus had an impact on its perceived authority because of the social value ascribed to scientific research and discovery. However,

it was women whom the medical profession had to convince of their superiority over midwives. There were more fundamental reasons than scientific authority that ultimately caused women to put their trust in science. It was scientific knowledge and technology that influenced so many women to abandon midwives for doctors because it brought them practical benefits while giving birth, such as pain relief through anaesthesia and physical aid in labour via forceps. Because birthing women had the authority and power to determine who would help them and what would and would not be done to them or for them during their labour, physicians could not force themselves into birthing rooms by negating the assistance of midwives. It was only when women were convinced that physicians were better suited to assist in labour and delivery that childbirth became medicalized.<sup>16</sup> Access to new medical technology is what helped to convince women that doctors were better suited to care for them during the birthing process than were midwives because of the “progress” that was made when technology and scientific knowledge were applied to obstetrics.<sup>17</sup>

One of these technologies, anaesthesia, was and typically is still very important to birthing women. According to Wendy Mitchinson, the lack of training and knowledge regarding anaesthesia may have been a major contribution to midwives’ waning numbers and importance. Once anaesthesia was widely available and proven to be effective, women “began to demand it because of the comfort it could provide” during childbirth as opposed to the comparative pain and suffering that women endured without painkillers.<sup>18</sup> Forceps were also a major contribution of science and technology to childbirth. If applied correctly and used skilfully, forceps could help a complicated birth to progress and could even save the lives of the mother and child. In both of these cases, doctors were the only persons trained to use such technology, so only the patients of medical doctors could reap the benefits, economic or otherwise, of this new technology.<sup>19</sup>

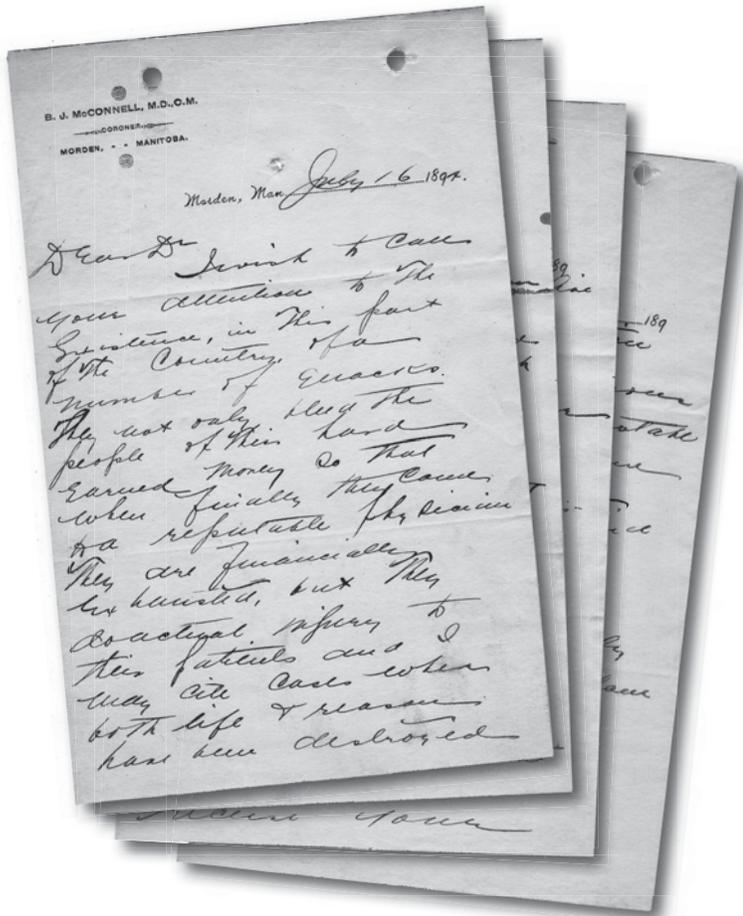
With the introduction of painkillers and forceps, women began to gravitate towards physicians and away from midwives. In fact, Leavitt points out that women seldom chose to revert to the traditional midwife once they had experienced giving birth in the care of a doctor because of the comfort he could provide. Women felt that they were more likely to survive the birthing process if they had a doctor overseeing their labour.<sup>20</sup> By putting their trust in science and technology, women contributed to, or possibly dictated, the medicalization of childbirth.

Despite the development of this more mainstream ideology, Leavitt describes a distinct group of women that she describes as “traditionalist.”<sup>21</sup> This group was typically made up of immigrant women who shared the traditional view that “birth only rarely needed the outside consultation of the medical profession.” Neighbourhood women acted as midwives and did not charge a formal fee, but rather accepted donations or “presents” of two to three dollars for their help.<sup>22</sup>



Archives of Manitoba,  
Legislative Assembly, 1907–1910.

**Dr. Benjamin James McConnell** (1861–1923) was one of several physicians in southern Manitoba who complained to the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons about “quacks” who were providing unlicensed medical care in the West Reserve. After practicing in Morden and Winnipeg, he entered provincial politics as an MLA, serving from 1907 to 1914.



Archives of Manitoba, College of Physicians and Surgeons, P6746.

**“A number of quacks.”** Files of the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons are filled with complaint letters such as this 1894 example from Morden physician Frederick Burnham (1870–1955).

The practices of Leavitt’s “traditionalist” group closely match the birthing practices of the Mennonite peoples in Manitoba at the turn of the century. Mennonites were a pacifist, German-speaking group who had migrated to Canada in the 1870s in response to military reforms in Russia that threatened their military exemption. Mennonites had a long history of negotiating with governments for special exemptions, usually to ensure the right to practice their pacifist beliefs and to secure the ability to live separate lives. Before arriving in Manitoba, they negotiated with the Canadian government for grants of land in block sections so that they could form their own communities and live apart from the rest of society.<sup>23</sup> As the settlement of Western Canada progressed, the two areas in which they lived in Manitoba became ethnic enclaves that were increasingly surrounded by British and other Western European immigrants.

Living separately from mainstream society was important to the Mennonites; it was thus crucial for the community to be bound together with strong, cohesive bonds. The cooperative birthing and medical practices that developed within the Mennonite community were

a reflection of this kinship and communal self-reliance. Often, one or two untrained but knowledgeable women in a given Mennonite community would be designated as community midwives and lay doctors and often remained in that informal but important position long enough to mend many broken bones, to nurse many illnesses, and to deliver many of the next generation of children.<sup>24</sup> Further, specialized birthing and delivery skills and knowledge were passed on from mother to daughter, thus allowing the community to continue to sustain its separation by avoiding outside medical intervention.<sup>25</sup> Royden Loewen has argued that midwives held a respected and valued place within the Mennonite community because of the important practical and ideological niche they filled. Their esteemed role is noteworthy because of the generally patriarchal nature of the Mennonite community; midwives and lay doctors were the only women allowed and encouraged to be in the public sphere by male community leaders. Often midwives and lay doctors were seen to have a special church-ordained gift of medical knowledge that allowed them to provide this essential service to the community.<sup>26</sup> Although these niche roles and the women who filled them were deeply valued by the Mennonite community, they were disdained by the professional medical community that emerged as modernization came to Manitoba.

The Mennonite West Reserve in South Central Manitoba was one of the more densely settled rural areas of the province and the arrival of the railway in the Reserve in the 1880s gave rise to the new railway towns of Gretna, Morden and Plum Coulee. The railway was soon followed by a variety of merchants, lumber dealers, banks, and doctors seeking to profit from the lucrative Mennonite market. In 1892, ten years after the arrival of the railway, Morden businessman and politician Valentine Winkler established the Village of Winkler on the railway tracks near the Mennonite village of Hoffnungsfeld. Located just seven

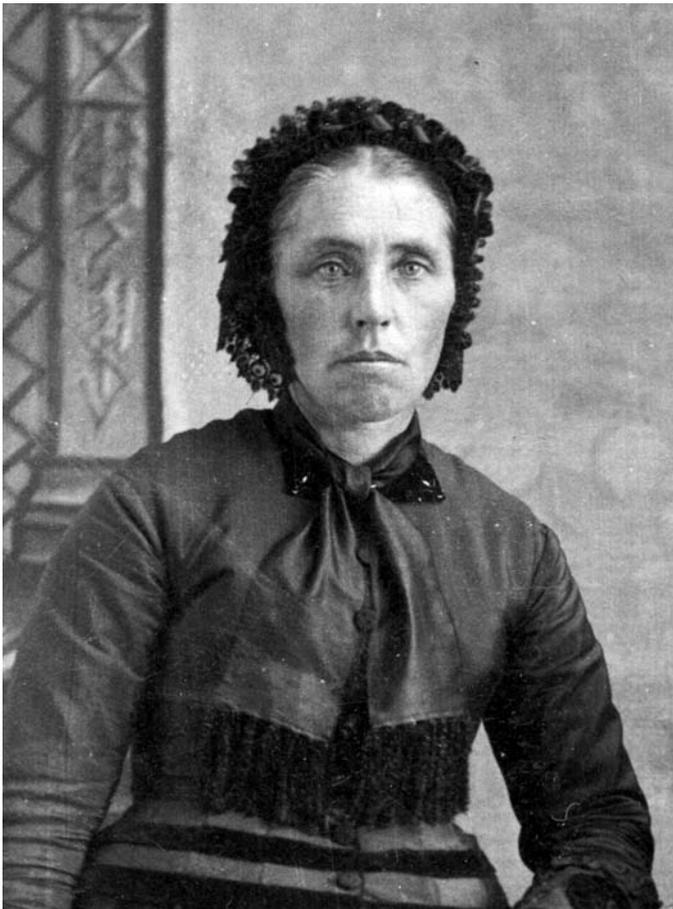
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miles East of Morden, Winkler and Morden were soon in heated competition for the business of the Mennonites of the West Reserve.

Trained doctors in the railway towns of the Mennonite West Reserve soon realized that they faced a lively competition from what they broadly categorized as “quacks.” Beginning in the late 1880s a stream of letters



I. Hildebrand.

**Katharina Born Thiessen** (1842–1915) had received training in midwifery, chiropractics, and naturopathy in Prussia before emigrating to North America. She practiced medicine in the West Reserve from 1885 to 1907, after which she continued to sell patent medicines to friends and neighbours.

was directed to the Manitoba College of Physicians and Surgeons asking them to pursue the prosecution of a variety of unlicensed practitioners. For the individual doctor the main reason for wanting the College to stop midwifery and informal doctors was for personal gain. Dr. Donovan from Gretna reported that there were at least five or six “quacks” practicing in the Mennonite Reserve at the time. Donovan’s problem with a certain Dr. Tyson, probably Katharina Thiessen, was that she was “charging regularly as much as five dollars for consultations.” Donovan complained bitterly to the registrar of the College that nothing was being done to give protection to licensed doctors.<sup>27</sup>

In 1894, doctors B. J. McConnell and F. W. E. Burnham of Morden joined Drs. Donovan and James McKenty of Gretna in the campaign against unlicensed practitioners in the Mennonite reserve. Burnham, in particular, was a persistent and vociferous advocate of prosecution. The theme of economic loss resulting from the presence of lay medicine pervades Burnham’s correspondence with the College’s registrar. In an 1894 letter Burnham claimed the quacks “not only bleed the people of their hard earned

money so that when finally they come to a reputable physician they are financially exhausted, but they do actual injury to their patients and I may cite cases where both life and reason have been destroyed.” Burnham claimed that unlicensed practitioners were often “aliens from Minnesota and Dakota who live here a short time reap a rich harvest and suddenly light out to enjoy it elsewhere.” In a later letter that mentions Katharina Thiessen and a Mrs. Bergen particularly, Burnham points out that the Mennonites are faithful in paying for medical services and as a result the two women “take considerable money out of our practice and if there is any way of stopping them I will be glad to assist you.” Burnham believed the College was there to help his practice by eliminating the formidable competition of midwives, naturopaths, and lay doctors. As he puts it in one of his many letters, the main purpose of the College as he saw it was “the protection of the brotherhood.”<sup>28</sup>

Many of the “quacks” in the Mennonite Reserve do appear to have been short-lived opportunists, but Katharina Thiessen, a Mennonite midwife who practiced in the Winkler area and who seemed to fill the niche role described by Loewen, proved to be a more resilient challenger to the doctors’ ambitions. Thiessen was a Mennonite immigrant from Russia who at age eighteen had traveled to Prussia to train as a midwife. She married a farmer in Russia and the couple had one son. They migrated to Peabody, Kansas in 1874 where she practiced medicine and her husband farmed. By the 1880s, the Thiessens were attracted to the free homesteads of the Prairies and, in 1885, they moved to Manitoba and settled in a Mennonite village near the site of the later Village of Winkler.<sup>29</sup> Thiessen not only assisted at childbirth in area villages but also performed trauma surgery and traditional medicine. She indicates in a letter to the College that she also had learned to administer a new treatment for cancer, a skill she had learned during a special trip to Cincinnati, Ohio.<sup>30</sup>

F. W. E. Burnham’s constant badgering finally forced the College of Physicians and Surgeons to pursue Katharina Thiessen and another Mennonite doctor, Mr. Abram Hiebert, in the Morden courts. Although it seems doctors in Gretna and Morden were able to convince witnesses

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to appear in the cases of the non-Mennonite unlicensed practitioners, it was much more difficult to find Mennonite witnesses that would testify against one of their own. When Katharina Thiessen was first charged in April 1895 the witness that had agreed to testify ended up offering

testimony that worked against the doctors' case. The witness claimed that Thiessen had treated his eyes and some time later, he had given her a gift of eight dollars. As the Morden lawyer acting for the College ruefully notes in his correspondence to the registrar, the presiding magistrate once had his horse treated by someone whom he had given a two-dollar gift. The magistrate took his own experience as sufficient precedent to dismiss the charges against Thiessen. The lawyer notes that it would be beneficial to have someone who spoke German working on the doctor's behalf because it was proving difficult to gather evidence because of the intense opposition to the prosecutions in the area. The second attempt to prosecute unlicensed Mennonite practitioners in the courts also failed because in the case of one defendant the witness that had been arranged for backed out at the last minute. Thiessen's case at the same trial date had to be set aside because the constable had not served her with a proper summons, causing the magistrate to again dismiss the case.<sup>31</sup>

The evidence that was ultimately presented against Thiessen was that she had assisted in the delivery of a baby using forceps where the baby died within ten hours of the procedure. Legal counsel for the College of Physicians and Surgeons pointed out during the preparation of the case that the evidence being offered possibly constituted malpractice and might very well diminish sympathy for the accused, but it was not sufficient grounds for prosecution under the Medical Act. Counsel pointed out that evidence would need to establish that the accused had no license, had performed medical surgery or midwifery, and had received, "gain or hope of reward."<sup>32</sup>

The 1871 Medical Act, part of the new Province of Manitoba's first laws, outlawed unlicensed midwifery and gave free reign to the Provincial Medical Board, all of whom were trained doctors, to determine qualifications for licensing in those cases where the applicant had not graduated from an approved medical college. The law that succeeded this first Act, the Medical Act of 1886, established the College of Physicians and Surgeons and added the economic caveat that licensing was required for midwifery or other practices of medicine or surgery if there was "gain or hope of reward."<sup>33</sup> As legal counsel pointed out to both the College and Dr. Burnham, evidence would have to be brought forward to show that Katherina Thiessen and other lay practitioners were not only practicing, but also charging for their services.

After a few false starts, Hiebert was convicted and then on 11 June 1895, Katharina Thiessen was also convicted in Morden court and fined fifty dollars. The conviction of the two Mennonite practitioners drew immediate opposition from Mennonites. The contest between Thiessen, the Morden doctors and the College soon involved Valentine Winkler, the German Lutheran founder of the Village of Winkler and an MLA who represented the Mennonite area. The contest pitted ethnic political clout against the medical establishment. Burnham reported that there was "considerable feeling in the Reserve as a result of

the cases and the people blame us for it."<sup>34</sup> Although most Mennonites shunned direct participation in politics they were not averse to pressuring their non-Mennonite representatives to vigorously pursue their interests. The Morden lawyer acting on behalf of the College and the Morden doctors reported that Valentine Winkler, the MLA for the Mennonite area, had appeared in court to pay the fine on behalf of Katharina Thiessen where he had also indicated he was on his way to Winnipeg to introduce an amendment to the Medical Act that would exempt Mennonites from its provisions.<sup>35</sup>

The Morden newspapers and the ethnic Mennonite and German Press immediately weighed in on the issue. The *Morden Monitor*, a political rival of Valentine Winkler, believed the issue was really a masked form of trying to boost the fortunes of the new railway town of Winkler just down the track. The *Monitor* claimed, "a great dust is being made over these medical cases by designing persons in order to boom Winkler at the expense of Morden."<sup>36</sup> The *Monitor* was against a separate law for Mennonites countering that if an exemption was given



Archives of Manitoba,  
Legislative Assembly, 1907–1910.

**MLA Valentine Winkler** (1864–1920) defended Katharina Thiessen from allegations of medical malpractice, and paid her fine levied by the provincial court in 1895.



Archives of Manitoba, Morden-Hospitals 2, N3783.

**The medical establishment.** Nurses pose on the steps of the Morden Hospital, circa 1910.

to Mennonites the Icelandic and French communities would be next. The *Monitor* argued that there should be one law for midwives and doctors for the entire province. The *Nordwesten*, a German language paper read by many Mennonites, supported its ethnic readership but pursued the economic argument, claiming it was “utterly impossible for poor people to pay high fees charged by the medical profession.”<sup>37</sup> The Mennonite German language paper, the *Rundschau*, offered greater insight into the reasons for the quick action of the area’s MLA. An anonymous writer to the paper appealed for support for the Mennonite practitioners from the ethnic community. The writer reminded readers that Thiessen was known and loved throughout Southern Manitoba as an experienced doctor. The writer sought to establish Thiessen’s credibility and value to the community and thought it regrettable “that a woman who had done immeasurable good among her coreligionists was persecuted in this way because of envy.” The clearest indication that Mennonites considered the prosecutions an ethnic issue came in the writer’s indictment that the law seemed to be on the side of the “English doctors.”<sup>38</sup>

The ethnic dimensions of the issue were not lost on those advising the College. In a lengthy legal opinion Hough and Campbell acknowledged the unique situation of Mennonites as an ethnic group whose traditional form of medical care was being threatened. Hough and Campbell

reminded the College that “it appears that Mr. Winkler M.P.P. has been asked to represent the feelings of a large section of the Mennonite people who regard Mr. Hiebert as a physician and who also think Mrs. Thiessen is qualified for the practice of midwifery,” and that “Mennonites are to some extent a people of themselves.”<sup>39</sup>

Although there was some understanding of the Mennonite position, the vigour and method by which Valentine Winkler was pursuing the issue caused grave concern to the College that went considerably beyond the problem of quack doctors in Southern Manitoba. Legal counsel pointed out that the issue had broader implications for establishing doctors’ status in the rest of the province. While counsel believed that the legislature would not have time to consider an amendment to the Medical Act such as that suggested by Valentine Winkler, there was

a great deal of “Patron” jealousy of the professions lately in the legislature, in fact it is somewhat pronounced .... A bill therefore to repeal the clauses forbidding medical practice without registration might have strong support though we think it would fail of passing.<sup>40</sup>

The correspondence between legal counsel and the College of Physicians and Surgeons suggest that support

for granting doctors the exclusive right to practice medicine and to deliver babies in the province was not general and that the organized efforts that were being mounted by the Mennonites to protect their own medical practitioners might well jeopardize the greater goal of licensing medical practice throughout the province. As alluded to in the legal opinion, the College had already recognized the danger and responded to Valentine Winkler's threat. According to Burnham, Valentine Winkler had told him that at a meeting between the College and legislators, the College had claimed that the prosecutions of Thiessen and Hiebert had been entirely the work of Morden doctors, not the College, and had offered to refund the fines imposed on the two lay practitioners.<sup>41</sup> Further, the College's legal counsel, Hough and Campbell, concurred with the decision by the College to stop further prosecutions under the Manitoba Medical Act in the Mennonite Reserve. They believed that "the implied promise given to Mr. Winkler by you and others for the Executive that if his bill were not put forward the two persons in question would not be further prosecuted by or at the insistence of the Council was not only wisely given but under the circumstances was called for."<sup>42</sup>

Clearly the attempt by Valentine Winkler to address the issue of medicalizing birth and illness, which was upsetting his ethnic constituents, had put at risk the move of doctors to reserve those domains for formally trained and properly licensed doctors throughout the province. The College and Valentine Winkler forged a deal that would see the former stop prosecuting unlicensed Mennonite midwives and lay doctors in exchange for the latter's withdrawal of the threat to introduce an amendment to the Medical Act. The pursuit of individual gain that was behind the Morden and Gretna doctors pursuit of prosecution had threatened public support for restricting medical practice and birth to licensed doctors. This reality was most clearly illustrated by legal counsel's final advice to the College. Hough and Campbell suggested the College remind Dr. Burnham "that no professional man is supposed to have any chartered rights. The Medical Act is for the benefit of the public and not for that merely of the physician."<sup>43</sup>

F. W. E. Burnham was forced to concede defeat although he and the other doctors continued to pursue prosecutions, including further actions against both Thiessen and Hiebert. In the case of the two Mennonite practitioners, however, the College always found ways of honouring its 1895 commitment. Katharina Thiessen continued to practice in the Winkler area for another fifteen years although her husband's ill health increasingly took up her time after he suffered a stroke in 1907. She retired from her practice in 1909 and died in 1915 of a massive stroke. While Burnham was prepared to accept the College's decision, he could not understand why they had not limited their promise to the practice of midwifery. In his letter after the compromise he conceded, "it would be satisfactory if the practice of these Mennonites was strictly limited to midwifery and I think that this is the easiest solution of the trouble. If the College of Physicians & Surgeons would give these people

to distinctly understand that they were violating the law but that they would be permitted to practice midwifery they would be satisfied."<sup>44</sup>

The prosecution of Katharina Thiessen offers new insights into the dynamics of the process of the medicalization of childbirth and illness and particularly how doctors in Manitoba pursued that process. Mitchinson's observation that doctors' attempts to wrestle childbirth away from midwives were driven to a large extent by economics seems to apply to the doctors involved in the case of Katharina Thiessen. Individual doctors, while believing their training could offer superior health care to the community, were motivated more by the difficulties of competing with midwives and traditional healers for the community's available financial resources. Doctors in Gretna and Morden had difficulty understanding the cautious approach taken by the College, which felt more keenly the responsibility of balancing the need to demonstrate that restricting medicine to licensed doctors was in the public's interest on the one hand, with the desire of doctors to have their competition swept away on the other.

