

# MAKING IT HOME

the invention of the prairie landscape

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August 2000



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**Making it Home:  
The Invention of the Prairie Landscape**

**BY**

**Patricia Wasney**

**A Thesis/Practicum submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies of The University of  
Manitoba in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree**

**of**

**Master of Landscape Architecture**

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I dedicate this project with great love and respect to the memory of my parents Michaelene (Jurkowski) and Frank Wasney who taught me the most about the land and my place within it.

# ABSTRACT

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People shape and are shaped by the environments in which they live. Humans alter the physical landscape to satisfy the universal desire to feel at home in those places and their cultural activities inform and are informed by their environments. Home, therefore, is not a static thing but a constantly evolving set of beliefs. The prairie landscape is a particularly appropriate place to explore these notions of home since in its 'featurelessness' it presents the idea of a vast plain on which we project our needs and desires. We have culturally invented the prairie landscape based on the physical reality of the land and our impressions of and hopes for it. Emphasis in this project is on the European settlement experience of the late nineteenth century and the continuing influence of this experience. Three distinct areas of human interaction with the land are considered: impression, apportionment, and transformation. Landscape architecture as a mediator between nature and culture is an ideal medium through which to study this mutual relationship, but only within a multidisciplinary context. Each of these distinct sections, therefore, have been considered using a variety of media and cross-discipline research. The result is a collection of writings and images that explore how the cultural and the physical landscape of the prairies has been perceived, transformed and represented by the people who inhabit it.

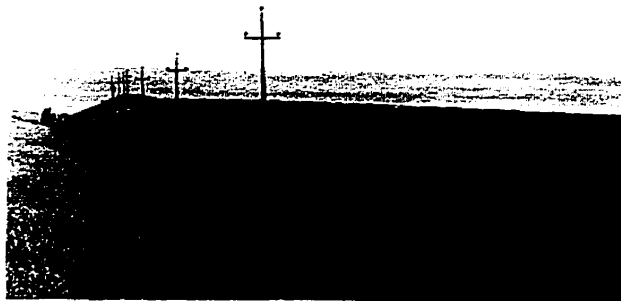


Fig. 1.

HOME IS WHERE  
(for Liz)

now I know  
this is the place  
this is home

my Ontario-born friend  
told me that  
when she moved West,  
pushed through that rocky border  
to this flat and grassy province,  
she felt suddenly and emphatically  
that she had  
come home

I puzzled over this  
for years, puzzled over  
how a young woman,  
leaving behind everything  
that shaped her, would  
feel this burst of emotion  
as she crossed the Canadian Shield,  
crossed over to a prairie town  
she had never visited  
and found home

now, maybe, I understand  
this, that  
coming home is not so much  
waiting for others  
to make room, to give  
me a place

but a bursting through  
the rocks to find, to my surprise  
a place I'd laid claim to  
all along, prepared for myself  
without really knowing it

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

---

Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
HOME IS WHERE (poem)	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vi
INTRODUCTION: MAKING IT HOME	1
SECTION I: IMPRESSION - Introduction	14
i) LOST (and found)	15
ii) EMPTY (and full)	25
SECTION II: APPORTIONMENT - Introduction	38
i) The Idea of Mapping	39
ii) Dividing the Land	47
SECTION III: TRANSFORMATION - Introduction	58
i) Public Space: MONUMENTS, PLACE AND IDENTITY - Cairns, Memorials, Town Mascots	62
ii) Private Space: The Yard and the Garden	72
EPILOGUE	85
ENDNOTES	89
BIBLIOGRAPHY	96

(All writing and images are by the author unless otherwise noted.)

# LIST OF FIGURES

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Note: page numbers are in *italic*.

Fig. 1; *iv* Manitoba Field, 1996. Photograph by author.

Fig. 2; *23* Grasslands National Park, Saskatchewan, 1999. Photograph by author.

Fig. 3; *24* Highway, Saskatchewan, 1999. Photograph by author.

Fig. 4; *28* “The Prairie On the Banks of the Red River, Looking South, Sept-Oct., 1858.” Photograph by H. L. Hime, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1975, plate 32.

Fig. 5; *30* “Cape Horn Near Celilo, Oregon (1867).” Photograph by Carleton Watkins from “Territorial Photography” in W.J.T. Mitchell, ed., *Landscape and Power*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994, page 189.

Fig. 6; *30* “The Prairie Looking West, Sept-Oct 1858.” Photograph by H. L. Hime, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 44.



- Fig. 7; 31 “Farm Houses and Windmills, Middle Settlement, Sept-Oct 1858.” Photograph by H. L. Hime, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 26.
- Fig. 8; 31 “Tents on the Prairie, Sept-Oct 1858.” Photograph by H. L. Hime, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 42.
- Fig. 9; 40 “Inuit View To the South” in R. Wiebe, *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic*. Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1989, frontispiece.
- Fig. 10; 42 A Section from Johnathan Carver’s, “New Map of North America”, 1778, in J. Warkentin and R. Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba: A Selection of Facsimile Maps, Plans and Sketches from 1612 to 1969*. Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1970, page 125.
- Fig. 11; 43 Waterways of a Part of Northern Manitoba by Cha Chay Pay Way Ti, 1806, in J. Warkentin and R. Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, page 143.
- Fig. 12; 48 Juxtaposition of river and sectional lots, from a Parish Lot Survey map, published by C. S. Lott, 1894.
- Fig. 13; 50 River lots at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, from a Parish Lot Survey map, published by C. S. Lott, 1894.
- Fig. 14; 52 Coat of Arms from Hessel Cerritsz’s map of 1612 of the Hudson Bay area, in J. Warkentin and R. Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, page 8.
- Fig. 15; 52 Indian Chief’s mark on a map of the Red River Settlement, 1817, in J. Warkentin and R. Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, page 163.
- Fig. 16; 54 Map depicting a *strassendorfer*, in A. Noble, *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America*. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992 page 269.
- Fig. 17; 55 Plan of a Mennonite house-barn in A. Noble, *To Build in a New Land*, page 277.
- Fig. 18; 56 Leaves, 2000. Scanned image by author.
- Fig. 19; 60 “Planning Farmstead Shelterbelts” from Forest Nursery Station circular, Indian Head, Saskatchewan, 1960.
- Fig. 20; 61 Tourism flyer from Gladstone, Manitoba, n.d.
- Fig. 21; 62 Powerlines, Hwy 3, 1999. Sketch by author.

- Fig. 22; 63 Postcard, “Dual Harvest, Oil and Grain — near Estevan, Saskatchewan, The Energy City”, n.d. Photograph by John Empey.
- Fig. 23; 63 Highway and Grain Elevator, Saskatchewan, 1999. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 24; 64 Boboli Gardens, Florence, Italy, 1998. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 25; 66 Abstract sculpture of Louis Riel by Etienne Gaboury and Marclen Lemay, St. Boniface College, 2000. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 26; 67 Statesman-like sculpture of Louis Riel, Legislative Grounds, Winnipeg, 2000. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 27; 68 Detail of tourism brochure from Glenboro, Manitoba, n.d.
- Fig. 28; 70 Postcard of Dauphin CNR Station, Dauphin, Manitoba, n.d. Artist Earl Graham.
- Fig. 29; 71 Postcard of “Amisk” the Beaver, Dauphin, Manitoba, n.d. Photograph by R. Tubbs-Avalon.
- Fig. 30; 72 Wheel and Goldenrod, 1996. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 31; 75 Sheds, 2000. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 32; 79 Canopus, Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli, Italy, 1998. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 33; 79 Maritime Theatre, Hadrian’s Villa, Tivoli, Italy, 1998. Photograph by author.
- Fig. 34; 81 Tractor, 2000. Sketch by author.
- Fig. 35; 82 Little White House, 2000. Sketch by author.
- Fig. 36; 84 Yard Film Strip, 2000. Photograph by author.

# INTRODUCTION MAKING IT HOME

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No group sets out to create a landscape . . . what it sets out to do is create a community, and the landscape as its visible manifestation is simply the by-product of people working and living, sometimes coming together, sometimes staying apart, but always recognising their interdependence.<sup>1</sup>

Human activity and culture are inextricably linked to landscape. If home is where the heart is then the heart is often deeply rooted in a geographical location, to a particular climate, specific plants and rock formations, to where the sun rises and falls. A culture's traditions are dependent upon many things including the cycling of

the seasons, the kind of food that is grown, the kind of building materials available for creating habitation. As J.B. Jackson suggests, a group of people may not deliberately set out to create a landscape but through their living of everyday life they do create the landscape, and the landscape creates them.