Mennonites saw the licensing of doctors as an intrusion of "English" society on a domain they firmly believed to be within the bounds of community, family and religion



Archives of Manitoba, Legislative Assembly 1932-1936.

**Dr. Cornelius W. Wiebe** (1893-1999) began a medical practice in Winkler in 1925. By the time he retired in 1978, he is thought to have delivered over 6,000 babies.

and marshalled ethnic politics to press for exemption from the laws of the land, as they had so often before. Valentine Winkler's role was clearly that of leveraging the precarious support for giving to doctors' privileges that were not yet widely supported by society to gain the exemption sought by his constituents. The contest put the College of Physicians and Surgeons in a difficult position. While the College was charged with furthering the project of placing medical practice and childbirth firmly under the regulations of the Manitoba Medical Act, the risk of losing the cause entirely was real. The compromise allowed both the recognition of ethnic sensibilities and the larger project of bringing childbirth and illness under the domain of licensed and educated doctors. The problem would disappear when Mennonites began to train their own licensed doctors and the benefits of trained medical care became apparent to them. Licensed doctors soon made their home in Winkler but it would take until 1925 when Dr. C. W. Wiebe, one of their own, set up practice in Winkler that the role of the midwife and lay doctor diminished in the villages around Winkler.<sup>45</sup> ☞

### Notes

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18. *Ibid.*, p. 179.
19. Leavitt, p. 47.
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28. F. W. E. Burnham to J. S. Gray, Registrar, 16 July 1894, Correspondence, 1886–1894, College of Physicians and Surgeons, Manitoba Archives, P6746. F. W. E. Burnham was a young doctor at this time, having graduated from the Manitoba Medical College in 1894. He later practiced in Winnipeg and during World War I served in the Balkans where he was a decorated surgeon. He died in 1957 when the sanatorium at the Halcyon Hot Springs near Castlegar, B.C., which he and his wife had directed, burned to the ground. See "Dr. F. W. E. Burnham 1872–1957: A Life of Strange Adventure," *Manitoba Medical Review*, 1966 vol. 46(9), pp. 569–570.
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# Movie Exhibition in Manitoba: The Case of J. A. Schuberg

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**E**xhibiting motion pictures as a commercial enterprise in North America dates from 23 April 1896, when Thomas Armat and C. Francis Jenkins introduced Thomas A. Edison's "latest marvel," the Vitascope, at Koster and Bial's Music Hall, located at 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue and West 24<sup>th</sup> Street, New York City, where Macy's store stands today.<sup>1</sup> Admission to the popular music hall/beer garden ranged from 25 cents for seats in the balcony to \$1.50 for reserved seats on the auditorium floor and in the boxes. The new entertainment—a selection of Edison motion pictures—was screened as part of that week's vaudeville program, which included a Russian clown, an "eccentric" dancer, two gymnasts, and a singer of "coster" songs. These films (each was under a minute in length) included *The Umbrella Dance*, *Rough Sea at Dover*, produced by Robert Paul in Great Britain, *Burlesque Boxing*, *The Monroe Doctrine*, and *Serpentine Dance*.<sup>2</sup> They had been spliced together to form a band, thus enabling the projectionist (Armat) to show the films without having to rewind them. According to *The New York Times*, an appreciative crowd of well-to-do customers (wearing silk hats) watched the films with great interest, marvelling at the movement of the life-like figures.<sup>3</sup> With this demonstration, Koster and Bial set the pattern for motion picture exhibition over the next ten years, i.e., combining movies and live entertainment.<sup>4</sup>

Vaudeville theatres thus served as the primary site for commercial movie exhibition between 1896 and 1906, when permanent sites (store-front theatres) began to appear across North America. Vaudeville managers valued movies because they helped satisfy the appetite of audiences for visual novelty, while movie producers valued vaudeville theatres because they enabled them to reach an enormous middle-class audience. Moreover, vaudeville provided

the nascent film industry a measure of stability during a period of uncertainty, generated in part by the many patent infringement suits Thomas Edison launched against his rivals.<sup>5</sup> Movie producers benefited greatly from this arrangement since they did not have to risk spending huge sums of money on building exhibition facilities. Even more importantly, this arrangement provided them with a great opportunity to learn valuable lessons from vaudeville managers about conducting an amusement business, e.g., such basic business principles as effective marketing.

Vaudeville theatres offered movie entrepreneurs access to a huge audience during the early years of the commercialization of leisure-time activities in general and the movies in particular. The last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two of the twentieth witnessed the expansion of cheaply-priced public entertainment, including dime museums, penny arcades, roller skating rinks, and dance halls, thanks to the flow of people to cities, and the prosperity that filtered down to the working class. In this context, it soon became apparent that, to differentiate their product, what these early movie entrepreneurs needed was a permanent site of their own. They tried a variety of venues, including penny arcades and amusement parks. Located at the end of trolley lines in major cities, such parks offered the possibility of attracting large audiences; municipal railway companies promoted entertainment at these sites because they wanted people to travel on their systems. For exhibitors, however, this meant screening films during the summer months only. Another strategy was to bring movies to audiences.

## Early Movie Exhibition in Canada

Exhibiting movies as a commercial enterprise in English-speaking Canada probably dates from 21 July 1896, when two well-known Ottawa businessmen, Andrew M. Holland and George C. Holland, in conjunction with Thomas Ahearn and Warren Soper, managers of the Ottawa Electric Railway Company, introduced the Edison Vitascope at West End Park, an amusement park located at the westerly terminus of the Ottawa Electric Railway Company.<sup>6</sup> As Peter Morris explains, Ahearn and Soper saw the motion picture show as another attraction that would lure citizens of Ottawa to West End Park (which they had developed on land once owned by the Holland family, the site spanning what is now Holland Avenue and extending from Ruskin Avenue to Queensway).

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As in the United States, selling the new entertainment meant screening films as part of a vaudeville program. Admission prices were set at ten cents for adults and five cents for children. Round-trip tickets to the park “including car fares, admission, and reserved seat” could be obtained for twenty-five cents from Ahearn and Soper’s offices at 56 Spark Street, Ottawa.<sup>7</sup> Between six and eight hundred customers attended the open-air show, which began at 8 pm. John C. Green, known professionally as “Belsaz, the Magician,” introduced the short films (less than two minutes in length), which were projected onto a large canvas screen. They included *The May Irwin Kiss* (1896), the great hit of 1896; *Watermelon Contest* (1896); *Shooting the Chutes* (1896); *Black Diamond Express* (1896); and *LaLoie Fuller’s Serpentine Dance* (n.d.). Interestingly, the Governor General’s Foot Guards Band provided a musical accompaniment. The show was a great success. Thrilled by the Vitascope’s life-like reproduction of movement, Ottawans flocked to West End Park, and the Holland brothers extended the engagement. Audiences enjoyed the sense of “being there,” being part of the activities taking place on the screen. Within months, entrepreneurs were exhibiting motion pictures in urban centres across the country.<sup>8</sup>

Despite such successes, amusement parks provided only a temporary venue for exhibiting motion pictures, given the seasonal nature of these enterprises.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, in spite of the massive urbanization that was taking place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, many people in the United States and Canada living in communities of fewer than three thousand had no amusement park at all. One way to bring movies to people in the rural areas was to follow the example of nineteenth century entertainers and to travel, i.e., to work a circuit of sites within a given territory.

Entering the (itinerant) movie exhibition business was one thing; prospering in this risky enterprise was another.<sup>10</sup> From 1898, ambitious individuals—possessing varying levels of mechanical ability and showmanship skills—obtained the equipment required from any

number of the suppliers who advertised in such trade papers as the *Moving Picture World*. As Kathryn Fuller observes, they could purchase Edison projectors from Edison Manufacturing Company outlets in New York City, Chicago, and San Francisco for \$135. As well, they could obtain this equipment from Sigmund Lubin, the Philadelphia-based producer of motion pictures and manufacturer of movie exhibition equipment, including the Cineograph, a combination camera and projector, and from Sears, Roebuck, and Company, the Chicago-based mail-order retailer, which had just launched a department called “Public Entertainment Outfits and Supplies.” Taking advantage of the increasing interest in motion pictures,<sup>11</sup> Sears, Roebuck, and Company supplied the would-be-exhibitor with all the equipment needed to enter the business, including stereopticons, moving picture

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**Entering the (itinerant) movie exhibition business was one thing; prospering in this risky enterprise was another.**

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projectors, motion pictures, and phonographs, plus scripts of lectures, sets of slides, records, advertising posters, and rolls of tickets. The firm also provided instruction manuals explaining how to handle the machinery, how to secure the venues in which to exhibit films, and how to advertise. Equipped with these materials, the exhibitor would travel the country, visiting such venues as churches, town halls, theatres, and opera houses. The majority travelled to fairs, where they erected temporary canvas theatres for staging vaudeville shows and exhibiting their movies.<sup>12</sup>

In rough-and-ready venues, audiences sat in makeshift seats or stood during the fifteen or twenty minutes required to watch the short films. The first projectors were noisy and caused much (and irritating) flickering on the screen. The itinerant showman would show a program of movies until the audience lost interest, and then move on to another locale. To enhance his program, i.e., turn it into a “special event,” the showman adopted some of the techniques that managers of vaudeville theatres employed, including arranging short films to evoke a poignant theme or featuring a fascinating lantern show or securing a talented lecturer who talked throughout the movies, commenting on or clarifying the action.<sup>13</sup>

To appreciate the development of theatrical movie exhibition in western Canada—as a commercial enterprise and (by extension) moviegoing as a social practice—during the heyday of the indoor, single-screen facility, the period from approximately 1910 to 1970, one must begin by studying those entrepreneurs who devoted time and energy to establishing movie exhibition as a legitimate business, to responding to calls to reform and to regulate the business, and to creating a national chain of movie

Manitoba Free Press, 1 December 1917.

theatres. Ultimately, this means focusing on the changing conditions of the film business, with regard to supply and demand, the structure of the exhibition industry, and corporate behaviour, not to mention the strategies these entrepreneurs used to manage their enterprises, in terms of theatre design, programming strategies, seating arrangements, pricing tactics, and marketing schemes.

Arguably, researchers should begin with J. A. (John) Schuberg, the first important film exhibitor in western Canada, and then consider Allen Theatre Enterprises Limited, Famous Players Corporation Limited, and Odeon Theatres (Canada) Limited respectively. (Here, we focus on the first part of this story.) The Allen organization introduced large, deluxe movie theatres to communities across Canada, creating a chain of movie theatres that extended from one coast to the other. Bernard (Barney) Allen and his wife Goldie Allen, Russian-born entrepreneurs, had settled (in the early 1880s) in Bradford, McKean County, a major industrial region of northwestern Pennsylvania, where he had set himself up as a jeweller. His sons, Jule (b. 1888) and Jay (b. 1890), had developed an interest in business in general and motion pictures in particular. With their father's assistance, they set themselves up (in 1907) in Brantford, Ontario, where they established a small chain of movie theatres and a distribution business. In 1910, the Allens moved to Calgary, making the city the headquarters of what would become an exhibition and a distribution empire.<sup>14</sup>



Winnipeg Free Press, 27 February 1960.

**John Albert Schuberg** (1875–1953), the motion picture pioneer of Western Canada.

### The Case of J. A. (John) Schuberg

This was the context in which J. A. (John) Schuberg, the enterprising showman known professionally as “Johnny Nash,” can be said to have brought the movies to the major centres across western Canada. F. W. (Ivan) Ackery, the manager of the Orpheum Theatre (Vancouver) for more than thirty years, describes Schuberg as the first successful movie house operator in Canada.<sup>15</sup> What set this travelling showman apart from his colleagues was his resourcefulness, especially his strategy of designing “thematic” programs of short films, thereby intensifying his audience’s movie-going experience.<sup>16</sup>

Schuberg, the son of Swedish immigrants, grew up in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He worked at a very young age, helping the family make ends meet. He became a showman at the age of thirteen, working at Kohn and Middleton’s Dime Museum, which featured such “variety” acts as Adgie the Lion Tamer, John Kelly the Irish Comedian, General Tom Thumb the Midget, and Jonathan Bass the “Ossified” Man. Here, he learned how to perform sleight-of-hand tricks and to operate a Punch and Judy Show. Billed as “Johnny Nash,” he toured with the John T. Robinson Circus, travelling across Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, and Louisiana. When he was nineteen, in 1894, he struck out on his own, moving to Winnipeg, where he worked for Frederick Burrows, who owned a circus. He played fairs and carnivals during the summer and free-lanced during the winter, travelling as far east as Montreal. In 1898, he married Nettie, Burrow’s youngest daughter, and the couple travelled to Vancouver, where they spent their honeymoon.

Finding the weather agreeable, Schuberg decided to settle in Vancouver, planning to open an umbrella repair shop. Business prospered, but he longed for the excitement of show business. Learning that a merchant in Seattle was selling an Edison projector, he resolved to become a movie exhibitor. He bought the machine for \$250 and a number of Edison films,<sup>17</sup> including *The Wreck of the Battleship “Maine”* (1898) and *Burial of the “Maine” Victims* (1898), together with a number of stereopticon slides, featuring the major news item of the day, the Spanish-American War. His timing was perfect. Thanks in large part to the “sensational” reports appearing in such newspapers as W. R. Hearst’s *New York Journal* and Joseph Pulitzer’s *New York World*, North Americans were eager to watch films about noteworthy persons, places, and events.

Schuberg later remarked: “I had reached the age of twenty-three and my wife was eighteen, so we were really in on the ground floor of motion pictures but with little realization of the many [theatres] to be built in the following years.”<sup>18</sup> Schuberg rented a large building on West Cordova Street, located in the central business district of Vancouver, a city of about 25,000 people at the time. He set up the equipment near the front and hung a screen at the back, providing no chairs because his program of films would run for only thirty minutes. He opened the doors



Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday

Paramount Pictures  
Present

**BILLIE  
BURKE**



In  
**"ARMS and the GIRL"**

**"Where is Your Passport?"**

A momentous question in a momentous play. Don't, under any circumstances, miss captivating Billie Burke in this story of love and thrills, enriched by a smack of military life and intrigue among the Huns.

EXTRA—"Want not—Waste not." Another great food conservation film. Promoted by the British Government.

Matinees only—The eleventh episode of "The Neglected Wife."

THE DOMINION ORCHESTRA—Music "as you like it."

Thursday, Friday and Saturday

Paramount Pictures  
Present



**Pauline  
Frederick**

In  
**"The Love That Lives"**

The screen's foremost emotional actress in a new and unusual characterization.

There are five scenes in "The Love That Lives" that are among the most graphic ever filmed, and during the rehearsing of which Miss Frederick risked her life.

Matinees only—The eleventh episode of "The Neglected Wife."

COMING:

CONSTANCE TALMADGE (the mountain girl in "Intolerance") in "SCANDAL."



Manitoba Free Press, 3 November 1917.

of the theatre to the public on 15 December 1898, charging patrons ten cents to watch a program of selected movies and slides of the Spanish-American War, which he called "The War Show."

Schuberg recalled that the films depicted the burial of the Maine victims, the Battle of San Juan Hill, in which Teddy Roosevelt's Rough Riders' charged the Spanish in the forest, and the Battle of Matanzan.<sup>19</sup> However, at first people stayed away. Some were likely preoccupied with the Klondike Gold Rush of 1897–1898, which overnight had almost transformed Dawson City into the largest city west of Winnipeg; others were suspicious of the latest showman's "gimmick." To pique people's interest, he promoted his show as if it were a sideshow. This meant producing a variety of sound effects: beating a bass drum, rattling a large sheet of metal to suggest thunder, and firing two pistols loaded with blank cartridges, so as to "add some realism" to the program.<sup>20</sup> He left the front door open, so that people on the street could hear the effects; this manoeuvre caught their attention, and soon he was playing to full houses.

Naturally, Schuberg resolved to exploit the commercial possibilities of the new medium. Like other showmen across the continent, he had only one set of films, so two weeks later he moved on, looking for audiences who had not seen "The War Show." The Schubergs concluded that this would mean showing films in a black-top tent at fairs and carnivals, which were becoming popular, and so decided to return to Winnipeg, where during the winter they could acquire such a facility. While motivated primarily by personal reasons, the Schubergs' move to Winnipeg was nevertheless in tune with the dynamics of the prairie economy during this period in that Winnipeg was the gateway to the Canadian West, and as such was an important point on the American-based Orpheum, Sullivan and Considine, and Pantages vaudeville circuits. Thus, their move to Winnipeg made business sense.

On their way back to Winnipeg in 1899, the Schubergs stopped at small communities along the CPR line to put on movie shows; however, business proved to be uncertain. For example, the electrical power in Ashcroft was insufficient for running the projector; more precisely, that evening the electrical power went to pumping water into the large tank that made up the water supply for the community. The light was rather poor, so Schuberg stopped the show and refunded his patrons' money. Next, he mounted a show in a hall over a printing shop in Kamloops, starting that Saturday at 7:30 pm. When no one showed up, he decided to attract attention by moving (at 8:00 pm) the projector to the balcony, where he ran the machine and lectured to an imaginary audience. People who had seen this charade soon packed into the hall. Schuberg recalled that customers, watching motion pictures for the first time, were not as enthusiastic as he had expected them to be; they liked the show, but said nothing about the machine.<sup>21</sup>

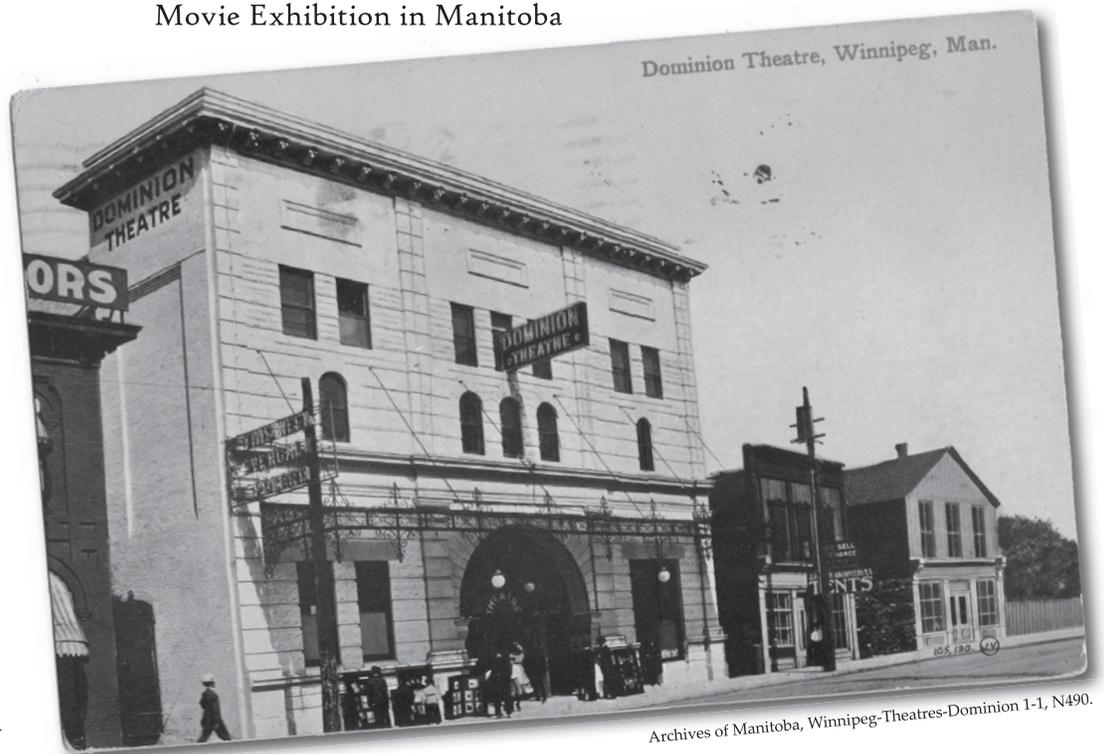
In Winnipeg, Schuberg and his father-in-law, Frederick Burrows, designed a black-top canvas tent measuring 20

## Movie Exhibition in Manitoba

ft. x 60 ft. that seated 200 people. Hilary Russell writes that the facility contained an inner tent of black cotton, which kept the sun out on windy days. At the end of the show, the exhibitor raised the "sidewall" so that the audience could cool off. In addition, the exterior featured a marquee-like banner on poles and fairly lurid paintings or posters advertising the movie inside.<sup>22</sup> Schuberg called this facility the "Edison Electric Theatre." Later, he explained: "I may not have been the first to think up the black-top tent, but I had not heard of any others."<sup>23</sup>

In May of 1899, Schuberg erected his black-top tent in a vacant lot on the west side of Main Street, about one hundred yards north of Logan Avenue. At this time, the Winnipeg and the Grand theatres offered the public such fare as the James Neill (stock) Company and the Metropolitan Opera Company respectively. In addition, Elm Park offered such variety entertainment as band concerts. Schuberg presented "The War Show," among the first movies screened commercially in Winnipeg,<sup>24</sup> presumably to take advantage of the crowds that had gathered for the Empire Day celebration on 23 May 1899. He later recalled that the money "came in so fast that it almost turned our heads."<sup>25</sup> During the summer months from 1899 to 1902, he played fairs and carnivals in Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois, and New Mexico. Schuberg had one of his best days at Eau Claire, Wisconsin, where (charging an admission of fifteen cents) he grossed a total of \$615.<sup>26</sup> During the spring of 1900, he obtained copies of George Méliès's films, *A Voyage to the Moon* (1902), based on Jules Verne's famous novels *From the Earth to the Moon* (1865) and *The First Men in the Moon* (1901), and *The Eruption of Mt. Pelee* (1902), which captured the devastation caused by the eruption of Mt. Pelee on the French Caribbean Island of Martinique, and played an amusement park in Winnipeg, the River Park. These films generated much excitement. Exhausted by their travelling, the Schubergs returned in 1902 to Vancouver with a view to setting up a permanent facility for screening movies. It can be argued that he was the first of the travelling showmen in Canada to do so.<sup>27</sup>

While in Los Angeles in the summer of 1902, Schuberg visited Thomas L. Tally's "permanent" facility, the Electric Theatre, located at 262 S. Main, opposite Third Street.<sup>28</sup> He may have noticed the advertisement in the *Los Angeles Times* (16 April 1902) describing Tally's penny-arcade as



**The Dominion Theatre** on Portage Avenue was one of Winnipeg's busy movie venues, circa 1910.

"a new place of amusement" that featured "up-to-date high-class moving picture entertainment, especially for ladies and children."<sup>29</sup> Tally screened such films as *Capture of the Biddle Brothers* (1902) and *New York City in a Blizzard* (1902), charging adults ten cents and children five cents admission. A year later, when Tally showed Edwin S. Porter's film, *The Great Train Robbery*, he decided to sell the Electric Theatre and to take this hugely successful film on the road, showing it all over the west. Porter not only directed and photographed this one-reel, ten-minute-long Western (on location at Paterson, New Jersey, in the fall of 1903) for the Edison Manufacturing Company, but also edited it, maintaining a high degree of suspense by intercutting between the outlaws who rob the train and the posse who apprehend the bad-guys.<sup>30</sup> Eventually, Tally returned to Los Angeles, where he operated movie theatres for more than twenty years.