Having said that, home is also a cultural creation and though linked to a locale it is a complex interplay between environment and people. In *Place and Placelessness* Edward Relph writes:

In our everyday lives places are not experienced as independent, clearly defined entities that can be described simply in terms of their location or appearance. Rather they are sensed in a chiaroscuro of setting, landscape, ritual, routine, other people, personal experiences, care and concern for home, and in the context of other places.<sup>2</sup>

There exists a powerful need to create home and community and though the manifestation may differ among people according to location, economics and a myriad of other considerations, it is clear that home is about identity. Relph suggests that “home is the foundation of our identity as individuals and as members of a community, the dwelling-place of being.”<sup>3</sup> People generally work hard to express and preserve that identity in the places they live.

Place is about identity and creating or

recognizing a sense of place has been a fundamental concern in landscape studies for a very long time; so too has been the fear of loss of this sense. Twenty-five years ago Relph wrote:

there is a widespread and familiar sentiment that the localism and variety of the places and landscapes that characterised preindustrial societies and unselfconscious, handicraft societies are being diminished and perhaps eradicated . . . we are at present subjecting ourselves to the forces of placelessness and are losing our sense of place.<sup>4</sup>

More recently, in the 1990s, Michael Hough wrote that

it is abundantly clear that lack of identity has become a universal phenomenon. It pervades not only cities everywhere but also the entire regional landscape. The market forces of trade, economics, and profit, and the technologies to master uncertainty and create security of supply are the imperatives driving contemporary cities.<sup>5</sup>

And landscape architect and theorist James Corner takes an even more dire view,

suggesting that in this Postmodern era “faith has been superseded by reason in a world now plagued by disillusionment — a world governed by the logic of modern technology and global economics.”<sup>6</sup> Referencing Heidegger, Corner goes on to suggest that

the resulting human condition [is] a ‘loss of nearness’ or a loss of intimacy between humans and their environment as well as between people and their communities. Clearly much of our built environment reflects this estrangement and is perpetuated by most contemporary attitudes toward theory and practice in landscape architecture and the related arts.<sup>7</sup>

This estrangement may exist, especially when one considers the generic building types and landscape design associated with many international companies that have proliferated in our landscapes. Hough suggests that the design profession itself has much to answer for in this regard because “while traditional vernacular landscapes usually represent the diverse character of different places, conscious planning and design tend to negate these

differences.”<sup>8</sup> The design fields recognize their complicity and are moving towards a greater appreciation of the vernacular where environments are not fixed but continuously evolving organisms. Hough suggests design solutions<sup>9</sup> and others suggest new theories. In the introduction to *Architecture of the Everyday*, Steven Harris writes:

the consideration of everyday life as a critical political construct represents an attempt to suggest an architecture resistant to this commodification/ consumption paradigm, a paradigm that has come to dominate contemporary architectural practice.<sup>10</sup>

These considerations of the vernacular and the everyday in architecture are positive developments. It must be made clear, however, that the aim is not to return to a pastoral, preindustrial state but to recognize the value and impact of ordinary, contemporary life on our environments. This includes economics and technology since these are an integral part of our lives whether we like it or not. What is most interesting is how, in spite of planned design and in spite of the blandness pro-

duced by global technology and economics, people continue to shape and create their environments by the very act of living their everyday lives, how they subvert the commodification of their landscapes in their own private ways. People invest their landscapes with meaning by their perceptions and choices, their traditions, by the way they interpret and represent the land, in short by their culture. In spite of the estrangement that may exist, there still remains a powerful need for humans to create home in the land they inhabit.

People who live in a place create meaning in it for themselves. If a landscape architect's role is to create landscapes that have value and meaning, then they must understand the physical and the cultural identity of a place. James Corner calls landscape architecture the "great mediator between nature and culture" and as such has a "great role to play in the reconstitution of meaning and value in our relations with the earth."<sup>11</sup> The key word here is role; the creation of landscape and home is a collaboration between many disciplines and

most importantly it rests essentially in the ordinary and everyday. Landscape architects must work hard to understand the meaning that already exists in a place, formed by the people who live (and lived) there. It is essential to look at cultural involvement with a landscape in order for any design to have any meaning. To understand the cultural and the physical landscape it is important to look at the history of the place, not nostalgically to create "what used to be" but to determine how what exists came to be.

Equally important is a multidisciplinary approach to the creation of home, accepting as valid the contributions of many disciplines including artists, writers, photographers, historians, geographers, architects, landscape architects. James Corner recognizes this need:

such a multidisciplinary perspective is crucial for any understanding of the contemporary landscape phenomenon, not least because the shifting of ideas across disciplines has traditionally affected design practice, modes of representa-

tion, and the way the built environment looks.<sup>12</sup>

This study will explore how home and identity have been created, and continue to be created by the living of everyday life, in what we call the prairie landscape. It will look at how, faced with the rigidity of imposed systems, people still carve out special places that speak of group and individual identity. It will also examine how images of place are culturally constructed and represented. The image of the prairie, for example, was created before settlement. The prairie landscape changed significantly with arrival of European settlers in the late nineteenth century. Not all these changes were good but neither were they intentionally evil: “changing times create changing landscapes.”<sup>13</sup>

## THE PRAIRIE LANDSCAPE

That which we call the “prairie landscape” is primarily a cultural construct. In the introduction to his history of the prairie region, John Herd Thompson writes:

any history of the Canadian Prairies must be a book about the myths of the people who shaped a prairie regional identity and through it shaped the Prairie West . . . because the concept of the ‘Canadian Prairies’ was the creation of European colonizers and their descendants, that designation itself makes this a book about their myths and chronologically bounded by their presence . . . the Native people and European traders who knew intimately the forests, park belt, and grasslands of the geographical area would have found the concept of ‘the Prairie provinces’ meaningless.<sup>14</sup>

All landscapes are to some degree invented since “owing to the inevitable imaging that enframes and represents nature to a given society, the possibilities of a cultureless nature necessarily remains absolutely unknown and unimaginable.”<sup>15</sup> The prairies do, however, have a unique history of a concerted effort to deliberately shape public opinion about the region even before shaping the land.

Much of what we associate with the physical prairie landscape is a result of this reshaping. Shelterbelt plantings, the farmyard surrounded by vast land and of course the ubiquitous grain elevator are images synonymous with the prairies. In prepara-



tion for settlement the land itself was shaped and refigured. The presettlement buffalo landscape of bones and wallows disappeared with the animals. The naturally marshy Red River valley was drained for agriculture, the original grassland of the area was destroyed and cultivated, replaced by squares of cropland. Farmers, writes Barry Potyondi, “modified southwestern Saskatchewan’s grassland to the point where the presettlement landscape and ecology were scarcely recognizable.”<sup>16</sup> The post-settlement landscape became one more influenced by culture than the former had been. Of this period historian Gerald Friesen writes:

perhaps the most profound of all the changes that occurred in the western interior in the last half of the nineteenth century was that thereafter the landscape would be dominated and moulded by humans rather than forces of nature, except in those rare moments — a flood, a blizzard, a forest or prairie fire — when nature reasserted its power.<sup>17</sup>

But even before the physical landscape was altered, an image of the prairies was

conceived by expansionists and propelled by the government to expedite settlement of the area. What had been formally regarded as a wasteland began to be seen as a new Eden:

The initial task of the ‘expansionist movement’ was to convince other Canadians that the vast regions to the west should be transferred to Canada and settled. This involved a reassessment of the nature of the soil and climate of the land under the control of the Hudson’s Bay Company. Between 1856 and 1869 the image of the West was transformed in Canadian writings from a semi-arctic wilderness to a fertile garden well adapted to agricultural pursuits; subsidiary to this was a new interest in the possibilities of mining, trade, and transportation.<sup>18</sup>

The construction of a new image for the prairie region coupled with physical changes and the influx of new people created another image of the west, one that continues to evolve:

A region becomes over time more than a product of its environment or even the perception of the environment. It

becomes a “mental construct,” shaped by the attitudes, beliefs, and stories of its people. This mythology governs what one sees as “reality.” In the case of western Canada, it is the stories and historical myths of the past that have taken shape over time, including a fusion of the earlier images of the West — the fact and fiction of the region — that have shaped the mentality of its people and projected the image of the West as a region of the mind. The West has become its own image.<sup>19</sup>

It is this cultural landscape shaped by the experience of the European settler in the late nineteenth century and the continuing influence of this experience that is at the heart of this project.

When European settlers arrived in Manitoba and Saskatchewan at the end of the nineteenth century they were shocked by the relative emptiness of their new environment, and reacted with both awe and fear. They brought with them the mental maps of the homes they left behind and in many cases set about trying to create them geographically and emotionally. The built

landscape forms that they produced were far more than protection against physical elements; they represented cultural beliefs and personal preferences. The boundary commission, the sectional survey system, the cardinal points were imposed to create order on what the newcomers saw as “the wild new land”. These systems also tell stories that go far beyond political boundaries and land allotments.

We are no longer pioneers on the prairies in the same sense but each of us continues to reinvent the landscape that we inhabit. Our cultural values and beliefs continue to shape our landscapes, just as the prairie landscape shapes us. This vast and open landscape has been a source of fascination and provocation for a long time. In its featurelessness it is an ideal place to explore how humans invent their landscape, how they seek to locate themselves within it and move throughout it.

The prairies continue to fascinate us as we strive to make it our home — we portion

out the land, impose grids and boundaries,  
change the make-up of plant material; we  
paint it, photograph it, write about it.  
These are all ways of finding our way  
through the prairies; they are all about  
making it home.

## METHODS

This project explores how the Canadian prairie has been shaped culturally and physically by the people who call it home. Emphasis is on the experience of the European settler in the late nineteenth century and the continuing influence of this experience. The 'prairie' refers generally to the southern-most portion of the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan that were formerly grassland and were converted to agricultural settlement in the late nineteenth century. I have drawn on research in cultural geography, philosophy, landscape architectural theory, history,

popular culture, art and literature to create a document that strives to present a variety of points of view.

The project consists of three sections:

1) *Impression*, 2) *Apportionment*, and 3) *Transformation*. These sections are based upon the process that is used in approaching any new project, that of assessing a situation, making decisions about parameters, then working within those parameters to create something new. In the design model for landscape architecture, for instance, one first undertakes a site

analysis, then formulates a set of guidelines and a concept, and then produces a design that transforms the site based on information gathered and observations made. This is not to suggest that the process here is a linear one but that each of these components forms the whole. In this example and in the approach to this project, the big picture is refined down to its smallest details, working from the general to the specific.

The three sections that serve as a structure for this project are similar in spirit: *Impression* examines how people, in particular settlers arriving at the end of the nineteenth century, generally perceived the unique aesthetic qualities of the vast prairie landscape and the impact this environment had on their cultural life.

*Apportionment* looks at the physical impact of land division on the prairies, as well as the metaphorical and cultural implications of mapping in general. *Transformation* explores how, within the larger divisions, individuals create homes or landmarks of importance that reflect their

own cultural practices or personal expression. These last two sections may at first seem similar in that they are both about how humans alter the landscape. They are quite different, however, in that the former is a system imposed by lawmakers and the latter what individuals do within these regulated spaces, a distinction also made by philosopher Henri Lefebvre who refers to these as dominated and appropriated spaces. Dominated spaces are those spaces that are transformed by technology and that originate in political power. Appropriated spaces are those that are modified to serve the needs and possibilities of a group.<sup>20</sup> This is, of course, an oversimplification of Lefebvre's theory and it should be noted that the two spaces although distinct are dependent on one another and are somewhat fluid:

Dominated space is usually closed, sterilized, emptied out. The concept attains its full meaning only when it is contrasted with the opposite and inseparable concept of *appropriation* . . . often such a space is a structure — monument or building — but this is not

always the case: a site, a square or a street may also be legitimately described as an appropriated space. Examples of appropriated spaces abound, but it is not always easy to decide in what respect, how, by whom and for whom they have been appropriated.<sup>21</sup>

Yi-fu Tuan makes a similar distinction between levels of attachments in determining a sense of place. Geographer Allan Pred interprets Tuan's theory as follows:

Although Tuan is not entirely consistent in separating the two, he suggests a public-symbolic sense of place is most apt to arise in connection with larger areal units — the city or region of one's residence, the nation state — while a field-of-care sense of place is most apt to emerge in connection with smaller areal units — the corner of a room, or the urban street, farm, or rural village of one's residence.<sup>22</sup>

Each of the three sections are broken down into subsections that explore the theme in different ways:

### *IMPRESSION*

- Lost (and found)
- Empty (and full)

### *APPORTIONMENT*

- The Idea of Mapping
- Dividing the Land

### *TRANSFORMATION*

- Public Space: Monuments, Place and Identity - Cairns, Memorials, Town Mascots
- Private Space: The Yard and the Garden

Topics have been explored through research and prose writing, sketches, photography, and digital artwork because a variety of cultural representation is the essence of the notion of home:

for each home ground we need new maps, living maps, stories and poems, photographs and paintings, essays and songs, so that we may dwell in our place with a full heart.<sup>23</sup>

The experience of home is an evolutionary one. Home cannot be seen as a whole static thing but rather as fragments constantly shifting and repositioning. The idea of home can be likened to Deleuze and Guattari's notion of rhizomic structures as

“non-hierarchical, horizontal multiplicities which cannot be subsumed within a unified structure, whose components form random, unregulated networks in which any element may be connected with any other element.”<sup>24</sup>

The format of this practicum reflects this notion; it was not intended to be a comprehensive study with progressive chapters and concluding, definitive findings but a rather collection of discrete writings and images that touch on the idea of what home may mean in the prairie landscape.

# SECTION I I M P R E S S I O N

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## INTRODUCTION

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak . . . but there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.<sup>1</sup>

Each environment and landscape has characteristics unique to its geographical location that have great impact on the people who call it home. The prairie landscape in its ‘featurelessness’ is a unique environment. Impressions of the prairie landscape change according to the needs and desires of the people who experience it. Impressions can be external or internal, but they are always subjective. This section will explore two common impressions of the prairie environment: the fear of becoming lost and the notion of emptiness. The prairie experience is often a paradoxical one. The titles of the essays in this section — *Lost (and found)* and *Empty (and full)* — are as well.



# LOST (and found)

---

Let's get lost, lost in each other's arms  
Let's get lost, let them send out alarms  
Although they'll think it's rather rude  
Let's tell the world we're in that crazy mood  
Let's defrost in a romantic mist  
Let's get crossed off everybody's list  
To celebrate this night we found each other  
Let's get lost.

*sung by Chet Baker, 1956, words and music by Loesser-McHugh*

Getting lost in the arms of your lover, in your own thoughts or in Chet Baker's trumpet riff that follows these lyrics is considered by most to be a wonderful escape from the routines of everyday life. This kind of getting lost is pleasurable and relaxing because you still have one eye on the map. You will get out again; this is only temporary.

Getting lost in a new and strange landscape (or in a familiar one that becomes strange) can be terrifying. "Lost person behaviour" is a condition brought on by serious disorientation where the victims suffer palpitations, increased heart rate, rapid breathing, even hallucinations. Kevin Lynch, an urban planner well-known for his studies of humans in their environment, writes:

let the mishap of disorientation once occur, and the sense of anxiety and even terror that accompanies it reveals to us how closely it is linked to our sense of balance and well-being. The very word "lost" in our language carries much more than simple geographical uncertainty; it carries overtones of utter disaster.<sup>1</sup>

At issue, it seems, is the relinquishment or loss of personal control.

The now infamous film *Blair Witch Project* (1999) is a pseudo-documentary about a small group of young filmmakers who go off into the New England woods to find proof of the legendary Blair Witch. They are ill-prepared as both navigators and filmmakers and their power struggles result in the loss or mysterious disappearance of their map. This is when their fear really solidifies. With the map the group holds out some sort of hope that they will eventually find their way out even though they are actually quite inept at reading it. Without the map their disorientation turns hysterical and their circling becomes tighter and tighter. The marketing of the movie suggests that the fear derives not

from what you see but from what you don't see (howls in the night, strange bundles of sticks left in front of tents — evidence of a malevolent stranger). But I think the real fear comes from the fact of being lost. When control is lost, chaos ensues and it seems that anything can happen.