Taking his cue from Tally, Schuberg rented (for \$1,000) an empty store at 38 Cordova Street, Vancouver, where in October of 1902 he opened the Edison Electric Theatre. He charged customers ten cents to watch a program of vaudeville acts and movies (he had only a few). Ackery explains that Schuberg hired George Case as his projectionist. The response to the program, which included two films, such as Méliès' *The Eruption of Mt. Pelee* and Edison's *The Great Train Robbery*, as well as illustrated songs, was enthusiastic.<sup>31</sup> Admission was ten cents. Schuberg printed a program (dated 16 February 1903) in which he announced that the Electric Theatre catered to "the refined" and that an usher would help ladies obtain desirable seats.<sup>32</sup>

Art Craft Dominion Para-mount  
WHERE QUALITY MEETS™  
**THEATRE**

---

**ALL NEXT WEEK**

---

J. STUART BLACKTON

The Master of Screencraft Presents  
**THE JUDGMENT HOUSE**

From the Novel by Sir Gilbert Parker  
 Picturized and personally directed by,  
 J. Stuart Blackton



A Paramount Picture

A GREAT BOER WAR LOVE STORY, which treats of the KILTIED HIGHLANDERS' heroic deeds on the battlefield—deeds that will forever stand out in the pages of history.

**A PICTURE YOU CAN'T AFFORD TO MISS**

All the human emotions in parade. Love, fickleness, pride, bravery, honor, sacrifice and elemental passions. Thrills galore; suspense enthralling.

A Story with a Love Element so tensely dramatic that it threatens to shatter the British Empire.

**EXTRA!—SPECIAL MUSICAL SETTINGS FOR "THE JUDGMENT HOUSE," BY THE FAMOUS DOMINION ORCHESTRA.**

*Manitoba Free Press*, 15 December 1917.

Meanwhile, Schuberg and Burrows formed an amusement company geared to operating movies-and-vaudeville theatres in Winnipeg. They opened the Unique, located at 529 Main Street, late in 1903, and Schuberg then sold the Electric Theatre in Vancouver to Fred Lincoln, later associated with the Sullivan and Considine vaudeville circuit. They opened the Dominion, located at 175 Portage Avenue in 1904, and the Bijou, located at 498 Main Street, in 1905, attracting much attention by screening *The Great Train Robbery*. Importantly, they arranged with a distributor in Minneapolis for one reel of film and three vaudeville acts per week. Business prospered, and they opened the Dreamland, located at 530 Main Street in 1909, and the Province, located at 209 Notre Dame Avenue, in 1910. Interestingly, a correspondent for the *Canadian Film Weekly* writes that the Dreamland was the first dedicated movie theatre in Winnipeg.<sup>33</sup> The Province, a facility measuring

40 ft. x 100 ft., accommodated 650 patrons. These theatres formed the nucleus of the Nash Theatre Chain, which eventually included eight theatres in Manitoba, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

Over the years, Schuberg employed a number of performers who later became movie stars. In 1906, he booked Al Jolson and Charlie Chaplin at the Bijou, paying the former \$75 per week and the latter about \$100 per week. Chaplin and his troop (of about twelve players) appeared in an act called Karno's "A Night in an English Music Hall." He booked these acts through the International Booking Office in Chicago, and later through the Sullivan and Considine Circuit in Minneapolis, which charged a booking fee. Being an independent operator, Schuberg opened his own booking office in the Tribune Building, Chicago. This was short lived, as Considine bought the circuit for \$100,000.<sup>34</sup>

In 1914, Schuberg and W. P. DeWees, a Vancouver-based exhibitor, formed a partnership. In 1916, they opened the Rex Theatre, Vancouver, and in 1917 formed the First National Film Circuit of Western Canada, having secured the exclusive rights to distribute First National Pictures throughout Western Canada.<sup>35</sup> Schuberg served as the president and DeWees as the general manager of the exchange. They hoped that this arrangement would give them a distinct business advantage.

The First National Exhibitors' Circuit came into being with the merger on 25 April 1917 of twenty-six regional distributors across the United States who controlled over one hundred first-run theatres in thirty cities, expressly challenging Adolph Zukor, who ran Famous-Players Lasky and Arcraft Pictures, the giant motion picture studio. This group, led by Thomas L. Tally, opposed the distribution system known as "block booking," whereby operators of first-run theatres contracted to exhibit the entire Paramount line, accepting good films as well as bad, with little or no prior knowledge of the films in question. Thus, if exhibitors wanted the cream of the Paramount crop, they were obliged to accept a block of (say) 104 films each year. However, they would have no idea of what type of film they were going to screen until it arrived. The distributor offered as a reward for buying the complete line protection against simultaneous showings in their areas.<sup>36</sup> Soon, the

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**Over the years, Schuberg employed a number of performers who later became movie stars. In 1906, he booked Al Jolson and Charlie Chaplin at the Bijou [on Main Street], paying the former \$75 per week and the latter about \$100 per week.**

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organizers agreed to finance the production as well as the distribution of their own films. Under J. D. Williams, First National grew rapidly, handling the films of such "stars" as

Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford, Milton Sills, and Richard Barthelmess, among others. (First National was taken over in 1927 by Warner Bros., who kept the name going until the mid-1930s.)

In less than two decades, Schuberg had created the leading theatre chain in western Canada. According to a correspondent to the *Moving Picture World*, Schuberg and Burrows owned and operated a sizeable number of theatres in Manitoba, including three first-run theatres in Winnipeg, and controlled eleven theatres in British Columbia, including three first-run theatres in Vancouver and two first-run theatres in Victoria. However, in June of 1919 Schuberg sold his exhibition and distribution interests to the Allen organization for close to \$1 million. Kirwan Cox explains that Schuberg had suffered financial losses at the box office, thanks to the closure of theatres during the flu epidemic of 1918 and to the Winnipeg General Strike, which affected unionized projectionists and musicians during the spring of 1919. Cox adds that Schuberg was also concerned about the labour unrest that was sweeping across Canada.<sup>38</sup> (This meant that the Allens controlled four first-run theatres in Winnipeg and operated forty-five of the best theatres in the country.) Schuberg took up ranching in the state of Washington, but years later he was back in the exhibition business, running the Strand Theatre in Vancouver. In 1924, he sold his theatre interests to Famous Players, agreeing to stay out of the exhibition business for ten years. He tried ranching again, but movie exhibition was in his blood, and he returned to Winnipeg, where he ran the Province and the Bijou for a number of years. Leonard Brockington, the president of Odeon Theatres (Canada) Limited, paid tribute to Schuberg at a banquet held in Toronto on 5 November 1952 to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of movie exhibition in Canada and the United States. This tribute included an onyx-and-gold plaque inscribed with the words: "You helped rock the cradle of our industry."<sup>38</sup> Schuberg died (on 13 December 1953) in Vancouver at the age of seventy-nine, leaving his wife, Nettie, three sons, two daughters, and seven grandchildren.

### Conclusion

A variety of (converging) social, technological, and economic forces affected the transformation of the movie industry from a novelty into a global entertainment industry. The dynamics at work were in fact continental, affecting Canada as well as the United States. This transformation—in western Canada as elsewhere—took place over a couple of decades. A thorough account of this process, i.e., the commercialization of leisure-time activities in general and of movies in particular, would tell the story of entertainment entrepreneurs who, via the exhibition strategies they employed, encouraged the public to develop the movie going habit; the movie house owners, the entrepreneurs who financed the buildings and managed the businesses; the architects who designed these "special"

environments; the movie producers and the "creative" people who made the films they thought the public wanted to see; the technicians who ran and the engineers who developed the equipment used by the producers and the exhibitors; the distributors, the entrepreneurs who circulated and rented the films to the exhibitors; and the audiences who claimed the medium as their own. As we suggested early on, travelling exhibitors such as Schuberg played a vital role in the movie industry, promoting (on a national level) the habit of watching movies. They enjoyed a short heyday, working smaller and smaller territories as more and more entrepreneurs established permanent exhibition sites during the Nickelodeon Era, from 1905 to 1913.<sup>39</sup> Many became projectionists, working for owners of these sites, but a few, such as Schuberg, became theatre owners themselves. ☞

**BIJOU THEATRE**



**Mary Miles Minter Week**

**MONDAY, TUESDAY  
AND WEDNESDAY.**

The Little Golden-Haired Beauty  
Will Appear in

**"Her Country's  
Call"**

A Story of a Young Girl's  
Patriotism

NEVER  
BEFORE  
SHOWN  
IN  
WINNIPEG

**THURSDAY, FRIDAY  
AND SATURDAY.**

As Pretty and Demure as Ever  
in

**"Melissa of the  
Hills"**

A vivid tale of thrilling adventure  
amongst the fighting mountaineers.

**MARY MILES MINTER WEEK**

*Manitoba Free Press*, 20 October 1917.

## Notes

1. See *The New York Times*, 24 April 1896, 5. For a discussion of this event, see Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture*. New York: Simon and Schuster, Inc., 1926; London: Frank Cass and Co., 1964, pp. 226-234; Garth S. Jowett, *Film: The Democratic Art*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1976, pp. 26-28; Tino Balio, ed.), *The American Film Industry*, rev. edn. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985, pp. 5-9; Gordon Hendricks, "The History of the Kinetoscope," in Tno Balio, ed., *The American Films Industry*, pp. 43-56; Robert C. Allen, "The Movies in Vaudeville: Historical Context of the Movies as Popular Entertainment," in Balio ed., *The American Film Industry*, pp. 67-69; Charles Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema: The American Screen to 1907*. New York: Scribner's, 1990, pp. 109-131; Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States*. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992, pp. 2, 7-8; James Trager, *The New York Chronology*. New York: Harper Collins, 2003, p. 248.
2. See Hendricks, "The History of the Kinetoscope," pp. 48-51; Gomery, *Shared Pleasures*, 5. Interestingly enough, many of the moving pictures W. K. L. Dickson and William Heise made for the Edison Manufacturing Company can be viewed at the Library of Congress Web site. Visit "Edison Motion Pictures" at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/edhtml/edmvhm.html>
3. *The New York Times*, 24 April 1896, p. 5.
4. Ramsaye, *A Thousand and One Nights*, p. 262.
5. Allen, "The Movies in Vaudeville," pp. 80-81; Arthur Frank Wertheim, *Vaudeville Wars: How the Keith-Albee and Orpheum Circuits controlled the Big-Time and its Performers*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, xvii.
6. We distinguish between the Cinématographe exhibition that the Lumière brothers' emissaries organised at the Palace Theatre, Montreal, on 21 June 1896, where admission was by invitation only, and the Vitascope exhibition that Edison's representatives, the Holland brothers, organised on 21 July 1896, where admission was ten cents for adults and five cents for children. See André Gaudreault and Germain Lucasse, "The Introduction of the Lumière Cinémaotgraphe in Canada," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 5.2 (Fall 1996): pp. 113-123, for an overview of this debate. We base our discussion of the Vitascope exhibition in Ottawa on the *Ottawa Free Press*, 20 July 1896, p. 1; the *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 20 July 1896, p. 1; 21 July 1896, p. 1, 4; 22 July 1896, p. 1; the *Ottawa Free Press*, 20 July 1896, p. 1; 21 July 1896, p. 8; the *Ottawa Daily Citizen*, 21 July 1896, p. 7; the *Toronto Mail and Empire*, 22 July 1933, p. 1, 4.
7. The *Ottawa Evening Journal*, 22 July 1896, p. 8.
8. Morris, *Embattled Shadows*, pp. 3, 243-244, 275.
9. Gomery, 11.
10. See Musser, *The Emergence of Cinema*, pp. 444-447; Gomery, pp. 7-18;
11. Kathryn H. Fuller, *At the Picture Show: Small-Town Audiences and the Creation of Movie Fan Culture*. Washington and London: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1996, p. 7.
12. Gomery, p. 11.
13. See Morris, pp. 11-14; Fuller, *At the Picture Show*, pp. 25-26.
14. Allen Theatre Enterprises "collapsed from within," thanks in large part to the effects of losing the exclusive rights to distribute Paramount movies and of over-extending themselves. Famous Players acquired thirty-six of the biggest Allen theatres in 1923. See Hilary Russell, "All that Glitters: A Memorial to Ottawa's Capitol Theatre and its Predecessors," in *Canadian Historic Sites: Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History*, no. 13 Ottawa: Parks Canada, National Parks, and Sites Branch, 1975, p. 115; Peter Morris, *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema, 1859-1939*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978, p. 92; Manjunath Pendakur, *Canadian Dreams and American Control: The Political Economy of the Canadian Film Industry*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1990, p. 61; Kirwan Cox, "The Rise and Fall of the Allens: The War for Canada's Movie Theatres," *Loneragan Review* 6 (2000): Robert M. Seiler "Movie Exhibition on the Prairies: The Case of the Allens, 1910-15," *Prairie Forum* 31.1 (Spring 2006): pp. 71-84.
15. See Hye Bossin, "Canada and the Film: The Story of the Canadian Motion Picture Industry," *Canadian Motion Picture Year Book: 1951*. Toronto: Film Publications of Canada, Ltd., 1951, p. 27; *Manitoba Free Press*, 27 February 1960, pp. 19-20; Ivan Ackery, *Fifty Years in Theatre Row*. Vancouver: Hancock House Publisher Ltd., 1980, p. 55; the *Vancouver Sun*, 15 December 1953, p. 16; the *Canadian Film Weekly* (hereafter cited as CFW), 24 April 1963, pp. 4-5; Russell, "All that Glitters," pp. 12-14; Morris, pp. 14-17; Philip Dombowski, "Emmanuel Briffa Revisited" (MS dissertation, Concordia University, 1995), pp. 28-29.
16. See the *Calgary Albertan*, 21 September 1963, p. 12.
17. See the *Canadian Moving Picture Digest* (hereafter cited as CMPD), 1 May 1940, p. 10; the *Vancouver Sun*, p. 15 December 1953, p. 16; the *Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 February 1960, p. 19; Ackery, *Fifty Years in Theatre Row*, p. 55.
18. Quoted in the CFW, 24 April 1963, p. 4.
19. Quoted in CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 10.
20. Quoted in the *Vancouver Sun*, 15 December 1953, p. 16.
21. CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 10.
22. See Russell, pp. 12-13. William H. Swanson claims that he opened the very first black-top tent movie show, i.e., in Booneville, Indiana, in July of 1897. This travelling exhibitor said that he routinely exhibited movies in a tent lined with black cotton. Apparently, two problems affected his business: on hot days, patrons were often overcome with heat and during storms the rain washed the dye out of the canvas, thereby bringing an end to the show. Eventually, Murray and Company, tent makers, produced a permanently black-top tent for him. Swanson writes that he later designed a red tent, equipped with a black cotton lining and ventilators in the top. See the *Moving Picture World* (hereafter cited as MPW), 15 July 1916, pp. 368-369.
23. Quoted in CFW, 24 April 1963, p. 4.
24. See CFW, 24 April 1963, 4-5; Morris, p. 15.
25. Quoted in CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 11.
26. Russell, 4; the *Winnipeg Free Press*, 27 February 1960, p. 20.
27. Morris, p. 19.
28. See CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 11; Russell, p. 17; Morris, p. 19.
29. Quoted in Ramsaye, p. 425.
30. For a fascinating study of Edwin S. Porter's development as a filmmaker (he joined the Edison Manufacturing Company in the fall of 1900), see Charles Musser, "The Early Cinema of Edwin Porter," *Cinema Journal* 19.1 (Autumn 1978): pp. 1-38.
31. See CFW, p. 26 April 1963, p. 4; Ackery, p. 56.
32. Russell, p. 16; Morris, p. 19.
33. See CFW, p. 24 April 1963, pp. 4-5; Cox, "The Rise and Fall of the Allens," pp. 60-62.
34. See CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 11.
35. See CMPD, 1 May 1940, p. 11; 3 January 1953, p. 3; Ackery, p. 57.
36. Ramsaye, p. 790; Tino Balio (ed.), pp. 120-121; Gomery, p. 38.
37. See the *Manitoba Free Press*, 15 May 1919, p. 15; 24 May 1919, p. 4; 26 May 1919, p. 4; 6 June 1919, p. 8; the MPW, 21 June 1919, p. 1782; Cox, pp. 60-62.
38. Quoted in the *Vancouver Sun*, 15 December 1953, p. 16.
39. Balio (ed.), p. 9; Morris, p. 21; Musser, pp. 444-347.

## James McKay (1828–1879): Métis Trader, Guide, Interpreter and MLA<sup>1</sup>

by Scott Stephen  
Parks Canada, Winnipeg

James McKay was a unique individual, but he was also representative of his time: his life and career illustrate both the halcyon days of the western fur trade and its twilight time, as well as the attempts by Métis commercial and political leaders to adapt to the rapid changes that followed Confederation. He found commercial success in the “old” West of the fur trade and the buffalo hunt, and political success in the “new” West of agriculture and settlement. He bridged the gaps between different worlds, nomadic and sedentary, English and French, Protestant and Catholic, Aboriginal and British.

### Trader, Freighter, and Guide

James McKay was born at Edmonton House in the Hudson’s Bay Company’s Saskatchewan District in 1828. His father, also named James (born Farr, Sutherlandshire, circa 1797), was a seasoned veteran of the HBC, having served as a boatman and guide since 1816. James Sr. retired to Red River in 1840, after spending the last four years of his career with the HBC-sponsored Arctic expeditions of Dease and Simpson. Young James’ mother was Marguerite Gladu, born at Cumberland House (circa 1808?) to a First Nations mother (probably Cree); it is not clear whether her father was First Nations, Métis, or French-Canadian.

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Archives of Manitoba, H. Letourneau Collection 17.

James McKay (1828–1879).

Young James—known variously as Jamie, Jimmie, and Big Jim—went to school in Red River and followed his father into the Hudson’s Bay Company’s service in 1853. He served mostly in the Swan River District of south-western Manitoba and south-eastern Saskatchewan,

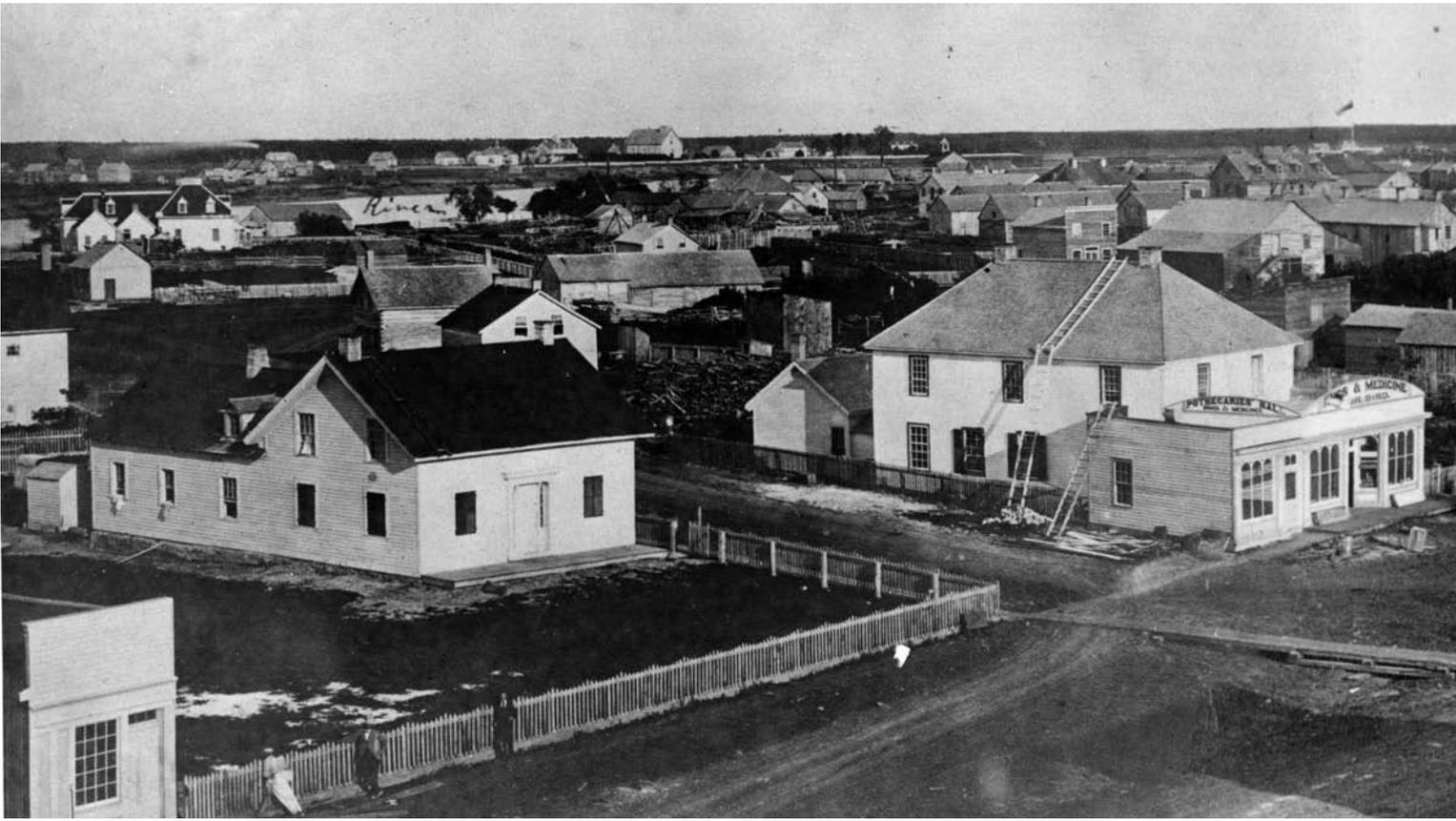
although in 1859 he established two HBC posts in American territory. The Company had hired him as a clerk and entrusted him with the management of small trading posts, but it was his skills as an interpreter and guide that gained McKay widespread fame both during and after his time with the HBC.