Although geographically the opposite of the New England woods, the Canadian prairie also produces fear for the very fact of its openness and seeming lack of landmarks. It is now well-documented that settlers to the prairies in the late nineteenth century were misled; lured to a harsh and undeveloped country by enthusiastic recruiters determined to populate the West:

While the emphasis on the promotion of immigration was relatively new to Canadian expansionism, some of the techniques were as old as the practice of salesmanship. The pamphlets always began with the strongest promises of realism and then continued with descriptions of prosperous and contented farmers living amidst slightly unreal fields of golden grain. As was perhaps inevitable, the attempt to sell

the North West led to an often one-sided and over-enthusiastic picture of the region. In the extreme this bordered on outright fraud.<sup>2</sup>

Descriptions of the Canadian prairies did not contain the words *cold* or *snow* and also didn't mention that there was a distinct lack of trees. Reports on the growth and development of prairie cities were embellished and manipulated:

It is difficult now to imagine the almost oppressive sense of space, the vastness and hostility of the land which must have confronted the first generation of settlers on the Prairie. This horror vacui is evident in two fold-out brochures of Main Street, Winnipeg, 1881 and 1892 . . . where the engraved image of every building on the street is reproduced in a handy, pocket-sized pamphlet replacing the reality of the physical street itself. What may have been obscured by the optimism of this image, and of boosterism in general, as manifested in the obsession with objectifying the city through the exaggerated and endlessly repeated images of the urbanscape, was likely a fear of the featureless and empty void of the Prairie itself.<sup>3</sup>

Writing about the experiences of rural settlers on the prairies at this time Ronald Rees suggests that "for newcomers who found themselves in open, featureless parts of the prairies two anxieties surfaced immediately: fear of getting lost and fear of being caught in open prairie during a fire or a storm."<sup>4</sup> Rees goes on to explain:

without landmarks to guide them, Europeans lost their bearings with disturbing ease. In the bare lands, Indians navigated by relationships, not fixed points, rather like sailors on open sea; they were guided by the position of the sun, by the direction and feel of the wind, and by the lie of the grass.<sup>5</sup>

A successful navigator, then, knows how to interpret these signs. In *Finding Your Way Without Map or Compass*, a pathfinding book written in the 1950s by a former military navigational expert, the author believes that there is no such thing as a "sense" of direction, that pathfinding is strictly learning how to read and interpret the signs of the natural world:

some people imply that the sense of direction is a sixth sense, a quite special sense to be added to the five senses with which the ordinary man or woman (and many other animals) is born . . . I do not believe that there is any such sixth sense. A man with a good sense of direction is, to me, quite simply an able pathfinder — a natural navigator — somebody who can find his way by the use of the five senses . . . developed by the blessing of experience and the use of intelligence. All that the pathfinder needs is his senses and knowledge of how to interpret nature's signs.<sup>6</sup>

While it is true that studying a thing very carefully will help you understand its structure, this purely deductive approach to reading the land leaves out the cultural perceptions and relationships that develop between people and the landscape they inhabit. Lynch writes that “the terror of being lost comes from the necessity that a mobile organism be oriented in its surroundings.”<sup>7</sup> But it is important to note that even the notions of being “oriented” and “mobile” may have diverse cultural interpretations. In Rudy Wiebe's *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the*

*Arctic*, he describes the Inuit perception of objects in space:

the Inuit understanding of visible phenomena is expressed by their language as two dimensional: the very grammar of Inuktitut requires that you express all phenomena as either roughly equal in size — things are as broad as they are long, that is, *areal*, or as unequal — they are longer than they are broad, that is, *linear*. This understanding explains why it is really impossible for a living being to be ultimately lost on the vast expanses of the arctic landscape, either tundra or ice. . . two corollaries expand this linguistic structural understanding and further explain what I mean: first, an areal thing changes dimension and becomes linear when it moves; second, any area without easily observable limits (a field of ice, the sea, an expanse of tundra) is automatically classified as long and narrow, that is, as linear also. In order to live a human being must move; to live in the Arctic a human being must, generally speaking move quite a lot to acquire enough food. Therefore in order to live he/she must become a linear dimension in a linear space. That means that another moving person (also linear) will certainly find them

because even in the largest space their moving lines must at some point intersect, and the very rarity of those lines in the “empty” Arctic makes them all the more conspicuous.<sup>8</sup>

When people inhabit a place for a very long time they develop a relationship with the land that pervades their culture. The newcomers to the prairies that Rees describes had no such relationship, no prior knowledge to draw on. Many of the settlers had come from overly populated European cities or from farming communities that had a very different landscape and climate. Even if what they had left was a harsh and impoverished life it was in a place they knew, perhaps for generations much like the Aboriginal people of the plains knew their land. In other words, their fear of becoming lost on the prairie probably involved much more than the featureless landscape they gazed out upon. Their fear was no doubt exacerbated by their sense of being lost culturally.

Understandings and concepts of space cannot be divorced from the real fabric of how people live their lives. To do so would be like saying that

culture is made up of beliefs and traditions but has no impact on how people live. Their concrete, non-discursive, practices are both informed by and go on to provoke modifications in the cultural discourse of the spatial.<sup>9</sup>

Without familiar landmarks and vegetation many cultural practices were affected. A Ukrainian poem of the era reflects the collective sadness experienced in trying to establish a home in unfamiliar surroundings and how even plants affected this homesickness:

All is different in you, Canada!  
The plants, the birds and all  
the animals -  
Sadness and dreariness, as in a  
grave.  
Nothing to see that is dear to  
me  
Save the lone cranberry, the  
only plant  
That took our roots — beloved  
cranberry!<sup>10</sup>

It is not surprising that many homesteaders began to try to recreate the yards and homes they had left behind. There are many examples of these attempts to transplant home. Ukrainian settlers arrived in Canada with tiny amounts of seeds and grain and eventually introduced over fifty

new plant species to the region.<sup>11</sup> Although the single homestead was the norm, styles of living varied among ethnic groups — Mennonite communities, for example, were unique in that they established agricultural villages called *strassendorfer* which they had previously built as settlers in other parts of the world such as the northern Netherlands and the Ukraine. The *strassendorfer* were distinct and consistent in layout, averaging about twenty-four households with houses occupying a one hundred-foot wide lot, set back about ninety feet from a main roadway typically lined with cottonwood trees.<sup>12</sup> The Mennonite tradition of joining barn to house was also unique, and was as well a “cultural transfer” from the “original Dutch homeland of the Mennonites.”<sup>13</sup>

The British had a well-known garden tradition that greatly influenced North American styles. Of a British settlement at Moose Mountain, Rees writes:

Although made from unfamiliar materials, the houses looked reassuringly English.

All migrants, the geographer Vidal de la Blache once remarked, like to carry their shells with them. Most of the houses were Victorian villas . . . on birthdays and festivals the occupants ate off Wedgewood dinner services with Georgian silverware, and listened to recitals played on a grand piano. To complete the Englishness of the scene, some of the houses were set in lawns and gardens protected from prairie winds by planted trees and shrubbery.<sup>14</sup>

Clearly not all these strategies were successful. Farms and gardens and large wooden houses were negatively impacted by shortages of wood and fuel, damaging prairie winds and drought conditions. We recognize now that many of the practices of the settlers were not sustainable ecologically and suspect from a regional identity standpoint as unsuitable forms imposed upon the landscape. But it is important not to be smug in our hindsight as there was something very powerful and intuitive at work here. These people were creating home; they were working towards being found.

*I am often disoriented, at odds with the cardinal points. This continually surprises me, having grown up on the prairies where the cardinal points have become a necessary pathfinding tool, a crucial imaginary landmark. My father, a farmer, always gave directions based on these points. I never understood them. I needed to translate his “turn west” to “right” or “left”. I would quickly conjure up a diagram — north at the top, west and east spelling WE, south now by default at the bottom. I confess that I still use this picture.*

*Our farm was an urban one. We were an anomaly, surrounded by people who weren't farmers — some whose yards were scarcely bigger than city lots. My father farmed discontinuous strips of land. Our yard was flanked on three sides by a highway and service road, a railroad track, a strip of poplar bush. The fourth opened out to a field more than a kilometre long without a curve, a flat, clear, far-reaching rectangle of cropland.*

*I loved this perfect geometry, the converging lines of the highway and service road, the unobstructed view of the fiery sunsets that completed the picture every evening.*

*The sunsets really were (and still are) spectacular; the sun seemed particularly round and colourful. One would think that this image would imprint itself as a reminder of west, if for no other reason than to be able to understand my father's directions. But it wasn't so. One morning a young me, ten or eleven years old, stood waiting for the school bus at the end of the driveway. An elderly couple pulled up in a long dark car, in need of direction. They asked which way is east, and I froze and stared blankly. Where does the sun the come up, then? This I could tell them. I pointed and they drove away.*

*I loved more than the aesthetics of this place. I knew where the sun came up and went down every day. It was my only childhood home and I felt secure here. My father attached himself fiercely to the land and I*

*think that trickled down to me. I also liked the anomaly that we were, felt proud of our farmer status even when other kids thought it weird, our yard messy. I liked having one foot in the city and one in the country.*

*I have thought about why I did not easily learn the cardinal points. I've wondered if perhaps I had no need of finding my bearings because I never wandered far enough from home to worry. I've wondered if perhaps when you are found that it is not really possible to become lost.*

∞∞∞





Fig. 3.

## EMPTY (and full)

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As long as a human eye is looking, there is always something to see. To look at something which is “empty” is still to be looking, still to be seeing something — if only the ghosts of one’s own expectations. In order to perceive fullness, one must retain an acute sense of the emptiness which marks it off; conversely, in order to perceive emptiness, one must apprehend other zones of the world as full.<sup>1</sup>

To most, the prairie landscape is not a sweet and instantly lovable place. Its environment is harsh and its visual appeal is questionable. We have been encouraged to equate landscape beauty with varied topography where many elements vie for our attention, exciting our eye and stimulating our senses or soothing us with

rounded curves. Unlike the pastoral landscape paintings of eighteenth-century Europe where gentle knolls provide a backdrop for picnics shaded by gnarled old trees, the prairie offers no protection, it is sharp and direct and relentlessly flat. The terrain is actually quite diverse across the prairie provinces; Manitoba, in fact, is

extremely varied in geology, landforms, climate, soils, vegetation and wildlife. The regions of the province include Precambrian rock, Boreal forest, grass-land, tundra and more.<sup>2</sup> However the descriptions of the prairie landscape that have reached the level of cliché — oceans of grain, endless sky — describe those parts of the prairie that really are extremely flat and relatively treeless. These are the same parts that, because of the lack of trees and varied topography, were selected for agricultural settlement in the late nineteenth century.

Probably one of the most common descriptors of the flat and treeless prairie landscape, and one that has resonance in both physical and psychological terms is that of emptiness. Emptiness can be frightening. When people speak of feeling “empty inside” it is a description of despair and hopelessness. Emptiness is a void; there is nothing to rage against. But emptiness can also be a place of new beginnings if you are interested enough to explore its possibilities. Wallace Stegner

writes of his complicated relationship with this aspect of the prairie in *Wolf Willow*:

Desolate? Forbidding? There never was a country that in its good moments was more beautiful. Even in drouth or dust storm or blizzard it is the reverse of monotonous, once you have submitted to it with all the senses. You don't get out of the wind, but learn to lean and squint against it. You don't escape sky and sun, but wear them in your eyeballs and on your back. You become acutely aware of yourself. The world is very large, the sky even larger, and you are very small. But also the world is flat, empty, nearly abstract, and in its flatness you are a challenging upright thing, as sudden as an exclamation mark, as enigmatic as a question mark.<sup>3</sup>

In these terms the prairie can be seen as a grand and overpowering presence, a kind of *terrible beauty* whose qualities owe more to the sublime than the pastoral. Edmund Burke, whose book *Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1759) “had an immense influence on aesthetics in Europe and North America in the latter part of the (eighteenth) century”<sup>4</sup> lists “among the sources

of the Sublime, power, obscurity, privation, vastness, infinity, difficulty, and magnificence” which “all suggest experiences that rob us of control.”<sup>5</sup> Like Wallace Stegner’s solitary human, involvement in the environment of the sublime is central: “the position of being both spectator and potential victim/participator is crucial to the full experience.”<sup>6</sup>

To others the experience simply is one of monotony:

Empty land. Empty sky. A stranger to the prairies feels uneasily that he is driving straight into infinity . . . the land is without character. It excites neither hatred or love. There is nothing here to respond to. Not the austere, sinister loneliness of a true desert or the friendly security of a conventional pastoral landscape.<sup>7</sup>

This passage was written in 1965; if this uneasiness and boredom was felt driving through the prairies then, or even now thirty-five years later, imagine what the early settlers must have felt one-hundred and twenty-five years ago when they arrived to stay. This was the land before

shelterbelt plantings and farm houses and towns. Even the few trees that grew along the banks of creeks and rivers were most likely removed by earlier settlers desperate for firewood.<sup>8</sup> Before concerted efforts to settle the land, which included constructing an acceptable image of the region, the prairie landscape suffered bad press:

the Canadian West was viewed prior to the 1860s in negative terms from both a northerly and southerly perspective. For northern fur traders it was a wilderness full of danger and terror, where the climate was forever cold, the land barren, and the native people inhospitable. For southern travellers it was a desert, lacking trees and water essential for agriculture, and having a monotonous, dreary landscape which was unappealing to the human eye.<sup>9</sup>

Indeed, the reaction of many European settlers to the prairie landscape must have been shock and disappointment: the land was likely more vast and barren than they had imagined, and surely more than they had been told: “it is difficult now to imagine the almost oppressive sense of space,

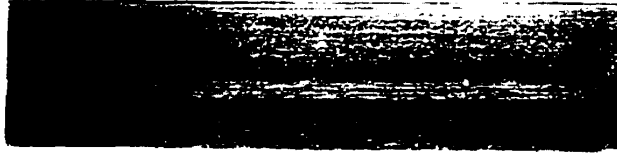


Fig. 4. H. L. Hime, "The Prairie on the Banks of the Red River, looking south, Sept-Oct 1858," in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 32.

the vastness and hostility of the land which must have confronted the first generation of settlers on the Prairie."<sup>10</sup> Many had arrived from overpopulated locations in Europe; even rural dwellers had been accustomed to village life in long-ago settled areas. As Ronald Rees writes "to many of the immigrants, a great plain covered with grass or, at best, patches of small, thin trees seemed not just spacious, but vacant."<sup>11</sup> How do you begin to interact with such a landscape, which seemed endlessly the same to many of the settlers:

subtle changes of scene, of sun, and of wind escaped most Europeans who saw only a featureless landscape. Even when moving they felt they were getting nowhere.<sup>12</sup>

Ironically, the desolation that the settlers felt in the new land was also the result of one of the qualities that had been employed to entice them here initially. The vastness and emptiness of the prairie was romanticized by writers, and later by immigration recruiters, who declared that the land was a clean slate where one could reinvent oneself, where anything was possible. One of these writers was Robert M. Ballantyne who had served as a junior clerk at York Factory and who therefore had at least a working knowledge of the land of which he wrote. Ballantyne "described an 'almost untrodden wilderness' where individuals could leave behind their past mistakes and make a new start."<sup>13</sup> Ballantyne, like other wilderness adventure writers, appealed to the rugged individualist fantasy of both appreciating and subduing the new wild land. These writers with "their stirring renditions of life on the margin of an empire, as they often put it, emphasized the silence and the loneliness and the beauty of this frontier" while at the same time making it clear that the "isolation of the region was temporary."<sup>14</sup>

William Butler's *The Great Lone Land* written in 1879 was a "widely-read book whose title entered the lexicon of phrases used to describe the Canadian West for the next fifteen years."<sup>15</sup> Butler was commissioned by the Canadian government to report on conditions in the region as a precursor to settlement, so his bias was obvious:

in contrast to the pre-1850 image of the West as a hostile, forbidding wasteland, Butler talked about its infinite beauty, its sublime silence, its splendid peacefulness, and its mystical spiritualism.<sup>16</sup>

In Butler's own words:

The great ocean itself does not present more infinite variety than does this prairie-ocean of which we speak. In winter, a dazzling surface of purest snow; in early summer, a vast expanse of grass and pale pink roses; in autumn often a wild sea of raging fire. No ocean of water in the world can vie with its gorgeous sunsets; no solitude can equal the loneliness of a night-shadowed prairie . . . for my part, the prairies had nothing terrible in their aspect, nothing oppressive in their loneliness. One saw here the world as it had taken shape and

form from the hands of the Creator.<sup>17</sup>

This sort of literary seduction was a major factor in the mythologizing, and ultimately the settlement, of the American frontier which was seen as "an embodiment of manly independence"<sup>18</sup>, and of which Canada was the northern and even more inhospitable extension.