Let me paint you a word-picture of James McKay in his prime. The Earl of Southesk, visiting the HBC’s territories in 1859, recorded his first impressions of his impressive guide, upon meeting him in St. Anthony, Minnesota Territory:

A Scotsman, though with Indian blood on the mother’s side, he was born and bred in the Saskatchewan country, but afterwards became a resident near Fort Garry, and entered the Company’s employ. Whether as a guide or hunter, he was universally reckoned one of their best men. Immensely

broad-chested and muscular, though not tall, he weighed eighteen stone [about 250 lbs]; yet in spite of his stoutness he was exceedingly hardy and active, and a wonderful horseman.

His face—somewhat Assyrian in type—is very handsome: short, delicate, aquiline nose; piercing dark grey eyes; long dark-brown hair, beard, and moustaches; white, small, regular teeth; skin tanned to red bronze from exposure to weather. He was dressed in Red River style—a blue cloth



A panoramic view of Winnipeg as James McKay would have seen it in 1874, looking southeast toward St. Boniface from the intersection of Main Street and Bannatyne Avenue.

“capot” (hooded frock coat) with brass buttons; red-and-black flannel shirt, which served also for waistcoat; black belt round the waist; buff leather moccasins on his feet; trousers of brown and white striped home-made woollen stuff.

I had never come across a wearer of moccasins before, and it amused me to watch this grand and massive man pacing the hotel corridors with noiseless footfall, while excitable little Yankees in shiny boots creaked and stamped about like so many busy steam-engines.<sup>2</sup>

Southesk described a quintessential image of the Canadian frontiersmen, and in many ways James McKay seemed to be that very image come to life.

McKay had a facility with First Nations languages, apparently speaking several, including Cree and Ojibwa. His linguistic skills combined with his extensive knowledge of the prairies to make him a popular and respected guide. He took great pride in his ability to get people to their destinations in good time, regardless of the weather or other conditions. One account of his guiding HBC Governor Sir George Simpson to Upper Fort Garry described McKay wading through streams and muskegs with Simpson on his shoulders. In 1857, McKay guided the British scientific expedition led by Captain John Palliser from Fort Ellice (St.

Lazare, Manitoba) to Fort Carlton (northwest of Saskatoon, Saskatchewan).

In 1860, McKay left the Company’s service despite Simpson’s efforts to persuade him to sign a new contract. He used his growing reputation as a guide and interpreter as the foundation of his own business. He began as a trader and freighter, and soon expanded his activities to include such things as transporting mail and supervising road construction. He ran his many business interests from his beautiful home in St. James, Deer Lodge. There he lived with his wife, Margaret Rowand, the daughter of prominent HBC Chief Factor John Rowand, who had managed the Company’s Saskatchewan District from his headquarters at Fort Edmonton for thirty years. James and Margaret had married in 1859. They had two sons and a daughter (two other sons died in infancy), as well as a girl whom McKay had informally adopted after her parents were killed by Sioux. Margaret’s brother, John Rowand Jr, and his family lived nearby in Silver Heights, originally meant to be their father’s retirement home.

Not only did McKay run a variety of successful business ventures from his home, he made it a social centre of St. James parish and of the Red River Settlement as a whole. Red River in the 1850s and 1860s was a vibrant and bustling place with a population of several thousand living in its eight parishes. Red River hunters and trappers, traders



Photomosaic constructed from Archives of Manitoba images, Winnipeg-Views 1874 #2-1 N20723 and Winnipeg-Views 1874 #3 N143.

and merchants radiated out from the settlement in all directions. Brigades of Red River carts travelled the Carlton and Edmonton Trails, the Pembina Trail, and the Portage Trail (which passed right by the front door of Deer Lodge). The Swan River brigade consisted of about 50 carts, driven by 15 men, while (by 1870) as many as 1,500 carts and 450 men were travelling between Red River and St. Paul every year. Cart traffic—particularly the St. Paul route—was the largest single employer in the settlement.

#### Political Leader

In 1868, McKay was appointed to the Council of Assiniboia, the governing body of the Red River Settlement, and was made president of the Whitehorse Plains District Court. This was the eve of a watershed event in Red River's history. Since the 1850s—and particularly since the 1857 scientific expeditions by Hind and Palliser (the latter of which McKay had assisted)—the Canadian colonies in the east had shown increasing interest in the territories west of the Great Lakes. After Confederation in 1867, the new Dominion government wasted little time in calling for the acquisition of the Northwest. The Canadian government began negotiations with the British government and with the Hudson's Bay Company—but the people of Red River and the Northwest were not consulted.

At the time, Red River was the largest settled community between Lake Superior and the Pacific coast. The Red and Assiniboine valleys were home to nearly 10,000 people—about 90% of them Métis or English-speaking “mixed bloods.” Red River was also the most significant agricultural community. However, for a variety of reasons farming was a relatively high-risk venture then, and so even full-time farmers supplemented their income with hunting, trapping, fishing, freighting, salt making, and other activities.

Commercially, Red River merchants had strong ties with St. Paul and the Minnesota Territory, but also had connections with Montreal. The possibility of becoming part of Canada offered opportunities to build up those connections with Montreal, as well as to make new connections in towns like Toronto. Canada's failure to consult them, however, caused some grave concern, and some serious opposition when the HBC sold its lands to Canada in 1869. The stand taken by Louis Riel and his Provisional Government at that time is well known.

Although McKay was named one of the English councillors in the Provisional Government, in reality he did his best to remain neutral. Like many Red River businessmen, he was prepared to welcome Canadian rule provided that it came on terms agreeable to Red River. At the

same time, he understood, and to some extent sympathized with, the frustrations of Riel and his supporters. When push came to shove, McKay could not support Riel, but made abundantly clear his intention not to oppose him by force: “I cannot take up arms against my own people.”<sup>3</sup> Partly to avoid being forced by the course of events to take actions with which he was uncomfortable, McKay even left Red River for the United States during a critical period of that eventful winter of 1869–1870.

When Riel’s resistance had achieved its end, and Manitoba entered Confederation as a province rather than as part of the Northwest Territories, James McKay was perfectly placed for the next phase of his political career. By walking a very fine line, he had demonstrated loyalty to both the Canadian government and the people of Red River, without irrevocably associating himself with one side to the exclusion of the other. When Lieutenant Governor Adams Archibald formed his first government in January 1871, McKay was a natural choice. He was named to the Legislative Council (where he served until it was dissolved in 1876), and his colleagues’ respect for him was illustrated by their election of him as the Speaker of that house (a position he held until 1874). In 1877, McKay was elected to represent Lake Manitoba in the new provincial Legislative Assembly.

McKay was also named to Archibald’s Executive Council, serving as president of that body until 1874. In naming McKay as the fifth member of that body, the Lieutenant Governor explained that he was not upsetting the balance he had already created by naming two English and two French members, “since his father was Scotch, his mother French Half-breed and though he himself [is] a Catholic he has two brothers Presbyterians.”<sup>4</sup> His wife, Margaret (Marguerite), also bridged linguistic and ethnic divides, having a Scots-Irish father and an English-Cree mother.

In his political dealings, McKay earned a reputation for good judgment, and for being fair and open-minded. In the words of one contemporary, “he considered those opposed to him, and was at all times willing to discuss public questions with his opponent, with a degree of justice, and at times wonderful adroitness.”<sup>5</sup> This stood him in good stead, as his greatest political legacy was facilitating the peaceful transition of western Canada from a fur trade economy of hunters, trappers, and traders, to an agricultural economy of farmers, ranchers, and merchants. Both at the provincial level—he was the Minister of Agriculture in Robert Davis’ government (1874–1878)—and at the regional level—he was a member of the Council of the North-West Territories from 1873 to 1875—he worked to advance agriculture and encourage immigration, while at the same time concerning himself with issues facing the Métis and First Nations (such as alcohol and the disappearance of the buffalo).

Perhaps the most direct way in which he facilitated the transformation of the West was through his involvement with First Nations treaties. He assisted in the negotiations

of Treaties One (Lower Fort Garry) and Two (Manitoba Post) in 1871, and of Treaty Three (Northwest Angle, Lake of the Woods) in 1873; and he was one of the commissioners for Treaty Five (Winnipeg) in 1875 and Treaty Six (Forts Carlton and Pitt) in 1876. He often acted as both interpreter and negotiator, making good use of his multilingualism. Although there were many flaws in the ways the numbered treaties were negotiated and implemented, in many ways McKay represented the best aspects of the treaty process: he was honest, respected, respectful, generous, and genuine. As was the case in 1869–1870, he sought compromise and accommodation, and saw no contradiction in declaring himself both Aboriginal and a British subject.

### Conclusion

Let me close with another example of how committed James McKay was to the peaceful transition from one way of life to another. During the 1860s, he had brought to Deer Lodge a few buffalo calves from the North Saskatchewan River valley, letting them run with his cattle. This became the basis of his “buffalo park,” the first of its kind in the West. In 1877, McKay became president of the Winnipeg Game Club, devoted to the preservation of game in Manitoba. Later that year, however, ill health forced him to sell these buffalo (including some that had crossbred with the cattle) to Samuel Bedson, Warden of Stony Mountain Penitentiary. Bedson moved the buffalo to Stony Mountain, where they stayed until 1889, when he sold the herd (now more than 100 strong) to a chap from Kansas named Buffalo Jones. However, a few were given as a gift to Lord Strathcona, who returned them to Deer Lodge. In 1898, Strathcona donated his herd to the Dominion government, who then donated four of the animals to the City of Winnipeg: they were the foundation of the herd at the Assiniboine Park Zoo.

Increasingly ill health forced James McKay to retire from politics in 1878. He passed away at his home, Deer Lodge, on 2 December 1879; his wife of twenty years, Margaret, had passed away in February. Their stately home later became a country inn—appropriate considering the McKays’ well-known hospitality—and during World War I was turned into a veterans’ hospital. The memory of James McKay, however, faded with time in the new Manitoba—a Manitoba that he had helped create through his commitment to accommodation and peaceful transition.

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### Notes

1. This article was originally given as a lecture in Creative Retirement Manitoba’s “Men and Women in History” series, 31 March 2008.
2. Quoted in Irene M. Spry, *The Palliser Expedition: The Dramatic Story of Western Canadian Exploration 1857–60*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Calgary: Fifth House, 1995, pp. 54–55.
3. Bumsted, J. M., *Louis Riel v Canada: The Making of a Rebel*. Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 2001, p. 87.
4. Turner, A. R., “McKay, James,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, vol. X, pp. 473–474.
5. Turner, pp. 473–474.

## A Dominion Land Survey Map of the Red River Valley

by Irene Hanuta  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

### Introduction

Modern air travellers are well acquainted with the patchwork quilt that characterizes the landscape of southern Manitoba and indeed the prairie west. But what did this region look like a century and a half ago? An objective of my doctoral dissertation was to reconstruct land cover in southern Manitoba before the widespread onset of European agriculture. I did this by transferring the information in nineteenth century Dominion Land Survey (DLS) township maps to a computer-based Geographic Information System (GIS). The result was a map showing the locations of prairie, forests, wetlands, and other landscape features as they existed in the 1870s.

Before 1870, agriculture was a minor component of the southern Manitoba landscape with small subsistence farms mostly located adjacent to the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. With the arrival of large numbers of European settlers beginning in the 1870s, the landscape of southern Manitoba underwent a transformation. Manitoba's population increased from approximately 10,000 in the 1850s to more than 150,000 by the turn of the twentieth century. The Dominion Lands Act of 1872 positioned Manitoba (and later Saskatchewan and Alberta) for an agro-economy. Extensive tracts of grassland and parkland areas were surveyed, settled, and cleared for farming.

The office of the Surveyor General, of the federal Department of the Interior, was created in 1871 to conduct legal surveys and prepare maps. The land of southern Manitoba was subdivided into townships, each township comprising 36 square miles divided into 36 sections one square mile each. A grid system employed township lines running east and west and range lines running north and south. The Canada-US boundary served as a baseline for the north/south component but a meridian baseline was necessary to describe land in an east/west plane. The First

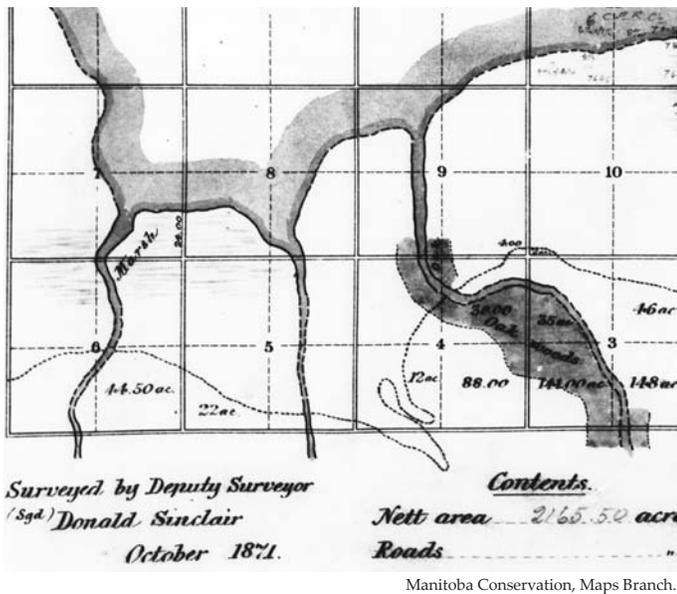
or Prime Meridian was established west of Winnipeg, at 97° 27' 28.41" west longitude. Six additional meridians were established in western Canada as the survey progressed. The range component of the legal description is, therefore, accompanied by reference to east or west of a baseline meridian. The township system is still used today, thus making comparisons to modern conditions possible.

A different survey system existed along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The River Long Lot Survey, established in 1813, did not conform to the strict sectional grid. Most long lots consisted of a 660- to 792-foot river frontage and a strip reaching two miles back. In areas with river lots, the township system grid was applied where river lots ended. Official re-surveys of long lots were undertaken around the same time as township surveys of the 1870s resulting in administrative units termed Parishes.

### Survey Documentation

Instructions for the Dominion Land Survey were compiled in manuals issued by the Department of the Interior. Numerous editions were printed, the first in 1871. The manuals focussed on technical aspects of the survey but they also included instructions for the recording of natural conditions. Each survey team was assigned a numbered Field Note Book in a standardized format that, according to instructions in the 1883 manual, was "to be a fair and exact copy of the original notes taken in the field." Field notebooks, belonging to individual surveyors, were used to document a survey. These notebooks were then used in the compilation and production of the final legal survey for a particular township. Notebook entries were typically made for individual sections along the road allowance separating two sections. Therefore, detailed descriptions can be found for individual sections. Because field notebooks often recorded information in more detail, they contain written descriptions of land cover features not always transferred to the final township plans. Examples of documentation found in notebooks but rarely or never on township maps include observations of depth and quality of surface water; descriptions of stream banks and current speeds; availability and quality of subsurface water; typical tree trunk diameters in wooded areas; quantity and suitability of timber for construction or fuel use; and dimensions and heights of local changes in elevation. Occasionally,

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A Dominion Land Survey map of Township 14, Range 7 West of the First Meridian was based on a survey in October 1871. The map itself, a portion of which is shown here, was made in June 1872.

notebooks identified geological features or mineral deposits and animal species found in a township.

Land cover information initially recorded in field notebooks was transferred by surveyors onto standardized township base maps. Upon completion of a survey, the surveyor was required to submit documentation to the Department of the Interior confirming the survey work. Among the material submitted were the field notebook and compiled township plan. In the final pages of the field notebooks a written summary report of the state of the landscape and environment was included.

### Mapping

My study area initially consisted of 194 townships in southern Manitoba but 24 townships were eventually eliminated because they were surveyed later than the initial surge of surveys in the 1870s. I also included parish maps along the Red and Assiniboine Rivers, and maps for the parishes of Lorette and St. Anne along the Seine River. These 170 townships covered 16,536 km<sup>2</sup>, most of most of which had been surveyed between 1871 and 1875 with the majority (97%) of the work completed in 1872. Very few surveys were performed in the winter; they occurred only in a few townships where impassable, boggy terrain prevented passage at other times of the year.

Land cover categories similar to the original categories were used for the mapping. To assemble land cover information from the township maps, two distinct components were involved: data collection and data analysis. Data collection involved transcription of the original township plan land cover information. Land cover polygons were traced from the original documents verbatim to ensure interpretations would commence after all relevant data was collected. To produce a GIS map of the entire

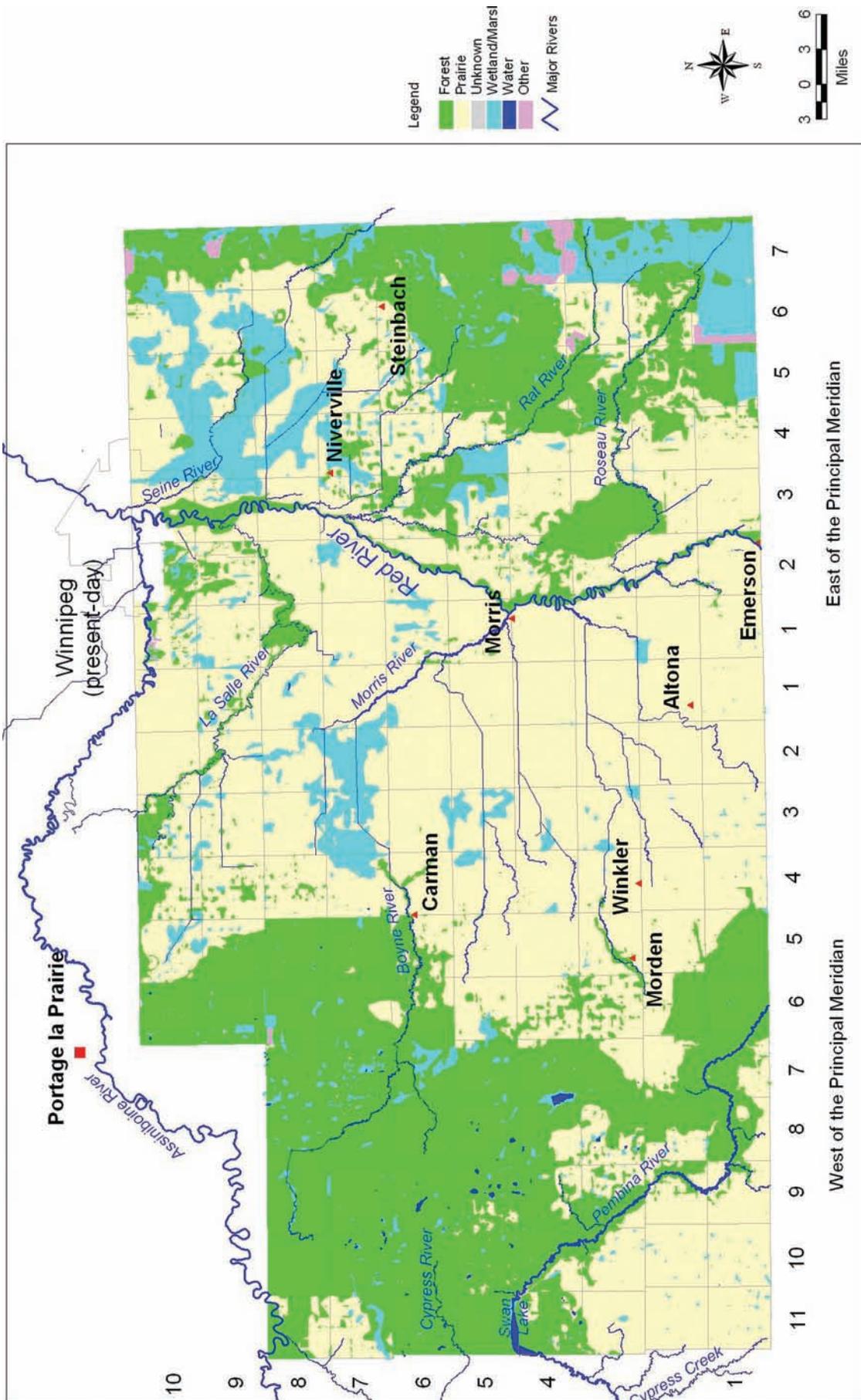
study area, each township map was georeferenced—that is, “real world” latitude and longitude coordinates had to be assigned to each original township map’s four corners, by comparing them to modern, spatially accurate maps of the same areas. Then, each township map was placed on a digitizing tablet and landscape features (prairie, wetland, woodland, scrub, and water) were traced. All written remarks relating to land cover were also transcribed from the original township plans. Target information extracted from township plans and specific to land cover included references to prairie land, wooded areas, wetland areas, scrub vegetation, surface water bodies or streams, and locations of spring outlets. Human settlement features were also transcribed from township and parish maps. Because the same surveyor did not conduct every township survey, some variations in land cover interpretation were evident. However, this was not a significant problem. To assess the reliability of original classifications, the written descriptions of land cover were analysed. This analysis showed that surveyors consistently used a small selection of a few key words or phrases when describing landscape features. Once digital representations of all township maps were obtained, they were combined together to make one seamless map of the entire area.