The juxtaposition of the grand and vast nature of the landscape with images of human control or presence was popular in photographs during this time as well and served to further argue that the empty land needed to be filled. Photography itself was new and its veracity had not yet come into question

The photograph, however, cannot deceive; in nothing can it extenuate; there is no power in this marvellous machine either to add to or take from: we know that what we see must be TRUE. So guided, therefore, we can travel over all countries of the world, without moving a yard from own firesides.<sup>19</sup>

Joel Snyder writes of American landscape photography in the 1860s and 70s and particularly of the work of Carleton Watkins whose monumental photographs depict the beginnings of industrialization in the still rugged western landscape of the United States:

this representative scheme, then, presents the possibility of a double salvation — a return to unspoiled innocence and an opportunity to profit from the violation of innocence. It offers, furthermore, a reassurance that this untouched West can withstand endless mass immigration and industrial exploitation.<sup>20</sup>

The pre-settlement photographs taken by H.L. Hime, one of the first known photographers to visually record the Canadian western interior in the 1850s also present a landscape that suggests the need to be ‘filled up’. Travelling with the Hind Expedition in 1858, Hime’s photographs depict a landscape of intensely bare and open plain sparsely populated by Aboriginal people and early Selkirk settlers.



Fig. 5. Carleton Watkins, “Cape Horn near Celilo, Oregon” (1867), from “Territorial Photography” in W. J. T. Mitchell, ed. *Landscape and Power*, 189.

Hime’s rather quiet photographs differ in spirit from the monumentality of Watkins’; this may well be due to individual expression or it may be indicative of a difference



Fig. 6. H. L. Hime, “The Prairie Looking West, Sept-Oct 1858,” in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 44.

in attitude between the two countries. Rees argues that the experience of the settler to the Canadian prairies was not one of

conquering and subduing as it had been in the USA:

people came here not, as de Tocqueville said of immigrants to America, to be “born free” but to escape oppression, to preserve traditions and ways of life threatened at home and, like immigrants the world over, to improve their material lives. They arrived as quiet recipients of a land already won, not as potential conquerors: the Indians had been subdued, the land surveyed and subdivided, and lawlessness brought under control. Psychologically, it was a setting better suited to the transplanting of old worlds than to the making of new ones.<sup>21</sup>

Rees may be right, but his evaluation of the settler experience is often one of utter desolation and victimization. Between the romanticism of the frontier myth and Rees’ desperately unhappy homesteaders perhaps lies the truth of a challenging new life in a difficult new land.

In any case, a paradoxical view of the land was a common one: Europeans saw the North American landscape as both a New Eden, free of the sins of old world and as a

wild and immoral place in need of cleansing.<sup>22</sup> While much art and literature romanticized this attitude, Catherine Howett also suggests that depictions of the landscape by artists caused the public to eventually appreciate their indigenous landscapes but, ironically, only when they were



Fig. 7. H. L. Hime, “Farm-houses and Windmills, Middle Settlement, Sept-Oct 1858”, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 26.



Fig. 8. H. L. Hime, “Tents on the Prairie, Sept-Oct 1858”, in R. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858*, plate 42.



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presented within an accepted European tradition:

both of these interpretations presumed that a civilizing agrarian order had to be imposed on the raw landscape of America. It was not until the nineteenth century, when the painters of the Hudson River School composed landscape scenes on canvas that framed the American pastoral or picturesque within the pictorial conventions of Claudian tradition, that Americans began to see — literally, to see — their native landscape as an object of aesthetic value.<sup>23</sup>

The aesthetic value of the prairie landscape is a subject explored by Neil Evernden in his essay “Beauty and Nothingness: Prairie as Failed Resource.” In it Evernden describes the emerging field of environmental aesthetics of the early 1970s that essentially “ruled prairie beauty non-existent”<sup>24</sup> and his continuing quest to “gnaw away at the idea of visual resources and at the misfit between my esthetic experience and the formal designation of visual merit.”<sup>25</sup> Evernden found that the prairie almost always scored low in public

opinion when evaluated on the basis of visual aesthetics:

low ratings may accurately indicate the public’s low opinion of the prairie, but the ratings also point to a central feature of this landscape, the absence of things. It is a feature that seems to condemn this landscape to esthetic poverty. Nothing is here, no things to measure or enjoy. There is nothing to *possess* esthetic interest, so how could the scene be beautiful?<sup>26</sup>

Evernden points out that as a society we have learned to value things over experience, and the prairie is a “substance-less landscape”:

the denial of thing-ness is suicidal in a society that craves — indeed, can only recognize — things . . . the prairie will always come out at the bottom of landscape popularity contests. Visual resource scales are not merely recording our tastes in scenery, they are also revealing, in their assumptions and results, how we encounter the world.<sup>27</sup>

Landscape appreciation really does exclude components of the prairie landscape. In his book *The Visual Elements of Land-*

scape, John Jakle's stated objective is to focus on "seeing landscape as visual display" and to "amplify the functional interpretation of cultural landscape by incorporating in it a clear visual dimension."<sup>28</sup> Jakle describes a number of components of landscape and suggests three types that exist. His prejudice is clear as he describes the first landscape type, romantic, as having "extreme variety and complexity"<sup>29</sup> and the second, classical, as "clearly intelligible compositions."<sup>30</sup> The third landscape type, in which the prairie clearly falls, he defines as cosmic:

cosmic landscapes are infinite extensions of monotonous plain embraced by encircling vaults of sky. . . such landscapes suggest necessity rather than expression. They are simple, balanced, and harmonious to the extreme. They want for visual surprise and mystery. They are too easily known. Such landscapes do not seem to contain individual places, but form merely a continuous neutral ground . . . seeing in detail is little rewarded in the face of such intense predictability.<sup>31</sup>

Jakle contends that the most visually interesting views are those that include "emerging and occluding panoramas, vistas, focal points, enclosures, enclaves, and points of pause" and that "especially exciting views may offer a sense of announcement."<sup>32</sup> As an example of this, Jakle refers (ironically) to a typical prairie scene, that of a slowly curving road with a view of a grain elevator in the distance, and writes that "expectations are created when a grain elevator comes into view announcing another town."<sup>33</sup> This only serves to reinforce the idea that the 'infinite extension of monotonous plain' that is the prairie can only be considered interesting when it is filled with things (grain elevators) and therefore brought into the sphere of acceptable visual interest and beauty.

Jakle's views are fairly commonplace in the field of landscape study. Tadahiko Higuchi's influential book *The Visual and Spatial Structure of Landscapes* concentrates mostly upon landscapes that contain

topographical variation. The seven classical types of landscape spaces that Higuchi classifies are all based on mountainous areas.<sup>34</sup> The eight indexes for determining the visual structure of landscapes that are the basis for his theories are also largely dependent upon landscapes that contain objects and vary topographically. Although some such as 'light' and 'distance' could apply to prairie views, others such as 'angle of incidence', 'angle of depression' and 'angle of elevation' depend on the ability to see objects from above or below.<sup>35</sup> When there are no objects, and in fact no above or below, such criteria is useless.

The evaluation of landscape based on traditional and conventional ideas of beauty is under criticism as notions of the ordinary and the everyday gain in respectability and importance in landscape studies. Public taste changes over time.

Catherine Howett writes:

reflection upon the historical evolution within our cultural tradition that has predisposed us, whether we are aware of it

or not, to apply certain aesthetic criteria in evaluating the landscapes with which we engage ought to have the effect of stimulating an exploration of alternative values as grounds for judgment. Without such an effort, we will continue to live and move blindly within environments that we fail to see or know intimately or profoundly, simply because we are conditioned to view them with an appraising eye, to see how they measure up against subliminal standards of visual organization and landscape meaning that we have been taught to value exclusively, indifferent to the wealth of knowing, feeling, and caring for places that begins with our earliest childhood experiences of engaging the world.<sup>36</sup>

The recognition that landscape is as much a cultural construct as a natural one is central to understanding it in a wider context as James Corner suggests:

it is thus a gross reduction to consider landscape simply as a scenic object, a subjugated resource or a scientific ecosystem. To consider landscape in solely visual, formal, ecological, or economic terms fails to embrace the complex richness of association and social structures that are inherent to it.<sup>37</sup>

The experience of the prairie landscape may be central to the 'exploration of alternative values'; defying conventional beauty, it is not an easy landscape to understand or to live within. But its difficulty requires our thought and attention which is infinitely more fulfilling than simple visual gratification. To know this landscape profoundly we fill its 'emptiness' not just with 'things', but with the mass of our experience:

Perhaps we could say that the prairie is subversive. It puts us out of register with societal biases and makes us question our definitions of beauty, esthetic experience, and even nature. The prairie forces upon us the realization that as individuals we inhabit a world of irrational, experiential value.<sup>38</sup>

We sat boldly on the plain, something the earth refused to swallow, right in the middle of everything and with the prairie as empty as nightmare clear to the crawl and shimmer where hot earth met hot sky. I saw the sun flash off brass, a heliograph winking off a message into space, calling attention to us, saying “Look, look!” . . . that was the essential feeling I had about that country — the sense of being foreign and noticeable, of sticking out. I did not at first feel even safe, much less that I was helping to take charge of and make our own a parcel of the world.<sup>39</sup>

Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow*

the prairie is not an easy story, no  
satisfying beginning middle end, rather  
a long empty scroll  
waiting to be written upon  
resisting happy endings  
and cloistered sheltered sub plots  
everything out there in the open  
hot and bright and windy as hell

but oh how triumphant you  
feel when you're done  
so strong and heroic, forging  
ahead on that rugged plain, setting  
out your words carefully, wanting  
to protect and free them all  
at the same time

## SECTION II

# A P P O R T I O N M E N T

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### INTRODUCTION

Boundaries are non-existent until made visible, in some way, on a map, if not on the ground. At the same time, differentiating space also means connecting it: any border, however impassable, has two sides.<sup>1</sup>

Like impressions of the land mapping can be rather subjective, reflecting not just material reality but aspirations and memories, among many other things. *The Idea of Mapping* looks generally at the metaphorical power of mapping. *Dividing the Land* gives a historical background on what effect the apportionment of land in the prairies had on those who settled the area in the late nineteenth century.



# THE IDEA OF MAPPING

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A good propagandist knows how to shape opinion by manipulating maps. Political persuasion often concerns territorial claims, nationalities, national pride, borders . . . spheres of influence and other geographic phenomena conveniently portrayed cartographically . . . people trust maps, and intriguing maps attract the eye as well as connote authority.<sup>1</sup>

Cartographic history should not be confined within the frame of geographical knowledge *stricto sensu*. It encompasses many other components of a culture: its conception of the world, physical and metaphysical, its cognitive categories that bring knowledge and truth within reach of the human mind, the social construction and sharing of such knowledge about the world. Cultural context is a key to variation in the history of cartography. Chinese, Indian, Native American, Islamic and early European cartographies beyond the apparent similarities of their maps as graphic artifacts, reflect deeply different intellectual and visual universes.<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 9.

The very first page of Rudy Wiebe's book *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* is a map with the words "Inuit View to the South" printed across the top. Looking at this map for the first time was curious, some-

thing seemed wrong but it was difficult to discern what it was. At last you realize the map is flipped, oriented with south at the top. This has the effect of making the Northwest Territories the focal point. On this map southern Canada trails off the top of the map, much like northern Canada does on most other maps. This orientation favours the north and skews a perception and a position of power that southerners take for granted. A simple twist of the page like this raises all kinds of issues about the privileging effects of representation.

It is no revelation of course that maps as tools are powerful yet arbitrary. Those responsible for making and distributing maps, historically the dominant and ruling class, are prone to favour their own positions and even foreshadow their future plans. Mark Monmonier is a geographer and writer who points out the capriciousness of maps to "make readers aware

that maps, like speeches and paintings, are authored collections of information and also are subject to distortions arising from ignorance, greed, ideological blindness, or malice."<sup>3</sup> Territories in dispute are sometimes claimed by both nations on their maps in an act of political power. However, "not all maps simplify, subvert, collude or conceal"<sup>4</sup> writes geographer Danny Dorling who contends that "there is much more to mapping society than simply reinforcing an image of the status quo."<sup>5</sup>

Claiming territory is not just an act of political greed. Asserting connection to and ownership of land is also about defending cultural values and customs. It is true that "a plurality of cultures also implies a multiplicity of landscapes"<sup>6</sup> or at least varied representations of landscape. Maps, especially in their earliest incarnations, were less scientific fact than philosophical musing. In fact, in a discussion of mapping from Ancient Greece Christian Jacob suggests that early maps were not created out of practical or technical needs or empirical surveys. The maps were not

necessarily drawn from the ground but from information gathered from myth and poetry, oral nautical directions, and general cosmological observations.<sup>7</sup>

Initially the mapping of the Canadian prairies was no different. Although European map-makers charted the region as early as the seventeenth century, their maps depended greatly upon the sketches and oral and written descriptions of travelers and amateur mappers who were also exploring the area.<sup>8</sup> Until the nineteenth century when settlement of the area became more pronounced there was little interest in western Canada apart from those concerned with the fur trade. The area was considered an undeveloped hinterland and the representation of its terrain was based on speculation as well as on the knowledge of "*coureurs-de-bois* and other men who put very little in writing and map form."<sup>9</sup> Some maps of this time are "the result of detailed observation; others draw on imagination to incorporate information from native sources with



Fig. 10. Map of North America, by Johnathan Carver, from Warkentin & Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, 125.

geographical data.”<sup>10</sup> The maps produced by professional map-makers prior to the nineteenth century, therefore, were graphically beautiful but often inaccurate while maps drawn by those familiar with the terrain were crude and reliable. The map created by Johnathan Carver in 1778 represents western Canada as an ill-defined area of incorrectly placed lakes and rivers. By contrast, the map drawn by Cha

Chay Pay Way Ti in 1806 of a portion of waterways in northern Manitoba is graphically crude but in terms of distance charted and placement of water features is very accurate, even though the lakes are drawn as bubbles connected by lines. Some maps were pure propaganda; the expansionists and the Canadian government, eager to promote mass settlement of the prairie

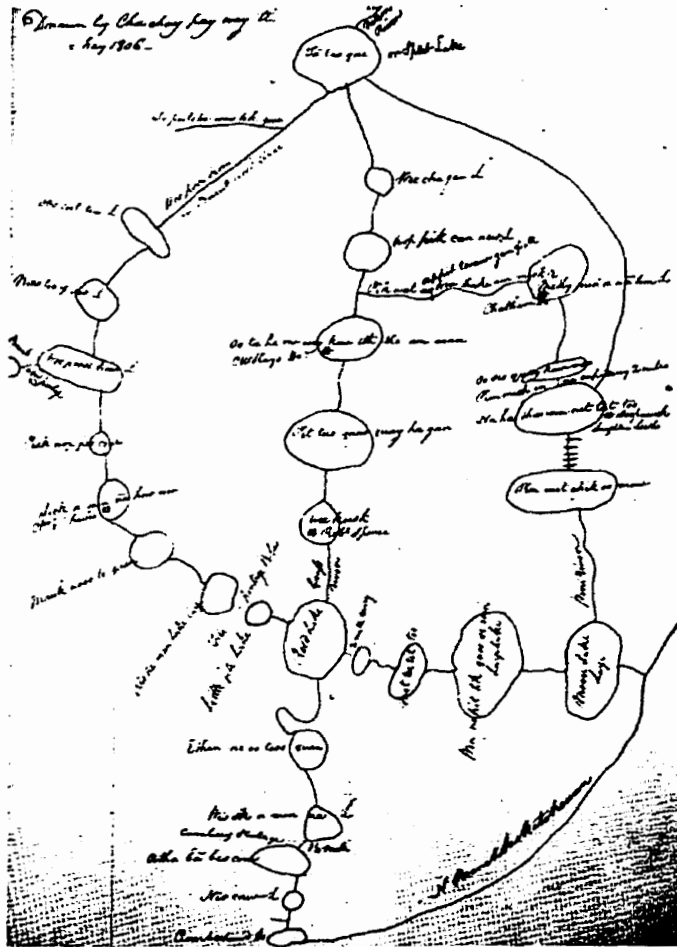


Fig. 11. Waterways map by Cha Chay Pay Way Ti, 1806, in Warkentin & Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, 143.