There were two problems in obtaining landscape information from township maps. First, the extent and, in some cases, the location of features was not always fully delineated in the original maps. Dense woods and impassable wetlands could prevent surveyors from mapping them completely. Consequently, some features in the digital map may be larger or smaller than they should be. A second problem was that a landscape feature beginning in one township map did not always continue on the adjoining map. This may have been caused by maps having been prepared by different surveyors who varied in their degree of thoroughness. Or, that the surveys took place at different seasons of a year and in different years. So, for example, a wetland might be present in one map prepared in a wet year, but absent from its neighbouring map done in a dry year. A number of these cases were resolved by referring to the original field notebooks.

### The Map

My map of southern Manitoba in the 1870s—see the following page—illustrates a landscape in which about 55% of the area was unbroken prairie, with the remainder made up of forest (35%), wetlands (10%), and a variety of smaller features (water, agricultural land, settlements, burned and unclassified areas) collectively representing under 1%. Data for 1995 obtained from the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration show that 85% of the same area is in some form of agriculture (cropland, forage, or grassland); forests represent 9%, wetlands are about 1%, and urban area and transportation corridors make up the remaining 5%. Clearly, the landscape of southern Manitoba has changed remarkably in about 120 years, showing the extent of human impacts on our environment. ☞

# Red River Valley Map, 1870s



I. Hanuta

The landscape of southern Manitoba in the 1870s was reconstructed using 170 townships maps of the Dominion Land Survey. Individual townships are denoted by the horizontal and vertical grid lines. The locations of some modern features, such as towns and cities, were added for reference. Township numbers are denoted on the left side; range numbers are shown along the bottom.

## A Memoir of Old St. Paul's College

by Fred McGuinness, Class of '43  
Brandon, Manitoba



Sandy Black

Fred McGuinness

For over fifty years, Fred McGuinness has committed his unique talents of communication to the understanding, appreciation and celebration of life in rural western Canada. His recollections reflect Fred's deep curiosity about life around him, his enviable ability to find the humour in every situation, and his unique ability to convey action, ideas, and nuance. When Fred received an honorary degree from Brandon University a few years ago, we received many supporting letters. One writer characterized him as "the undisputed Dean of community newspaper editors and journalists." He was, asserted another, "...a philosopher, a lecturer, a specialist in arboriculture (especially of the Christmas tree variety), a protector of grammatical English, an advisor generous with his time, and on top of it all, a mighty fine gentleman." These qualities shine through in his writing, some of which will be published in the next few issues of *Manitoba History*.

Tom Mitchell  
Archivist, Brandon University

I returned to my room one day after class and found a note pinned to the door. "Please come to the rector's office." This was my introduction to Father Sutton, a brisk, florid-faced, no-nonsense type who moved quickly and gave the impression of always being in a rush. There was no salutation, rather he launched right into the purpose of this meeting:

"McGuinness: you've been here now for several weeks and you still haven't told us what your sport is going to be. Every Crusader must have at least one sport."

I did not respond immediately, mainly because of the shock. After all, I was not in great shape. I had been involved in a shipwreck. I had spent eleven months in bed in hospital. I had lost forty pounds. I had a heavy brace on one leg. To get around I needed a walking stick. Does this man think I'll try out for the football team?

I mumbled something about mobility problems, but I was cut short by this impatient man. "I know all about your condition. Despite that, there is something you can do in the sports field. I suggest you see the director of athletics right away." With this, he turned to the stack of files on his desk as I limped away.

Within minutes I had introduced myself to the athletics man and, after a helpful chat, I was appointed manager of the senior hockey team. Yes, I was still on the limp, but I certainly was well enough to buy hockey sticks, make bookings for games, and order a bus if the team was playing beyond the reach of the Winnipeg street cars.

In the office next to the rector's was the man I always felt really ran the institution: Father Charles Joseph Kelly. He was the bursar. This was a non-academic specialist; he had to pay the bills, a daunting task. He employed wondrous ways of raising cash. When someone dropped a dish in the refectory, he charged a nickel to the account of every boarder. If there were two hundred of us, and that's only a guess, he was coining money, dish by dish. One boarder suggested that Father Kelly had no time for the gold standard; he was doing just fine on the crockery standard.

In two years at the old St. Paul's I passed the exams for grades nine, ten, and eleven at the same time I became a cheerleader for those black-robed men who comprise the Society of Jesus, popularly known as the Jesuits.

The old St. Paul's was located a long block north of The Bay. There were three buildings along with a large playing field. One small older brick house was the residence of

## Old St. Paul's College



Archives of Manitoba, Thomas Burns Collection 669.

**The distinctive architecture** of St. Paul's College, seen near the centre of this 1927 Winnipeg panorama, graced Ellice Avenue for many years before being demolished to make way for a federal laboratory. The College is now situated at the University of Manitoba's campus in south Winnipeg and grade-school students are instructed at a facility in the Tuxedo suburb.

the priests. A second old structure was residence for older students, mainly those at the university level. The third was a combination school building with numerous dormitory rooms for young scholars.

There were some youngsters of eight or nine years. A number of them had parents who lived in remote mining settlements, or hydro generating stations. The rest of the student body could be divided into two groups: Roman Catholic lads from small towns in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and northwestern Ontario, and a large group of day students from Winnipeg. There were always a few strays: a student expelled from the Winnipeg school division could apply for admission at St. Paul's.

### Notable Tolerance

Once each year, at the beginning of a new term, we had a splendid demonstration of the tolerance at this institution. Non-Catholic boys were told to attend a meeting in the common room. Father Sutton always took these brief sessions. I can paraphrase his lecture which took all of two minutes: "You boys don't go to our church so we ask you for a courtesy: When the Catholic boys are in chapel, please don't make a noise so that they might wish they were on the playing field. Class dismissed!"

### Characters

St. Paul's had its full share of characters. A seriously crippled man named McNulty was the night watchman. We were told he had jumped from one of the upper floors of St. Boniface College years earlier during a disastrous fire.

A favourite friend of mine was Father Eric Smith, Latin teacher. He agreed to give me tutoring for final exams, but he would never specify the amount I owed him. One day when I pressed him on this topic, he had a delightful explanation: he said if I gave him money, he was bound by Jesuit law to give it to the bursar, Father Kelly. However, if I gave him something in lieu of cash, different rules applied. He then mentioned that he had a sweet tooth, which responded well to chocolates, and he had a special interest in wine of the grenadine type. I kept him well supplied with both.

A rarity was Father St. Jacques, a history teacher currently serving as a chaplain in the RCAF with the rank of squadron leader. He wore the uniform with a Roman collar.

He knocked on my door one evening and invited himself in, and closed the door behind him. I thought this unusual, but so was his request. He told me that I was the only person in the residence old enough to have a liquor permit, and was there a chance that I had enough points for a bottle of whiskey. I said yes, I had those points, but I could not possibly take time to go the liquor store, because my final history exam was scheduled for the next morning, and Father St. Jacques should know that; it was his class. He cut off further discussion by making a proclamation: I was to get into his car immediately. As to that final exam, I was to stop worrying about it; I was going to get a B-plus. Sixty years later, I still kick myself for not negotiating for an A.

### **Braithwaite's Virgins**

An object of much discussion was "Braithwaite's Virgins."

Kitty-corner to the Bay on Portage Avenue was Braithwaite's Drugs, a pharmacy with a lunch counter. This was the closest thing to a hangout available in that busy downtown area. For reasons never enunciated, the waitresses were recruited from the Mennonite Belt of southeastern Manitoba. This was a collection of happy, friendly farm girls with names like Katie, Rosie, Agatha, Aganetha, last names unknown. They all lived in large old boarding houses close to the college. On warm evenings, they would sit outside on the steps. Students passing who stopped for a chat were often invited inside for some carefully prescribed necking. As reported to me, these young women had a literal definition of the word "necking." Contact was restricted to the neck and above. I thought it sad that there was no courting; their religion frowned on both movies and dancing. Those students who had visited the girls in their rooms had reached a conclusion; not only were they virgins, but they were going to maintain that condition until they married.

### **The Refectory**

I do not believe that anyone ever saw the name of St. Paul's in any Michelin Guide to Fine Dining. Just let me say that it was plain fare and no one ever died of malnutrition.

The kitchen crew were members of an order of nuns, and English was not their mother tongue. Contact was limited to the one young nun who placed the serving dishes on the pass-through. The only priest to eat with the rest of us supervised the table of the little kids. The rest of the faculty ate their meal in a separate room. I thought it was an interesting custom that they ate in silence, while listening to one of the young scholastics as he read aloud from current literature.

### **Dining Out**

There was a standard evening meal each Friday that many of us avoided. There is something unexciting about a pair of soft-boiled eggs rolling around on a dinner plate, so we escaped whenever the exchequer would bear it. My roommate one year was Albert Ninian McCrudden from Wabowden, a man of sparkling wit. Our favourite eating-out spot was Jimmy's Steak House, opposite the Marlborough. After I had ordered a T-bone, McCrudden would tell the waitress that he wanted a whale steak. When he was advised there was no such item on the menu, he would throw up his hands and say, "Oh well, I tried to have fish on Friday, but they wouldn't let me. Bring me a tenderloin."

### **Mysterious Neighbour**

In my second year, Father Kelly put me in a private room next to the sacristy where the priests and altar boys robed.

There was one more room next to me, but I never saw the occupant.

What solved this mystery was the night I had company. Two of my shipmates from HMCS Alachasse were in town as members of a naval tattoo. They telephoned my home in Brandon and learned I was in Winnipeg, and they came calling. As is often the case with sailors, there were occasional rough touches to the hilarity. In the middle of the evening, the door next to mine opened and out came a Jesuit. After my company left, I apologized to my neighbour for the noise we had made, especially for the rough talk. He smiled and told me to forget it. He then introduced himself as Father Deslaurier. About the profanity, I was to forget it as well. He said he had heard it all before. After all, he was the Roman Catholic chaplain at Stony Mountain Penitentiary.

### **Friday Evening**

There was one dominant non-academic topic on the Old St. Paul's campus and it was followed with religious zeal: football. It always struck me as curious that numerous students, coming to Winnipeg from remote areas, had never seen a pointed football in their lives. Despite this, they took to it like that proverbial duck on a prairie slough.

A big question each autumn concerned the candidates for quarterback. That exalted position turned an average student into the BMOC. The coach was Greg Kabat, of the Blue Bombers. I never confirmed this, but certainly I was told countless times that, before each game, he lectured his enthusiastic young charges with a pep talk which reportedly included the injunction, "Always remember that you are the Crusaders of St. Paul's; play hard, play like gentlemen ... once you are three touchdowns ahead!"

Friday night was game night. We abandoned the campus *en masse* from youngest kid to oldest priest. We walked around the corner of The Bay to the Osborne Stadium. While we were waiting for the opening whistle, a pair of Winnipeg police officers would pass by and one of our cheerleaders would call out, "Where does your old man work?"

The response from several hundred of us was, "My old man don't work ... he's a cop!"

### **Favourite Character**

One of my favourite characters from the student body was a young man from Ste. Rose du Lac. Gildas Molgat was fifteen when he came to St. Paul's and he soon went on to become a gold medalist at the University of Manitoba. After a stint in the travel industry, "Gil" became an MLA, and soon after was appointed to the Senate. Via correspondence and the telephone, we kept in touch until his death.

Interesting fact: in two years at St. Paul's I think I never heard the word failure. It wasn't in our lexicon. I do not believe the faculty would let this happen. Their assignment was to prepare you for university. And they made certain all their students were suitably qualified. ☛

## Manitoba's Government House at 125

Since 1883, the stately three-storey mansion known as Government House has been the residence of Manitoba's Lieutenant Governors. Located at 10 Kennedy Street in the heart of downtown Winnipeg, it has housed twenty of the province's twenty-three federal officers and served as a centre of political and social activity. Over the years its doors have been opened to welcome royalty and dignitaries, artists and scientists, teachers and preachers—the famous and common folk alike.

The office of Lieutenant Governor has changed dramatically since Manitoba joined Confederation in 1870. Whereas the incumbent once had the power to reserve bills and to make and unmake ministries, the Lieutenant Governor is now a social leader and political figurehead, whose powers "to warn, to encourage and be consulted" are rarely exercised. Although still legally the federal government's officer and the sovereign's representative, the Lieutenant Governor has not exercised significant political authority over the provincial government since early in the twentieth century.

Government House is located on a piece of land which had been appropriated in 1872 as a twenty-hectare government reserve. The property adjoined the western end of the Hudson's Bay Reserve and ran from the Assiniboine River, north to what is now York Avenue and west from Kennedy Street to present-day Osborne Street North. In 1874 this tract of land was divided down its length and the eastern half, which extended on both sides of Broadway, was designated as a provincial reserve. The southern portion of the reserve was seven hectares. At the northern end of this section the federal government constructed Manitoba's first provincial Legislative Building (since demolished when the present one was completed, in 1920),

and on the south side built Government House. While work on both buildings was to commence in 1881, Government House was completed in 1883, one year before the finishing touches were made to the Legislative Building.

The architectural designs for Government House were drawn up by the Chief Architect's Office in the federal Department of Public Works. A simplified version of the

Second Empire style was chosen to compliment the nearby Legislative Building. Known as Second Empire because of its popularity in France during the Second Napoleonic Empire, this style was introduced to Canada in the 1860s. Its most prominent feature was a flat steep-sided Mansard roof. During the early 1880s, builders in Winnipeg constructed everything from warehouses to private residences in this style. The simple lines of the Second Empire style were understated and dignified, admirable qualities for the home of a Lieutenant Governor. Government House is one of the few

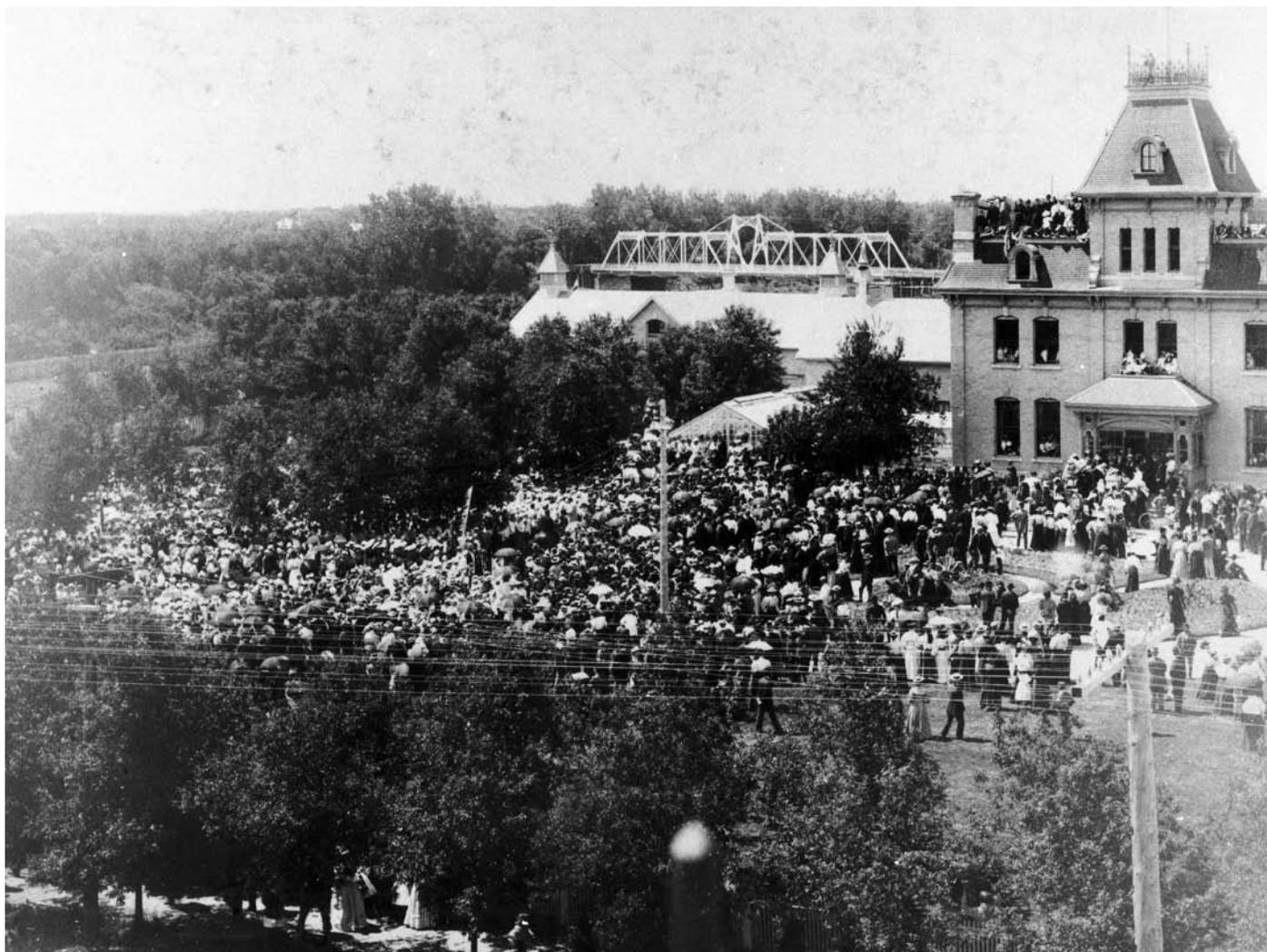


Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Homes-Government House-31, N5878.

**Government House** was the home of Lieutenant-Governor James Cox Aikins (1823–1904) at the time this photograph was taken by photographer F. V. Bingham, circa 1885.

remaining examples of Second Empire architecture in Manitoba.

Building tenders were called in 1881 and the two lowest were submitted by A. Charlebois of Montreal (\$23,133) and Joseph Williams and F. J. Bowles of Selkirk (\$23,995). Although Charlebois' bid was lower, he would not guarantee his quote unless he also received the contract for the Legislative Building. John R. Lyons of Ottawa had quoted a lower price on the latter and so Charlebois lost out on both fronts. The contract for the Lieutenant Governor's residence was awarded to Williams and Bowles, and work began in early September 1882. By late December the superstructure and tin roof were finished. The interior and most of the outbuildings were completed during 1883. In March, Bowles had also received the contract



Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Homes-Government House-6.

**Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee**, celebrated in 1897, brought out revelers to the home of her representative in Manitoba, as seen in this view by Winnipeg photographer Frank D. Blakely. They looked out of its every window, and gathered on its roof. The stout brick stable is visible in the background, as is the iron bridge across the nearby Assiniboine River.

for the stables and a combined wash-house, ice-house and woodshed. The stables were located approximately thirty-four metres southwest of the house to keep the "sweet" smell of the horses from drifting towards the residence. The second building was situated closer, some eleven metres from the southwest corner of the house, for the convenience of the servants who stocked the ice box and wood bins. Everything was in readiness by the time Lieutenant Governor James Cox Aikins moved in during the third week of September. The house had already been connected to the telephone exchange, and it was only a few weeks before the pipes were laid to provide fresh water via the Winnipeg Water Works.

The residence was located fifty-three metres west of Kennedy Street and offered a pleasant view of the spacious lawns that stretched down towards Broadway. A semi-circular driveway cut its way around to the front of the house, where wooden walkways led up to the stairs. During the 1880s and 1890s, the area around Government

House became a fashionable district as professionals and entrepreneurs such as stationer R. D. Richardson, grain merchant Nicholas Bawlf, and builder W. H. Rourke constructed their homes across the street. Government House was twelve metres high and nineteen metres long by eighteen metres wide, with a Mansard-roofed tower, eighteen metres above grade. The best quality local white brick was used to construct the walls, while the above grade foundations, window sills and caps were made of limestone. The foundation below grade rested on oak piles thirty-eight centimetres in diameter driven nine metres into the ground, over which concrete footings were poured. Oak planks were laid on top of the footings, and these "sills" formed the base for the Stony Mountain rubble stone that continued up to ground level. In most private residences the rubble stone ran right up to the brick work, but in many public buildings such as the Eastern Judicial Jail (later the Vaughan Street Detention Centre) and Government House, finely-cut limestone slabs were used above ground. The

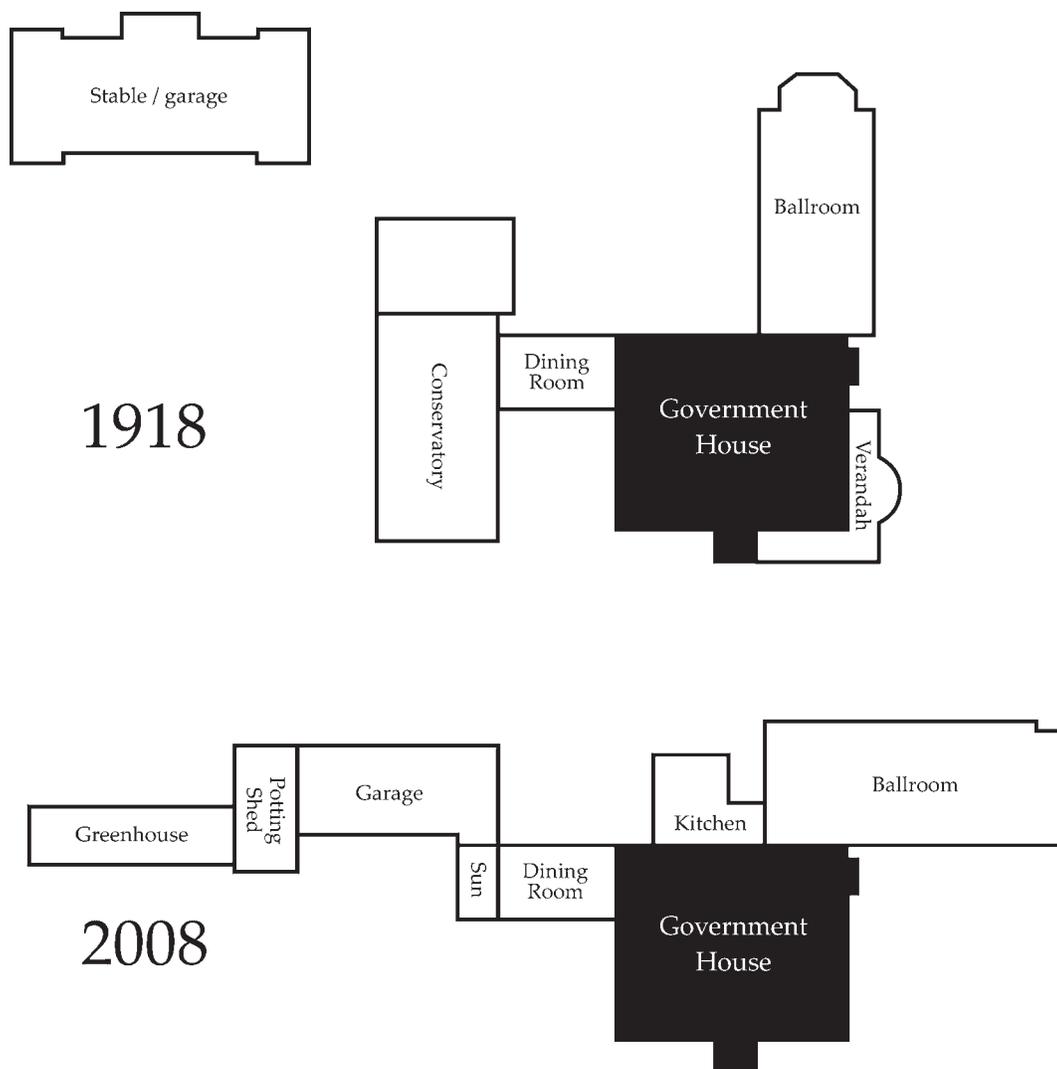
## Government House

combined strength of the oak pilings and concrete footings of the foundation were designed to compensate for damage that could have been caused by the surrounding clay soil. Unstable and constantly shifting, the clay was a well-known problem plaguing many of the city's newer structures.

Six steps led up to the porch and the heavy set of double oak doors which formed the entranceway to Government House. A transom and two sidelights brightened the path of night-time guests as they made their way through the doorway and into the main vestibule. This entrance hall was four by two metres and featured two glass floor openings which threw shafts of light down into the "still room," a basement chamber where preserves and liqueurs were prepared. The vestibule opened onto an outer hall which led into the Lieutenant Governor's office, the inner hall, and the drawing room.

Most guests would have been led directly into the inner hall, where an oak staircase curved its way up to the second floor. Three storeys overhead was a rooftop lantern-light which lit the stairwell and hallway. The north doorway off the hall led into the six by five metre breakfast room, and the west door entered onto the seven by six metre drawing room. The portal on the west wall opened onto the eight by six metre dining room, which took up the southwest corner of the building. An adjoining serving room was connected to the basement kitchen, scullery room, and storage rooms by a dumbwaiter and stairs. During state parties or large public functions, the folding doors between the library, breakfast room, drawing room, and dining room could be opened to form an L-shaped reception area or ballroom.

The light-well that stretched up from the main hall to the third storey formed a gallery or balcony on the second



The footprint of Government House has changed dramatically in eighty years. Virtually all its outbuildings in 1918 have been replaced by a series of interconnected structures comprising some 20,000 square feet.



Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg-Homes-Government House-15.

**The ballroom**, added to Government House at the turn of the twentieth century as the site for special functions, was demolished in 1960 to make way for a replacement.

floor. Off the gallery were the dressing rooms, bathroom and bedrooms used by the Lieutenant Governor's family and guests. Two bedrooms at the rear of the house were connected by a set of folding doors which could be opened to create the six by sixteen metre royal suite. All of the main bedrooms on the second floor had a small fireplace, and a number featured marble-topped mahogany bedroom suites. A small staircase, off the bathroom-dressing room area on the south side of the house, led up to the attic storey. The servants' modest accommodations and a number of unfinished rooms were situated here. One of these unfinished chambers was apparently made into a billiard room.

The house was finished and furnished according to the formal tastes of the vice-regal resident. Walnut and ebonized wood furniture was purchased in Toronto. Carpets were also ordered from Toronto and from the Hudson's Bay Company store on Main Street. A billiard table was supplied by Samuel May and Company of Toronto, while D. Scott and Company of Winnipeg provided the mahogany bedroom suites and servants' furniture. The large furnace and boiler was made by a Montreal manufacturer, R. Carte and Company. All in all, it

was a residence that offered "every modern convenience." As one local journal observed, "Nothing, in fact, will be wanting to make this a fitting abode for the Lieutenant Governor of the great Province of Manitoba."

Prior to 1885 the federal government provided fiscal aid and a large portion of the funding needed by the Manitoba government. It also paid for construction of the province's first Legislative Building and Government House. After 1885 Manitoba assumed responsibility for its own financial

#### More on Government House

In 1970, Frances Bowles, wife of then Lieutenant-Governor Richard Bowles, invited members of the Manitoba Historical Society into Government House for a comprehensive presentation on the history her home. Later published in the Society's *Transactions*, the article is now available on the MHS web site:

[www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/govthouse.shtml](http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/govthouse.shtml)

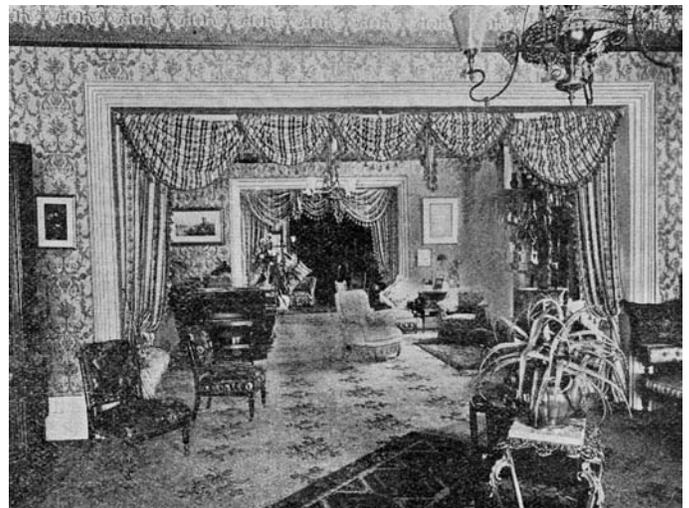
### Government House Trivia

- Ownership of Government House was transferred to the Province by the federal government for the sum of \$1. The Order-in-Council authorizing the transfer stipulated that the house was to be used as the official residence of the Lieutenant-Governor, to which Sir John A. Macdonald added in handwriting, “and for no other purpose.”
- Government House had no address until 1960 when it became #10 Kennedy Street.
- There are eleven washrooms in Government House.
- Two Lieutenant-Governors, Theodore A. Burrows and Roland F. McWilliams, refused to serve liquor at official functions in Government House.
- Government House is one of few in Canada that has been used continuously as a residence for Lieutenant Governors. (The only older ones are in Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.)
- The first Manitoba-born resident of Government House was Errick French Willis (1896–1967), our fifteenth Lieutenant-Governor, born at Boissevain. All subsequent Lieutenant-Governors, except Pearl McGonigal—who was born in Melfort, Saskatchewan—have been native Manitobans.
- The Royal Bedroom on the second floor has been used by several royals over the years. Princess Anne was the last member of the royal family to stay at Government House, in 1982.
- Government House was one of the first residences in Manitoba to have a telephone. It was installed in 1883, at an annual operating cost of \$26.70.
- Lieutenant-Governor Harvard hosts an average of one hundred special events each year at Government House.
- In addition to its human residents, Government House is home to cats, turtles, and numerous goldfish in a greenhouse pool.
- A Westminster Eight-Bell grandfather clock at the front entrance was crafted in England in 1870, with ornate pictures on its face that move with the phases of the moon. The clock is wound twice a week. It still keeps good time.

affairs, which included the cost of any renovations or alterations made to the Lieutenant Governor’s residence. By the mid-1890s Government House was in need of repair. During the winter of 1896-97 observers claimed that the house was barely habitable—the heating system needed overhauling; plumbing fixtures had to be renewed; and the

hearths and fireplaces needed to be rebuilt and retied. These and all subsequent repairs, renovations and extensions were paid for by the provincial government.

Over the years, Government House underwent a number of changes. Rooms designated for one purpose came to serve others: a library became a drawing room, a second floor bedroom doubled as a ballroom, and the Lieutenant Governor’s office became an aide’s room, once the incumbent was given his own chambers at the Legislative Building. A conservatory was added to the greenhouse in 1886, and a ballroom and verandah were added around the turn of the twentieth century. Some of these were later torn down and replaced by other additions: a sunroom, an assembly room, a new garage, and modern greenhouse. An important alteration was made in the 1940s when a kitchen wing was attached. In



*Town Topics*, 23 January 1904, Manitoba Legislative Library



G. Goldsborough

**Then and now.** Furnishings in the front drawing room of Government House have changed to suit the tastes of the times, as seen in this pair of photos spanning 104 years. Heavy curtains in the archways of the 1904 photo (top) have, by 2008 (bottom), been replaced by classic columns, perhaps to provide structural support to the 125-year-old building.

March 1999, the newly installed 22<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, the Honourable Peter M. Liba, had to wait for several months to take up residence in Government House, until the latest round of renovations were completed. The original Manitoba oak hardwood floors on the main level were restored and additional preservation work was done in the parlours, grand staircase, and some second floor spaces. Upgrades brought the building into code compliance, the fire alarm system was improved, the private residential space was modernized, new windows matching the originals were installed, the original cedar roof and dormers were restored, and the foundation was underpinned to stabilize and strengthen it. Finally, air conditioning was installed on the main floor in July 2000. Prior to this, formal dinners could not be held during the summer months.

On 6 September 1870, Lieutenant Governor Adams Archibald held a reception at Upper Fort Garry so that the general populace could meet and chat with the Canadian government's new representative in Manitoba. This marked the first of many social events organized and presided over by Manitoba's Lieutenant Governors. Archibald followed the reception with a New Year's Levee held on 2 January 1871, a celebration which became an annual tradition. The first New Year's Levee held at the Kennedy Street residence in 1884 provided curious citizens with an opportunity to view the handsome interior of the new house. According to one account the main hall had been tastefully decorated with festoons of evergreens, and a larger evergreen horseshoe, inscribed with the words "A Happy New Year," welcomed guests in the foyer. The event began at four in the afternoon and lasted for over two hours. A number of distinguished guests attended: Premier John Norquay and cabinet ministers C. P. Brown and A. A. C. La Rivière, along with American Consul James Wickes Taylor and Archbishop Robert Machray. A table in the dining hall was laid out with garnished platters of turkey, prairie chicken, partridge, duck, venison, and other dishes.

For a number of years the chatelaines residing at Government House set aside one day a week as an "at home" where a variety of visitors were received for tea and

conversation. Spring and summer garden parties held on the lawn of the Lieutenant Governor's home were another popular form of entertainment. Public celebrations, such as Queen Victoria's two jubilees, were held at Government House, as were the receptions which marked the opening of the provincial legislature. State dinners, receptions and balls, held in honour of distinguished visitors and guests, were often lavish affairs attended by hundreds of local personalities.

Many such functions were arranged for visiting royalty. There have been twenty-one Royal visits to Manitoba, ranging from the 1901 tour of the Duke and Duchess of York to the more recent stopover made by HRH The Prince Edward, The Earl of Wessex, in 2008. During the 1939 tour of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, the royal couple arrived in Winnipeg on 24 May 1939 accompanied by Prime Minister Mackenzie King. They were met at the train station and whisked to Government House.

Special radio equipment had been set up in the library, and at one o'clock that afternoon the King broadcast to the empire. The table which he used now bears a small brass plaque and photograph commemorating the event.

Visits by the Governors General of Canada have also been frequent. Since the transcontinental tour of Lord Lansdowne in the fall of 1885, every presiding Governor General has been a guest at Government House. On one occasion, in July 1900, Lord and Lady Minto travelled to the city to open the Winnipeg Fair. The couple arrived in the evening and were greeted by Lieutenant Governor Patterson. The houses along the route from the station were lit in welcome, and

Lord and Lady Minto were accompanied by a torchlight procession and a score of bands. When they arrived at Government House, they found the grounds decorated with Chinese lanterns and the house ablaze with coloured electric lights.

Other guests who stayed at Government House included Winston Churchill and one-time British High Commissioner, Lord Amory. Its doors have been opened to welcome John Phillip Sousa, Billy Graham, Princess Christina of Sweden, President Vigdis Finnbogadottir of Iceland, Lord and Lady Baden Powell, and author



A medallion commemorating the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Government House is being presented to special guests during 2008 by Lieutant-Governor Harvard.

Office of the Manitoba  
Lieutenant Governor.

Margaret Laurence. Songstress Gracie Fields paid a visit, and renowned actress Sarah Bernhardt was entertained at tea by Lady Aikins. Other famous visitors included Harry Belafonte, Bill Cosby, Sammy Davis Jr., Canadian astronauts Dr. Roberta Bondar and Dr. Ken Money, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, and Dr. Andrei Sakharov.

The year 2008 marks the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Manitoba’s Government House. Few buildings in the province have reached this milestone still serving the same function for which they were originally intended. Understandably, a 125-year-old home—even one that has undergone periodic renovations—is bound to have problems. According to the present Lieutenant-Governor, the Honourable John Harvard, foremost among them is a lack of climate control. Although air conditioning was installed on the first floor in 2000, the upper floors remain uncooled, making them uncomfortable during Manitoba’s characteristically hot summer nights. And the primitive heating plant cannot be controlled accurately with the result that it is sometimes necessary to open windows in the dead of winter to maintain a reasonable room temperature. The problem is most acute on the second floor where special guests—including members of the Royal family—would be accommodated. Mr. Harvard believes that attention to these issues is needed for the building to continue as a source of pride for Manitobans.

Government House is situated in close proximity to three buildings which symbolize the political and administrative heart of this province: the grand Legislative Building, the Land Titles Office, and the Law Courts Building and Power House. Although somewhat overpowered by the



Office of the Manitoba Lieutenant Governor.

**A spring levee.** The Honourable John Harvard, P.C., O.M., Manitoba’s twenty-third Lieutenant-Governor, welcomed visitors into his home during Winnipeg Doors Open in May 2008. His Honour and Her Honour Lenore Berscheid are pictured here dressed in period costume (he in top-hat, she in bonnet), as some 2,000 visitors took in the building and grounds during the two-day free event.

still formalism of the large limestone structures nearby, Government House remains an important landmark in Winnipeg and an integral part of the political and social life of Manitoba. ❧

*The text of this article is based, in part, on a pamphlet by the Manitoba Historic Resources Branch, used here with permission. Editors.*

### A Message from the Lieutenant-Governor

As the Patron of the Manitoba Historical Society and the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba, my thanks to the editors for turning the spotlight on Government House. It’s a grand old house that occupies a very special place in Manitoba’s history.

It is more than just a house. It’s home to the province’s Lieutenant Governor—a major distinction between it and its counterparts in other provinces (a couple have none at all) that no longer serve as home to the Queen’s representative. This distinction is most important. It’s a very special feeling for guests to have come to the home of the Lieutenant Governor.

As the above article points out, the condition of some areas of the home, especially the private quarters and the guest rooms on the second floor, is of deep concern to me. Fixing the existing problems would be money well spent in preserving one of Manitoba’s finest heritage homes.



The Honourable  
John Harvard, P.C., O.M.  
Lieutenant-Governor of  
Manitoba

# HSI: Historical Scene Investigation

by Gordon Goldsborough  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

This is the first—and probably the only—episode of *HSI: Historical Scene Investigation*. Patterned on the television series *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, its objective is to show how much information can be extracted from an historical photograph by analyzing small details in it.

Look at the accompanying photograph of a group of people—and a dog—standing in front of a building under a sign for the Wheat City Business College. I purchased

it four years ago from a seller in Florida, assuming that it had been taken in Brandon, our “Wheat City.” But is there anything else in the photo that supports—or refutes—my assumption? My first step was to check if G. F. Barker’s 1977 book *Brandon: A City, 1881–1961* included any reference to the Business College. Sure enough, page 90 told me that, in 1904, J. W. Beveridge and F. E. Werry resigned as instructors in the commercial department of Brandon College to



G. Goldsborough

establish their own college in a building owned by the lumber firm of Hughes and Company. So it is probable that the photo *was* taken in Brandon.

A fire insurance map of Brandon from October 1903, available in Brandon University's S. J. McKee Archives, showed me that the Hughes Block sat on the west side of Tenth Street, between Princess and Rosser Avenues, beside the Strathcona Block. But it did not seem like the same building as the one behind our group of people. For one thing, its architecture did not match what we can see in the photo. (To compare for yourself, see a photo of the Hughes Block on page 4 of the October 2007 issue of *Manitoba History*.) But the clincher is that this photo was taken of the east—not west—side of Tenth Street. How do I know? Notice the gradual downward slope to the street, from right to left. Streets in this part of Brandon slope down to the Assiniboine River valley, so if the group had been posed on the west side of the street, the slope would have been the opposite direction.

You might not be able to see it, but the street number is faintly visible above the door in the center of the photo, but only the first two digits are legible: 14 followed by what might be 3 or 5. Referring back to the fire insurance map, I saw that the building on the east side of the street was labelled "Printing office, Offices and Business College Over" and it had three numbers: 137 for its north office, 139 for the middle one, and 145 for the south office. Right above the number is a large pane of glass in which one can see a blurry reflection. Referring to the photograph of the Hughes Block referred to earlier, I saw that its architecture matches the reflection. So this building is directly opposite the Hughes Block. Lumber merchant Joseph Henry Hughes, the proprietor of the company that built the Block carrying his name, owned most of the property on Tenth Street between Princess and Rosser. It is likely that his firm owned buildings on both sides of the street.

The building caption from the fire insurance map mentioned a printing office, and if we look behind the men at the right side of the photo, we see window signs for "The Daily Times." D. M. Loveridge's 1981 book *A Historical*

*Directory of Manitoba Newspapers, 1859–1978* tells me that the *Brandon Times* was founded as a conservative rival to the liberal-leaning *Brandon Mail* newspaper. A weekly edition was published from 1886 to 1913, and a daily edition was produced from 1907 to 1913. It seems reasonable to assume that the printing office was, in fact, where the newspapers were printed. If we look closely at the fellow in the light-coloured suit, fifth from right (excluding the dog), we see that he had a newspaper with the *Times* masthead folded under his arm. Scanning the rest of the folks in the scene, I speculate that they are the staff of the newspaper, not that of the business college. Among them we see at least three men wearing aprons. Were they printers who wore aprons to protect their clothes from ink stains? Several boys could have helped with newspaper sales. I like to think that the man in front, with his sleeves rolled up, is the editor; the dapper gentleman wearing the bowler hat is the publisher. Several hard-nosed reporters are standing to the right, and the woman to the left did clerical work in the office. And the jobs performed by the dog and the baby? Who knows. Can any of the people be identified? Perhaps, but I am not hopeful. One could use the 1906 and 1911 Canadian censuses, transcriptions of which are available on the Internet, to look for Brandon residents working in the newspaper business. But that would not tell if they worked specifically for the *Daily Times*.

So I conclude that this photograph shows the anonymous staff of the *Brandon Daily Times* newspaper, taken sometime between 1907 and 1913. For those who may be wondering if I could refine the date by comparing the headline in the folded newspaper to archival copies of the *Times*: good idea, but not possible. Copies of the weekly *Times* survive in the Manitoba Legislative Library but, as far as I know, there are no existing copies of the daily version. So this photograph may be the only evidence that a vibrant daily newspaper once occupied what is now a vacant building at 145 Tenth Street in Brandon. ☞

*I thank Tom Mitchell, Archivist at the S. J. McKee Archives in Brandon, for his enthusiastic assistance with the research on this photograph.*

## Future History

In upcoming issues of *Manitoba History* ...

- The introduction of public automobile insurance in Manitoba
- Sybil Shack and Manitoba education
- Prairie monuments: A video history of Oakville
- The life and work of Reverend Harry Lehotsky
- A history of Red River dredging
- Book reviews & more

## Thanks ...

The Editors wish to thank the following people who assisted in the preparation of this issue of *Manitoba History*: Louise Ayotte (Manitoba Legislative Library), Shirley Bergen, Roland Bohr (University of Winnipeg), Sharon Foley (Archives of Manitoba), Phyllis Fraser (Office of the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba), Christy Henry (Brandon University), Irvine Hildebrand, Tom Mitchell (Brandon University), Blair Philpott (Parks Canada), and Alf Redekopp (Mennonite Heritage Centre).

## Commemorating the First Railway in Western Canada

Parks Canada  
Winnipeg, Manitoba

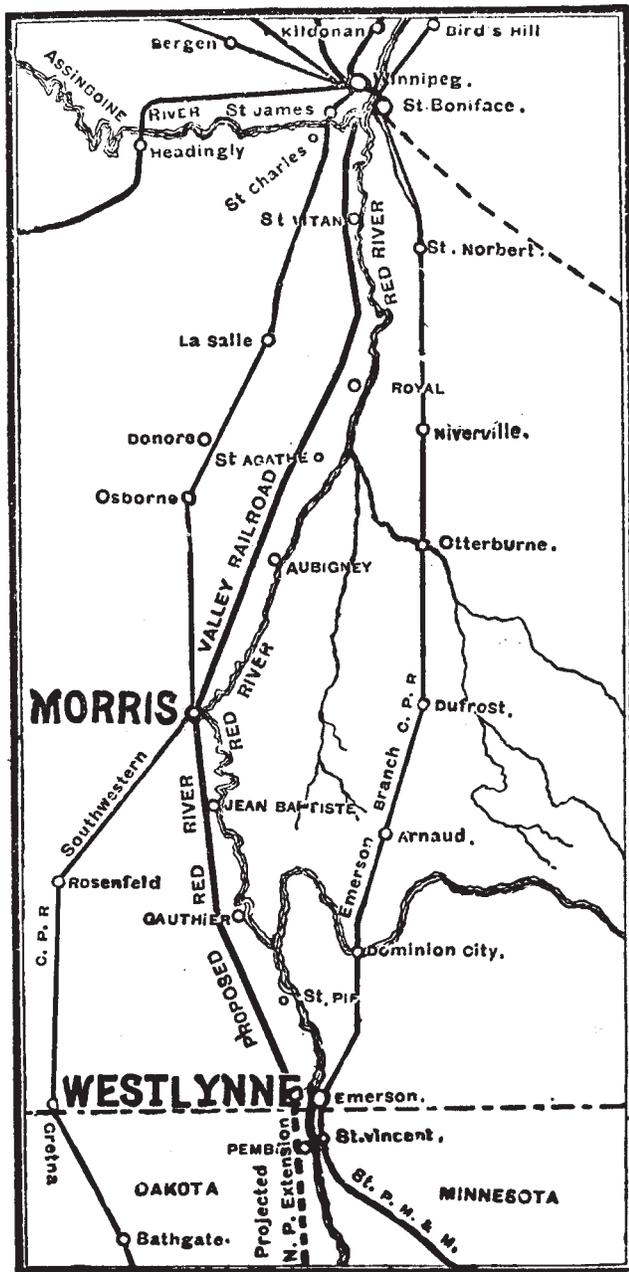
The Dominion of Canada was still quite young when it spread its wings and reached for the Pacific. But purchasing the Hudson’s Bay Company’s territories and bringing Manitoba and British Columbia into Confederation were only the first steps to becoming a transcontinental nation. An effective communication and transportation route needed

to be established between the eastern and western portions of the expanding country—indeed, such a route had been promised to British Columbia. While Sir John A. Macdonald proposed building the now-famous transcontinental railroad, Liberal leader Alexander Mackenzie preferred a combination of rail and water routes to connect east and



Parks Canada.

**First railway commemorated.** Attending the plaque unveiling at Dominion City on 5 July 2008 were (L-R): Bryan Nichols (Councillor, RM Franklin), the Honourable Vic Toews (Treasury Board President and MP, Provencher), Dr. Robert O’Kell (Manitoba Member, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada), Dr. Lloyd Penner (University of Winnipeg), Archie Hunter (Reeve, RM Franklin), Maureen Sullivan (great-great-granddaughter of Sam Sullivan, a section boss at the time of railway construction who oversaw the driving of the last spike in 1878), Cliff Graydon (MLA, Emerson), and Peter Friesen (Councillor, RM Franklin).



Archives of Manitoba, Transportation-Railway 77.

**Railway mania.** In the 1880s, numerous railways were proposed to join the Pembina Branch in carrying traffic between Winnipeg and the United States. Shown in this 1887 map as the “Emerson Branch” of the Canadian Pacific Railway, the first railway ran northward from Emerson on the east side of the Red River.

west. Macdonald’s eagerness to realize his vision led to the Pacific Scandal and the downfall of his Conservative government in 1873, giving Mackenzie’s Liberal coalition an opportunity to implement their own vision of a Canada stretching from sea to shining sea.

An integral part of this vision was a railway from St. Boniface, Manitoba (across the Red River from Winnipeg) to St. Paul, Minnesota, via Emerson, Manitoba and Pembina, North Dakota; this became known as the Pembina Branch. The line was built by the St. Paul, Minneapolis,

and Manitoba Railway. Following both the Red River and generations-old cart paths, the first spikes were driven on 29 September 1877 by Governor-General Lord Dufferin and the Countess of Dufferin. It officially opened on 3 December 1878, when the *Countess of Dufferin* (the first locomotive in western Canada) met an American train at Dominion City, Manitoba where the last spike was driven. Both trains were carrying railway officials, dignitaries, and prominent citizens, to attend the event.

The significance of the arrival of the railway in western Canada cannot be overstated. In a practical sense, the rail connection between Winnipeg and eastern Canada (via American lines) allowed for the cost-effective import of both settlers and manufactured goods to the west, and the export of grain and other agricultural produce to the east. This not only provided an invaluable boost to the fledgling western economy, but encouraged capital investment in eastern centres as well.

Railroads embodied late nineteenth century concepts of progress and modernity, and were generally key to contemporary ideas of political and economic expansion. New Brunswick and Nova Scotia had both made an

*Plaque text*

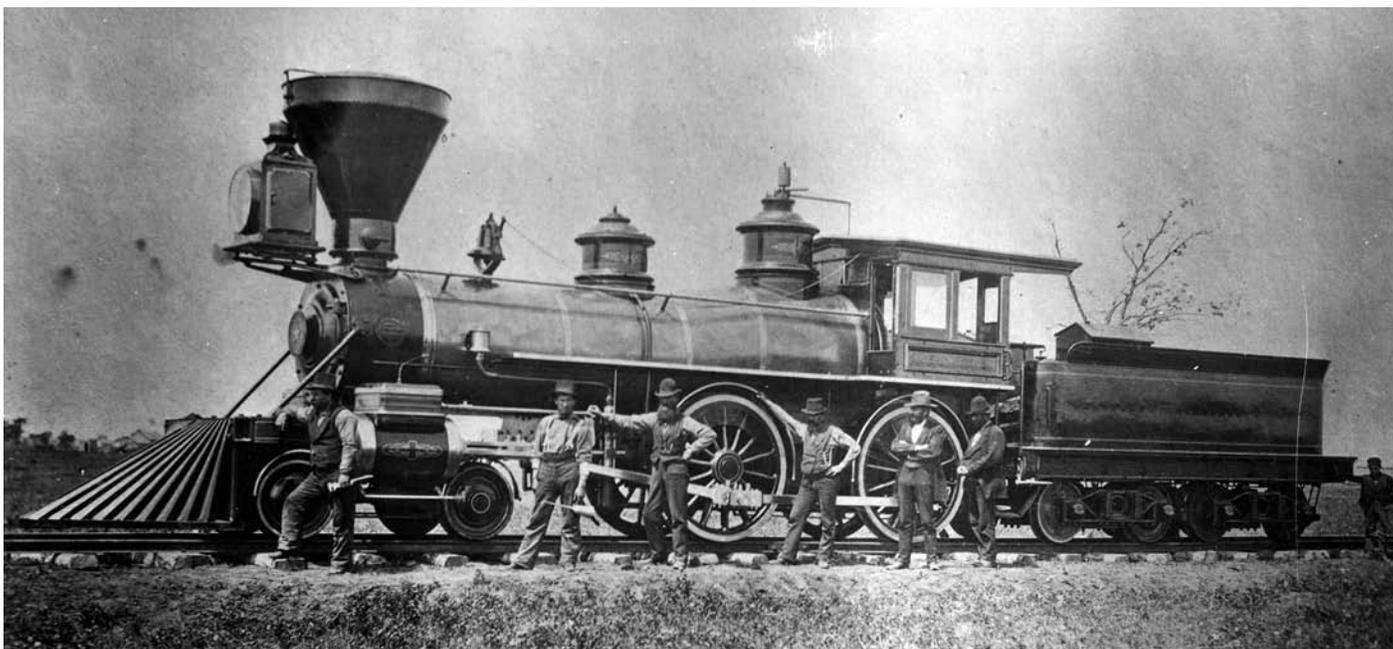
**FIRST RAILWAY IN WESTERN CANADA**

On December 3, 1878, the last spike was driven here to complete the first railway line built in the Canadian West. Known as the Pembina Branch, it ran some 100 kilometres from St. Boniface to the international boundary at Emerson, connecting Manitoba to eastern Canada by rail through the United States. Proposed in the 1860s, this line was ultimately endorsed by Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie in 1874 as an alternative to a more expensive all-Canadian railway line. The route brought prosperity to the region, serving as an important link with eastern Canada until the Canadian Pacific Railway reached Winnipeg in 1883.

**LE PREMIER CHEMIN DE FER DE L'OUEST DU CANADA**

Ici eut lieu, le 3 décembre 1878, l'inauguration du premier chemin de fer de l'Ouest canadien. Connue sous le nom de Pembina, cette voie ferrée de quelque 100 kilomètres entre Saint-Boniface et la frontière internationale, à Emerson, reliait par le réseau américain le Manitoba à l'Est canadien. Ce projet, proposé dans les années 1860, fut adopté en 1874 par le premier ministre Alexander Mackenzie comme solution de rechange à une ligne transcanadienne plus coûteuse. Ce chemin de fer contribua à la prospérité de la région, assurant un lien important avec l'Est du pays jusqu'à ce que le Canadien Pacifique atteigne Winnipeg en 1883.

## First Railway in Western Canada



Archives of Manitoba, Transportation-Railway 111, N9460.

**The Crew of Locomotive #2 "Joseph Whitehead",** strike a pose, circa 1877. They may have been present at the driving of the last spike for the Pembina Branch. Left-right: John Cardell (engineer), George Charles Swinbank (fireman), George Swinbank (foreman), John Lumley (timekeeper), John Clark (assistant foreman), and Alexander McCloy (roadmaster).

intercolonial railway one of their few conditions for entering Confederation in 1867, and British Columbia had joined Confederation in 1871 on the promise of a transcontinental railway to be built. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the growing network of railways connecting far-flung domestic markets emerged as one of the strongest pillars of the Canadian economy.

More importantly, though, the railway increased the *feeling* of connection with the east that was so necessary to making the west Canadian in spirit as well as in legal fact. Railways were the rivers of the new industrial age, connecting people and places to each other. The Pembina Branch was the first step in overcoming the sense of physical isolation imposed by vast distances and by geographical barriers like the Canadian Shield and the Rocky Mountains. Even the most fiscally cautious federal government of the period was willing to invest heavily in this venture, knowing how important it was to Canada's commercial and cultural development.

### National Designation

In 1954, the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada recommended that "the construction of the first railroad in Manitoba connecting that part of the country with the United States and Canada be declared of national historic importance and that a standard tablet be erected." The next year, the Board clarified this recommendation, describing it as the construction during 1877 and 1878 of a railway from St. Boniface to the United States, through Emerson, Manitoba, on the American border, and Pembina, just to the south, in the northeast corner of North Dakota. The Board stated that this was the first railroad in the Canadian

West, as well as the first section built of the water and rail route to British Columbia proposed by Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie in 1874, as an alternative to Sir John A. Macdonald's projected complete rail route. Mackenzie's proposal fanned the flame of the secession movement in British Columbia and so was an indirect cause of Lord Dufferin's visit to that province.

An inscription was approved for the plaque in 1955. Entitled THE FIRST RAILROAD IN WESTERN CANADA, the text read: "In 1874 the Hon. Alexander Mackenzie proposed to link the West with Eastern Canada by a water and rail route. A first section of railroad was built from St. Boniface to the International Boundary, 1877-78. From nearby, on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 1878, ran the first train en route to Emerson." The plaque was not installed, and it was 53 years later that a plaque commemorating the Pembina Branch was finally unveiled at Dominion City, at a ceremony held on 5 July 2008. ☛

### The Second Railway ?

Purists may argue that the Pembina Branch was, in fact, the *second* railway in Western Canada, having been preceded by the Grand Rapids Tramway. Built in 1877 by the Hudson's Bay Company, the Tramway is described in a 1975 article in the *MHS Transactions*, available on our web site:

[www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/grandrapidstramway.shtml](http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/3/grandrapidstramway.shtml)

# Reviews

Arok Wolvengrey, editor, *Wawiyatâcimowinisa: Funny Little Stories*  
Regina: University of Regina Publications, 2007, 110 pages,  
ISBN 0889771855, \$ 12.95 (paperback)



An interesting feature of Cree literature is its division into numerous genres by the tellers. These divisions include *kakêskihkêwina* "counselling speeches," *tipacimowina* "historical narratives," *âtayôhkêwina* "sacred stories." Among these genres, *wawiyatâcimowinisa* "funny little stories" occupy a unique position; on the one hand, they constitute the backbone of Cree socializing, while, on the other hand, they occupy a peripheral position in the canon of Cree literature. In

setting aside an entire volume to *wawiyatâcimowinisa* "funny little stories," then, the current volume brings the Cree socializing and Cree literature into balance.

Modeled in all senses on the *kiskinohamawâkan-âcimowinisa* "student stories" collected and edited by

Freda Ahenakew in 1989, Arok Wolvengrey (First Nations University of Canada) here presents the results of his and his students' text collection and transcription work on the Cree languages of the Prairies (Plains Cree, Woods Cree, and Swampy Cree). In about half of the cases, the student has transcribed someone else's story, while, in the other half of the cases, the student is also the teller.

Texts are presented first in the Cree syllabary, which is accompanied by a chart explaining it, and then in the standard Roman orthography and an English translation. These last two are presented on facing pages, as has been the tradition for Algonquian texts since Leonard Bloomfield. The texts are introduced by a detailed explanation by Wolvengrey, which set the context and explain the editorial practices. At the end of the text is a 36-page glossary that contains all of the Cree forms found in the texts. Text presentation thus closely matches the publications of Freda Ahenakew and H. C. Wolfart, meaning that anyone familiar with the work of these two scholars will be instantly comfortable with the presentation here.

One notable departure from other Cree texts is the inclusion of one cartoon illustration for each story. Roughly, in the style of Japanese manga, these nicely done drawings



A group of Cree people in full dress, Saskatchewan, circa 1900.

Glenbow Archives, NA-1255-48.

fit well with the humorous tone of the book and its intended audience—Cree language learners. The drawings were done by Melissa Sanderson, who is the teenage daughter of Jeff Sanderson—one of the students whose work transcribing his mother Annabelle Sanderson’s story is represented in the book. Involving young people in the work their parents and grandparents are doing is crucial to the development of strong identities for Cree youth and the survival of the Cree languages. It is to be greatly hoped that this kind of collaborative work continues.

In terms of content, the stories are typically short (one to two pages), as promised by the diminutive title (*acimowinisa* “little stories”). Some are simple jokes, as in *kikwây ana?* “What is that?” told by Neil Sapp, which plays on the alternate meaning of English “cowboy” (i.e. a boy that is a cow). Others relate funny things that happened in the teller’s past, as in *ê-sîpêkistikwânênisot* “Washing his own hair” by Bealiqué Kahmahkotayo, which tells how her father accidentally washed his hair with toothpaste. The final few relate to the cultural hero *Wîsahkêcahk*, as in Annabelle Sanderson’s telling of *wîsahkêcâhk ê-kî-wîkihtot* “Wîsahkêcahk got married,” which tells how Wîsahkêcahk outrageously schemes to get his own beautiful daughter into bed. One story, *môtha nîtha Indian* “I’m not an Indian,” told by the linguist Solomon Ratt (First Nations University of Canada), manages to artfully combine humour and tragedy by relating his childhood desire to be a cowboy like John Wayne while at the residential school. Representing the Cree approach to hardship (humour and good-natured self-criticism) this is a common mode of communication for Cree people who lived through those times. They likely deserve an entire volume of their own.

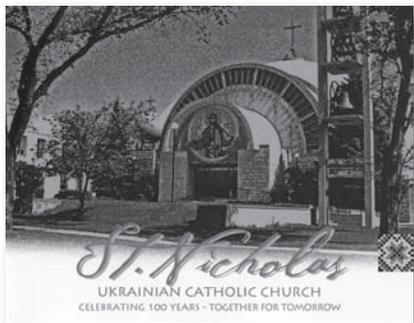
For students of the Cree languages, the present volume also provides an important source of data. For example, the story *tânisi ôma ê-itwêhk?* “How is it said?” by Guy Albert, shows several examples of the Plains Cree evidential preverb *matwê-* “visibly or audibly” (e.g. *nête matwê-ay-âpiw* “he was sitting over there **in view**”), which I have found nowhere else. The differences between Woods, Swampy, and Plains Cree are also thrown into sharp relief, as shown by the stringing together of multiple Independent Order verbs in the same clause (... *kî-ayiw kî-nâpêwîw* ...) in the Swampy Cree story *wîsahkêcahk ê-kî-wîkihtot* “Wîsahkêcahk got married”—a pattern that could never happen in Plains Cree.

In reading these stories, an interesting difference between oral and written communication is brought to light. Although the genre is overtly identified as humorous, many of the stories are not funny on paper. For example, the tale of Wîsahkêcahk trying to trick his own daughter into bed reads something like a court report from a social worker. I did not realize it was terribly, outrageously funny until I told the story to a friend, who laughed heartily at my telling of it. The oral performance, then, is a crucial component of these stories, and is lost in the printed work as surely as a textual synopsis of a classic Bugs Bunny cartoon would lose its humour. The best way to appreciate the humour of these texts, then, is the next time you’re sitting with friends that want to laugh. Try telling them, and you’ll understand something fundamental about Cree socializing—if you don’t understand it already.

Jeff Muehlbauer  
University of British Columbia

**Athanasius McVay and June Dutka, editors, *St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church: Celebrating 100 Years—Together for Tomorrow*  
Winnipeg: St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, 2006, 348 pages,  
ISBN 0973971312, \$50.00 (paperback)**

*“I am your church  
Make me worthy of your support and concern  
Come, worship with me, and support me, and I will serve  
you all your days.”*



From the inaugural blessing of St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church erected on its third site in Winnipeg in 1966, the symbiotic union between St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church in

Winnipeg and its community has flourished for over a century.

The commemorative book, *St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church: Celebrating 100 Years—Together for Tomorrow* outlines the church’s history through its first century. It does so with text, photos and reproductions of rare archival documents. The exact date of when the church was established is sometimes said to be 1899, the time when the early Ukrainian settlers in Winnipeg gathered as a faith community and when they had no permanent place of worship. Other times it is said to be 1901, when Father Polywka, Order of St. Basil the Great, arrived in Winnipeg and helped the faithful purchase the plot of land where the first church was built and officially consecrated. This Byzantine rite church continues to be administered by the



C. Goldsborough

St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, April 2005.

Order of St. Basil the Great. This book, the definitive source for information relating to St. Nicholas Church, sets the parameters of 100 years at 1901–2001.

Father Athanasius McVay, OSBM, served as the book's editor-in-chief, while June Dutka, Librarian Emerita at the University of Manitoba, carried out the research and writing of the English text and identified the majority of the photos. Cynthia Chuckree was responsible for the graphic design.

Visually the book resembles a coffee table volume. Its glossy cover and overall design is pleasing to the eye. Even its oversize format lends itself more to the coffee table than to the reference desk. However deceptive its format, the book in its entirety, is a useful reference tool.

St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church is unique in that it was not only the first Ukrainian Catholic church established in Winnipeg, but it was also the first established in all of urban Canada. Why Winnipeg? As the gateway to the west, Winnipeg was the hub for all Ukrainian activity in Canada. The city's North End was where the Ukrainians settled and lived their lives. And, it was in the North End, on the corner of Stella Avenue and McGregor Street, that the first St. Nicholas Church was erected in 1901.

Most of the book is in English, but the chapters devoted to church history are bilingual, both English and Ukrainian text. Although both texts deal with the history of how the church came into existence, the politics involved in establishing a Byzantine rite church in a country where up to that time this rite was foreign, and the building of the three church structures which housed the parish over the century, the two texts are not exact translations of each other.

Besides the history of the church itself, the work traces the history of the Order of St. Basil the Great and the Sister Servants of Mary Immaculate in Canada. The history of the two religious orders is intertwined; they arrived in Canada together in the early 1900s and have worked

together offering mutual support to each other ever since. For example, whereas, the Basilian Fathers established St. Nicholas Church the Sister Servants established the first Ukrainian Catholic day school, St. Nicholas School (since renamed Immaculate Heart of Mary School), in Winnipeg, and thus, in Canada. In addition, the book examines the history of the school, its influence on students and activities.

The many and varied activities sponsored by and associated with St. Nicholas Church have always extended beyond the realms of liturgies and classrooms. June Dutka's research and documentation does justice to all church related groups, clubs and organizations: the Knights of Columbus, the Ukrainian Catholic Women's League, Altar servers, Children of Mary, choir, youth and seniors' clubs, sports clubs and many more.

The layout of the book is fairly standard for a Ukrainian Catholic church publication. It begins with letters of greeting, in this case, on the occasion of the church's centenary, from all levels of clergy, starting with the secretariat of the Vatican and ending with the parish priest, Father McVay—albeit Father McVay's letter reads more like a prologue to the book than a greeting. The book concludes with a list of donors who made financial contributions to cover publication costs.

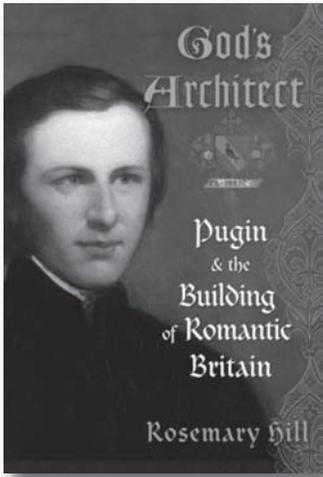
Ostensibly a church history, the book's significance extends far beyond that of the church organization. It is a cultural and social history as well, not only of the church and its faith community, but the broader community overall. It is modest on this topic, perhaps even too modest, for every long time North End resident knows that its clubs and activities reached out to many, particularly the youth, Catholic and non-Catholic, Ukrainian and non-Ukrainian. In this way, St. Nicholas Church has always been a positive presence and a uniting force within the community.

It becomes clear that the book is a tribute to St. Nicholas Ukrainian Catholic Church, its pioneers and present day parishioners. The church became more than just a physical structure. Rebuilt three times in the course of 100 years of uninterrupted history, the church itself, as indeed the book, is a triumph of spirit and energy celebrating the faith, clergy and people of its community who have a great many potential successes still ahead of them.

Alexandra Pawlowsky  
University of Manitoba

*Editor's Note:* Dr. Alexandra Pawlowsky, a specialist in Ukrainian Canadian literature and culture, died on 29 March 2008. She received a BA and MA in Slavic Studies, followed by an interdisciplinary PhD in Ukrainian Canadian Heritage Studies, believed to be the first such degree in the world. She taught at the University of Manitoba for 26 years, and held administrative positions at the Centre for Ukrainian Canadian Studies, and most recently served as a Coordinator of the University 1 program.

**Rosemary Hill, *God's Architect: Pugin and the Building of Romantic Britain*  
 Toronto: Allen Lane, 2007, 624 pages,  
 ISBN 9780713994995, \$40.00 (hardback)**



Some seventy years ago, M. S. Osborne, writing on the architectural heritage of Manitoba, noted its eclectic and derivative qualities. For the period 1880 to 1914 in particular, the main influences were mainly modified English and French styles in domestic and sacred structures but somewhat broader in range for commercial buildings.<sup>1</sup> Since the “Great War”, a richer set of influences have subsequently been added, reflecting the diversity of

Manitoba’s settlement history. One of the derivative styles mentioned by Osborne was that of the Gothic tradition. Its influence was, he noted, present in many of the province’s commercial buildings but it was “our traditional association of Gothic with religious buildings” which was responsible “for the number of churches in the Gothic style erected during the past few years in this locality.”<sup>2</sup> These observations were sound and Manitobans in just about all communities will find there examples of the style in domestic, sacred or commercial contexts. Just what was behind the development and spread of this style? This is the subject Rosemary Hill has chosen to tell.

The early Victorian architect and designer, Augustus Welby Pugin (1812–1852), was what in our day we would call an obsessive and a workaholic.

In this comprehensive and well illustrated biography, Rosemary Hill has made the case that her subject should be much better known for his role in furthering the nineteenth century Gothic Revival in architecture. If Pugin was not the originator of a revived Gothic style in Europe and England, he certainly became its main and busy propagandist after 1832. It was not the only kind of revival that interested him. Pugin’s steady devotion to a more controversial enterprise, the post-1830 resurgence of the Roman Catholic Church in England, continually got him into difficulty, not just with Evangelical Protestants, but also with other schools of Catholic reform. This was particularly true of the branch that evolved out of the so-called “Oxford Movement” — those academic Anglican “Tractarians” who sought to foster greater English Church unity in a way sympathetic to Roman Catholics. Contra such ecumenical thinking, Pugin, for much of his career, seemed to advocate a return to a more genuinely English set of medieval practices applied to both church and social organization.

His style of advocacy gradually became too much for the most famous of the Tractarians, John Henry Newman, who went over to the Roman Catholic Church in 1845. The literalness with which Pugin went about his medievalism was both romantic and impractical and went vastly beyond anything Newman, and later Ruskin or Morris, ever suggested. Hill has much fun in documenting the rich veins of gossip that animated the architectural style wars among the chattering classes. Only in his very last years did Pugin start to realize that he had seriously misread the grim realities of medieval history; but by then his time was short, for he was dying from the long term effects of what Hill suspects was syphilis. (456, 492) After 1868, following legal efforts by his son to gain greater recognition for his father’s contribution to such important structures as the new British Parliament Buildings, Pugin largely vanished from public memory. Most people today recognize the Big Ben clock tower on the Thames at the Westminster Parliament, but few know who designed it.

Biographical studies of Pugin have been few. Hill’s excellent and detailed study approaches his life in rigorous chronological fashion, with due regard for family origins and parental influences. As with Ruskin, the accidents of birth were significant, for both the educational opportunities presented and the strong guiding hand of the parents. The father, Auguste Charles Pugin (1767–1832) was a Paris-born designer and illustrator with strong interests in architecture. Unsympathetic to the French Revolution, he came to England in 1792, but maintained important continental connections. Unlike the nominal Catholic father, his mother, Catherine Welby, was a determined Protestant, much influenced by Carlyle’s friend, the radical preacher Edward Irving. She was the ordering but supportive influence in the life of her only child. Nevertheless, quite early her son rejected the virtues of Protestant preaching and plain church architecture.

Young Pugin benefited from domestic education, local and continental travel and attendance at his father’s drawing school in London. A transforming event came in 1825 when he was sent to Salisbury for the country air to recover from illness. The great cathedral was a revelation, as was his later discovery at Salisbury of the old Sarum rite of English Catholicism as practiced by the 11<sup>th</sup> c. Bishop Osmond. Upon returning to London, Pugin was soon preoccupied with drawing castles and prowling the streets of London, looking at buildings, and spending less time in his father’s school. By 1829, he was working as a carpenter at Covent Garden and he then established a furniture business oriented towards older styles.

This initial work in design and theatre stage effects encouraged Pugin to take up a somewhat bohemian way

of life, but this phase was brief owing to the death of not only his first wife Anne, in May of 1832, but of his father in December of that year, and his mother in the spring of 1833. Possessed of a child, he had responsibilities, an inheritance and was now motivated to carry on his father's design work. Ever the man in a hurry, Pugin remarried in 1833 and tried to put some order into his life. The stage was now more or less set for the most creative decade of his life. Of fundamental importance was his conversion to Catholicism in 1835 and his developing relationship with a patron, the Catholic nobleman of Staffordshire, John Talbot, the Earl of Shrewsbury. By means of the Earl's deep pockets and congenial eccentricities, Pugin was able to pursue theoretical and practical aspects of Gothic architecture and design in sacred, domestic, institutional and commercial contexts.

He joined the architectural firm of James Graham and Charles Barry in 1836. His relationship with Barry would extend beyond the grave, but at the start, he helped Barry obtain the contract for the new Parliament buildings on the strength of his own drawings. The same year saw publication of his manifesto against the Regency style, *Contrasts*, in which he compared the virtues of historic Gothic with recent and contemporary structures. He also built an alarming home, by Victorian standards, at St. Marie's Grange, near Alderbury, a house that one might consider a template for everybody's favourite scary mansion from the House of Usher to the façade of Hitchcock's "Psycho House." Commissions started to follow and with formal Catholic emancipation in 1839, commissions for sacred and institutional work started to flow in succession from fellow adherents. He made contacts with romantic Catholics in France, such as the Comte de Montalembert and became part of his circle. Following *Contrasts* came *The True Principles of Pointed or Christian Architecture* in 1841 and *An Apology for the Revival of Christian Architecture in England* in 1843. Other literary works would flow from his pen.

As Hill makes clear, however, the way for Pugin was never smooth. He often bit off more than he could chew in his multiple roles of architect, designer, consultant and writer: "Designs for cathedrals made in five and forty-minutes" quipped *Punch* in 1845. His diplomatic skills were far from well honed and he did not always balance the erratic impulses and lapses in taste of his various patrons with his own professional ambitions. More problematic, he sometimes found influential segments of old England ranged against him, as when he lost the contract for repairs and alterations to Oxford's Balliol College on what, from Hill's discussion, must be considered grounds of pure prejudice. (283-6) It was not just mounting Protestant anxiety with which he had to contend. After 1845, he found himself increasingly at odds with the ultramontane wing of the English Catholic reformers, such as Newman, who looked to Rome for leadership rather than to some romanticized and revived version of an English "Gallican" church favoured by Pugin. Amidst such tensions, a vast

amount of work continued to pile up, additional to his work on the New Westminster Parliament, all mixed with the seemingly constant turmoil in his private life.

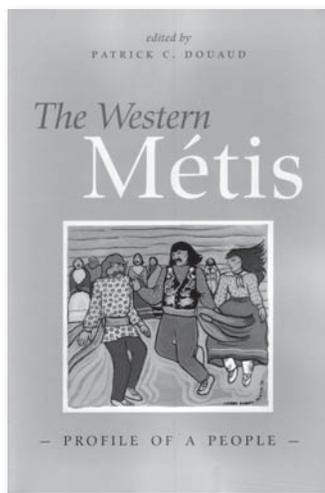
Pugin had suffered from recurring bouts of illness, but following his third marriage in 1848, he finally seemed to achieve some personal stability accompanied by some recognition at the Great Exhibition of 1851 where his Medieval Pavilion was a great success. It is true that there were still forces ranged against him. Hill writes that Ruskin, now on the crest of his own fame, attacked Pugin as an architect and on historical grounds. Pugin, as usual, had little time for critics: "Let the fellow build something himself" he replied. (458-9) To be sure, however, Ruskin did not uniformly condemn him, admitting to his great skills as a designer and miniaturist.<sup>3</sup> In 1851, Pugin seemed to be on the verge of great things, but by February 1852, his behaviour had become erratic and he suffered a severe attack of madness requiring a lengthy confinement. This was followed by other complications and on 14 September, he died.

Hill refers to Kenneth Clark's lucid 1928 study of the Gothic Revival where he remarked that "if Ruskin had never lived, Pugin would never have been forgotten."<sup>4</sup> Clark later stated that even in the 1920s many people in Oxford were still falsely attributing to Ruskin, work inspired by Pugin and Butterfield.<sup>5</sup> Why should this great lapse in memory have occurred? In part, it was surely the lack of theoretical depth in Pugin's published work compared with the more systematic work of mainstream architects and the stylistic flare of other longer-lived Victorians such as Morris and Ruskin. His lack of credentials and religious persuasion helped keep him in the background, serving others more powerful, such as Charles Barry. However, if he lost many of the private battles of the day, he won the war of taste through diffusion. His constant promotion of Gothic ideas before 1852 rather quickly impressed itself on the public imagination and on the minds of architects. With the assistance of bodies such as the Cambridge Camden Society, builders took the essentials of his ideas across England and to the far reaches of the Empire wherever British Isles immigrants were to be found. Homes, churches and public buildings proliferated in the style and continued to do so until the end of World War I. Indeed, its imprint has never entirely vanished to this day as evidenced in many a new Canadian suburb experiencing nineteenth century revivals of the cookie-cutter kind.

Graham A. MacDonald  
Victoria, B.C

1. Osborne, M. S., "The Architectural Heritage of Manitoba" in R. C. Lodge, ed., *Manitoba Essays*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1937, vol. 74, pp. 78-832
2. *Ibid.*, p. 81
3. Ruskin, John, *Works* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1903-1912), vol. 9, pp. 437-439; vol. 12 pp. 88.
4. See Kenneth Clark, *The Gothic Revival*, 3rd ed. Introduction by J. Morauant Crook. London: John Murray, 1995, p. 144
5. See Clark's letter to Michael Sadlier, July 1949, reproduced, *Ibid.* 1-5.

Patrick C. Douaud, editor, *The Western Métis: Profile of a People*  
 Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2007, 326 pages,  
 ISBN 9780889771994, \$29.95 (paperback)



This book brings together thirteen articles on aspects of Métis history that have appeared over the past three decades in *Prairie Forum*, an interdisciplinary journal published by the Canadian Plains Research Center at the University of Regina. It also features an introductory essay by *Prairie Forum's* editor-in-chief Patrick Douaud. In keeping with the journal's mandate to publish articles relevant to the Canadian Plains, *The Western Métis:*

*Profile of a People* focuses on Métis experiences in the Prairie Provinces. Most of the contributors are professional historians, and all deal with developments taking place in the nineteenth century or earlier.

Douaud explains that the contributions were chosen for the "breadth and scope of the investigations upon which they are based, and for the reflections they will arouse in anyone interested in Western Canadian history and

politics" (p. 17). The book is intended, then, for a general audience. The narrow focus of several articles, however, combined with passages quoting source material in French and German, suggest that most of the authors were writing for an academic audience.

The articles appear to be grouped around four themes—Métis origins, involvement in the fur trade, loss of land following incorporation into the Canadian state, and personalities and events associated with the resistance movements of 1869–1870 and 1885. This organizational scheme is never formally stated, however, and the themes are not immediately apparent. The book would have been easier to navigate had the articles been presented under subheadings identifying major themes. An editorial statement introducing each theme could have provided further coherence as well as insight into how scholarship in the field has taken shape over time.

Some of the book's strongest material addresses the establishment of western Métis communities in the late 1700s. John Foster's classic essay, "Wintering, the Outsider Adult Male and the Ethnogenesis of the Western Plains Métis", outlines the initial steps. They include the practice of "wintering", in which a fur trader spent the winter hunting with a First Nations band, marriage to a woman of the band, and the decision to become an independent



Métis Red River carts from Pembina encamped on St. Anthony Hill, 1858.

Archives of Manitoba, Transportation-Red River Cart 45.

trader. As friendships with other freemen and their families solidified, a distinctive society emerged. This work is nicely complemented by a contribution from Ruth Swan and Edward Jerome that traces how the process Foster described unfolded in the case of one freeman and his descendants.

*Manitoba History* readers may take special interest in a pair of articles debating the terms under which Métis residents lost land reserved for them under the 1870 Manitoba Act. In "The Market for Métis Lands in Manitoba: An Exploratory Study", Thomas Flanagan tracks 59 children's land grant allotments. While he finds that over 90% had been sold by 1890, most at a deep discount, he contends that the Métis received fair compensation in an "open and highly competitive" market (p. 122). D. N. Sprague's counterargument, "Dispossession vs. Accommodation in Plaintiff vs. Defendant Accounts of Métis Dispersal from Manitoba, 1870–1881", examines Dominion Lands grants records and personal testimonials. He concludes that legal roadblocks and unreasonable deferrals amounted to a policy of "discouragement by delay and denial" (p. 135) that left most people little choice but to sell to speculators at cut-rate prices.

Other selections are less felicitous. J. M. Bumsted's charitable re-assessment of Canadian loyalist Thomas Scott ("Thomas Scott and the Daughter of Time"), although a legitimate contribution to western Canadian historiography, seems out of place in a book on Métis history. Manfred

Mossman's psychocultural take on the 1885 Riel Resistance ("The Charismatic Pattern: Canada's Riel Rebellion of 1885 as a Millenarian Protest Movement") sheds little light on the circumstances that led the Saskatchewan Métis to take up arms. And his characterization of the Métis as "willing to fight and die for their *Lebensraum*" (p. 188) is culturally inappropriate. Douaud likewise strikes a discordant note with his introductory essay, "Genesis." His emphasis on the biological component of ethnic identity is at odds with the culturally-based analyses of other contributors, while his use of terms such as "interbreeding" and "miscegenation" will offend many readers.

In sum, while *The Western Métis* has strengths, it also has deficiencies. The failure to address Métis history post-1885 is particularly disappointing. *Prairie Forum* has published articles on contemporary Métis experiences—see, for example, Barsh *et al.* 2000 and Belisle 2006. Including either would have made the point that the Métis remain a vital part of Canadian society and helped round out this "profile of a people".

Susan Berry

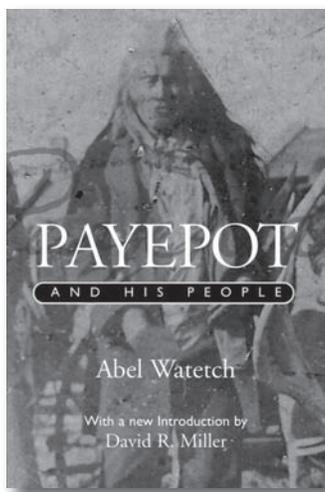
Royal Alberta Museum, Edmonton

Barsh, Russel Lawrence, E. Ann Gibbs and Tara Turner, "The Métis of Lethbridge: A Microcosm of Identity Politics," *Prairie Forum*, Vol. 25, No. 2 (Fall 2000): pp. 283-295.

Belisle, Darcy, "Finding Home on the Way: Naming the Métis," *Prairie Forum*, Vol. 31, No. 1 (Spring 2006): pp. 105-120.

### Abel Watetch, *Payepot and His People*

Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, University of Regina, 2007, 64 pages,  
ISBN 0889772010, \$14.97 (paperback)



From the closing decades of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth century, numerous biographical accounts of prominent Aboriginal personalities were published, largely for a non-Aboriginal readership and from a perspective of salvage ethnography and the concept of the "vanishing race." *Payepot and His People* differs in some respects from the majority of such accounts because it came from a

family member, Payepot's nephew, Abel Watetch.

Drawing on family stories, Watetch intended to write about the history of the Piapot First Nation of southern Saskatchewan to "set the record right." In 1957, the Acting Secretary of the Saskatchewan Arts Board, Blowden Davis,

discovered Watetch's writing project. Their cooperation led to several published versions. It first appeared as a serial in a local newspaper *The Western Producer* and was published as a book through the Saskatchewan History and Folklore Society in 1957.

Payepot (also spelled "Piapot") was an important Plains Cree leader who guided his people through a trying time of transition from their life as mobile bison hunters to a new existence on reserves in the last decades of the nineteenth century. As they went through this difficult transitional period, Payepot made a determined effort to keep his people's central ceremony, the Rain Dance, or Thirst Dance alive as a cultural and spiritual focus in the face of rapid change and strong opposition from government administrators of federal Indian policy and from local clerics.

Thus, Watetch's account focuses on the importance of the Rain Dance ceremony and its role in maintaining an Aboriginal identity. His account aimed to dispel lingering popular misunderstandings of the Rain Dance, which among other Plains cultures came to be known as the Sun Dance, as a rite of initiation for young Aboriginal men

and as a precursor for violence and warfare, when it was actually intended as a spiritual renewal of creation and a reaffirmation of the people's belief in and devotion to the Creator. One could argue that Payepot and his successors were instrumental in maintaining this ceremony, which has survived since then and is currently practiced on a significant number of southern Canadian reserves.

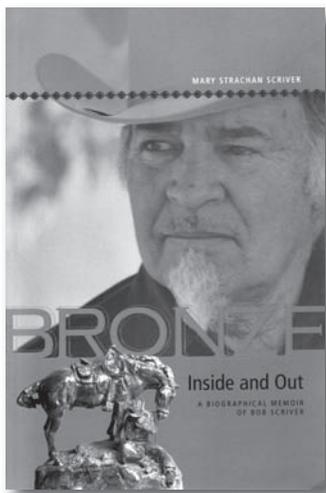
Payepot spent a part of his childhood among the Dakota as a captive with his grandmother. Watetch points out this fact as the reason for his uncle being called "Nehiyawapot," or the "Sioux-Cree." However, the origins of this term are connected to the appellation of Payepot's people as the "Cree-speaking Assiniboines." Theirs was a mixed Cree-Assiniboine identity that had emerged out of close contact and intermarriage between bands of the two groups. Payepot and his band maintained contacts to the Assiniboine people on the Fort Belknap Reservation in Montana, which Payepot visited regularly to guide their central ceremonies, such as the Rain Dance.

The book provides important information pertaining to questions of ethnogenesis among Northern Plains peoples and to the transitional period of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century from an Aboriginal perspective. An appendix provides references to corresponding documents from the Northwest Mounted Police and the Department of Indian Affairs, contained in the *Sessional Papers of Canada*. While this new edition contains two introductions, the original one by Blowden Davis and a new introduction by David Miller, it did not retain most of the original illustrations by Saskatoon artist Bill Perehudoff.

This new and conveniently sized soft-cover edition is of interest to scholars and students, as well as other readers interested in the history of the Canadian Plains, First Nations, southern Saskatchewan and Aboriginal biographical accounts.

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**Mary S. Scriver, *Bronze Inside and Out: A Biographical Memoir of Bob Scriver*  
Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2007, 400 pages,  
ISBN 9781552382271, \$44.95 (paperback)**



Written by his wife, *Bronze Inside and Out* details the life of Western artist Bob Scriver, in a richly illustrated narrative ingeniously paralleling the stages of his life with the steps of creating a bronze sculpture, Scriver's preferred artistic medium.

Bob Scriver was born on the Blackfoot Reservation in Browning, Montana, in 1914, where his father and later his older brother ran a store trading to local Aboriginal people. After a

career in music, Scriver turned towards visual arts in the tradition of early twentieth century Western painters like Frederick Remington and Charles M. Russell. However, in the 1960s Scriver eventually settled on bronze casting and became known for his dramatic renditions of western themes, such as wildlife, the Lewis and Clark expedition, ranching, and the Native peoples of the Plains, predominantly the Blackfeet.

Disaffected with formal Christianity after the death of his daughter, Scriver increasingly turned toward Blackfeet spirituality. Gradually he was initiated into the ranks of spiritual authorities among the Blackfeet, namely the owners of prestigious medicine bundles, culminating in his acquisition of a Thunder Medicine Pipe bundle

from Richard Little Dog in 1969. Thus, unprecedented in Blackfeet spiritual culture, in an elaborate three-day ceremony one of the most prestigious and spiritually significant medicine bundles was formally transferred to a person of non-Aboriginal descent, making Scriver an acknowledged spiritual authority among the Blackfeet.

Besides his art, Scriver was known for an extensive collection of Blackfeet artefacts, begun by his father and brother. When federal legislation in regard to the return of spiritually significant Aboriginal artefacts to the communities of their origin was about to be enacted in the United States, Scriver decided to sell his collection, including his medicine bundles, to the Provincial Museum of Alberta (Royal Alberta Museum) in 1989. This sparked controversy on several levels, especially among Aboriginal communities in Montana and Alberta. While the Provincial government eventually "repatriated" parts of the collection to Blackfoot communities in Alberta, groups among the Montana Blackfeet protested, expressing their belief that Scriver had only held these artefacts in trust for them until the traditions pertaining to their use could be revitalized.

When Bob Scriver passed away in 1999, most of these issues remained unresolved. In *Bronze Inside and Out*, Mary Scriver presents these events from a personal perspective, detailing her and her husband's perception of Blackfeet history, spirituality and culture, Western art and life in and near an Aboriginal community in Montana.

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