used pamphlets and maps to encourage immigration that sometimes

bordered on outright fraud. One particular map of the North West, for instance, seems to have been especially popular in immigration literature. This map, which first appeared in 1874, optimistically showed a Canadian Pacific railway running the breadth of the land; in contrast, it carefully differentiated between those railroads in the United States that were complete and those that were only 'projected'.<sup>11</sup>

These examples highlight three distinct but common functions of maps. The early professional map-maker was concerned with the conventions of his trade, the visual presentation of a landscape based on second-hand information available at the time. The Aboriginal guide was most concerned with the detailed knowledge of the landscape itself since navigating it was of utmost importance, probably life and death, to himself and those he led. The map he made was simply representation for others of what he already knew. "The environmental image" writes Kevin Lynch "has its original function in permitting purposeful mobility"<sup>12</sup> and the image he refers to is not necessarily that of a two-dimensional map but of the "topographic memory"<sup>13</sup> of the inhabitants of a place. The Canadian government map of the prairie region was produced specifically to present an optimistic, if rather untrue, picture of

the new land to encourage mass settlement.

Maps serve a variety of functions and exist in a variety of forms. In the cases cited above, the map represents need and desire as much as it does location. As James Corner writes:

mapping is a fantastic cultural project, creating and building the world as much as measuring and describing it . . . the function of mapping is less to mirror reality than to engender the re-shaping of the worlds in which people live.<sup>14</sup>

Encouraging people to map their own communities is a design technique that has been used by urban planners and landscape architects such as Kevin Lynch, Randolph Hester and Douglas Aberley to determine what is most important to people about the places they call home. This kind of mapping gives communities the opportunity to be directly involved in landscape planning and renewal. Canadian Geographic recently ran an article on what is becoming a popular process. The author, Adrienne Mason, writes:

in British Columbia, where this populist approach to map making is spreading faster than a rumour, communities are using the vernacular of cartography to challenge development proposals, support native land claims, alert people to sensitive bird nesting sites and migration routes, or simply highlight the character of place.<sup>15</sup>

There is another form of mapping that does not necessarily make it to the printed page. These are the habits that we repeat and the mental images that we carry that form who we are and which sometimes translate directly into physical form:

I like to say that I never travel without a map, but then none of us do; we all travel with many maps tucked away in the glove compartment of memory, some of them communal and universal, like our autonomic familiarity with local roads and seasonal constellations and the shape of continents, and some as particular as the territories we have each traipsed; as we navigate on the trip that Dante called “our life’s way”, we are all creating our private maps.<sup>16</sup>

We build our homes or our gardens based on a multitude of skills, memories, experi-

ence. This is especially evident in the prairie landscape where architectural styles and patterns of garden planting were carried with settlers and transplanted into the relatively featureless landscape.

*Maps are about memory. We are always making mental maps both geographical and emotional. Where do I have to go today, what do I have to do, and why?*

*I'm intrigued by the routes of these personal maps. Sometimes I like to imagine their spidery lines reaching out, waxing and waning. I wonder how they intersect with the route-lines of other people and how they diverge. I know they create designs that are invisible and I conjure them up, the air stacked high with patterns that we can't know or understand as a whole.*

*My car broke down recently and as a result I have become a bus rider. I've ridden the bus for years, on and off, on routes known and familiar. Now I take the bus to places I've only ever driven to. The bus routes are never the most direct; I certainly would not choose to navigate them in my car. But I have to say I am fascinated by these new maps I'm following; amazed that this system really works. Take this bus there, transfer to that one to go in an entirely new direction. My spidery lines are extending, and both crossing and running parallel with the lines of many new strangers.*

*My friend told me about growing up on a farm where his family had a few cows. He could tell by the grassless lines in the pasture where the cattle headed most frequently. Well-worn trails to the water; to the shade. But there would be subtle paths too. A favorite tree, maybe. A breezy spot. Those paths are grown in now, the farm no longer raises cattle. But my friend can still see the fact of the cattles' movement and desire; a smooth inward curve carved into the bark of a tree, a marker of where the cow rubbed her neck, her flank. Trees as maps. Air, too, if we could chart it.*

*Maps are about experience and action. Like the cattle, we most traverse the paths that carry us to places of personal and communal desire and need. Sometimes these routes are used by enough people that they are recorded on paper. Highways and roads, flight patterns. Official maps. But we maintain our subtle maps too, our own private versions of smooth, sculpted trees and grassless lines in the pasture.*



# DIVIDING THE LAND<sup>1</sup>

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The landscape is divided up in the image of its inhabitants.<sup>2</sup>

The most rapid and dramatic alteration to the Canadian prairies was the survey and division of millions of acres of land into sections in the 1870s. Since land division was a precondition to settlement, and Canada wished to settle the prairie region quickly, the government wasted no time in setting up a survey system. Once the system was approved and adopted in 1871,

land division moved along rapidly: by 1873 most of southern Manitoba had been divided into sections; by 1876 10.5 million acres had been surveyed and by 1883 the surveyed land extended as far west as the Rocky Mountains and north from the International Boundary to the North Saskatchewan River.

The survey of western Canada in the late nineteenth century has had an enormous effect on the cultural and physical landscape of the prairies. Two systems were used to divide the land for purposes of settlement: the long lot system and the sectional survey system, although the latter was by far the dominant one.

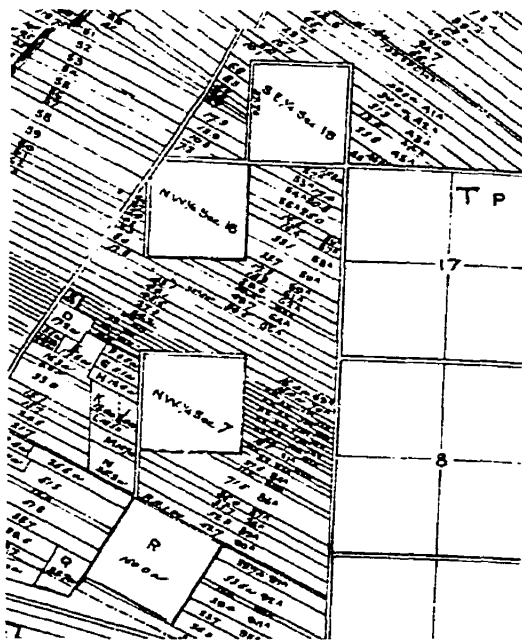


Fig. 12. Juxtaposition of river and sectional lots, from a Parish Lot Survey map pub. by C. S. Lott, 1894.

These linear patterns that were laid down upon the land over one hundred years ago are responsible for many of the visible elements in the present prairie landscape. Roads, fields, fences, woodlots, shelterbelts, farm houses and urban centres

are almost exclusively situated in relation to the geometric systems. Every effort was made to create an amenable environment for settlement; all efforts that were directed toward the homestead had an impact on the much larger picture

the homestead, of course, was just one of several legislative initiatives intended to foster settlement of the public domain. Settlement took place in a milieu. Forestry practices made wood lots, tree seedlings or cut timber available to the settler and protected the watershed which served irrigation. Coal policies sponsored an industry which provided fuel and seasonal employment. Even conservation of migratory birds assisted in meeting the ends of agriculture. The full range of land use policies — not just the homestead — contributed to the frontier experience.<sup>3</sup>

So, in addition to the physical landscape the survey system greatly influenced economic activity and settlement patterns, determining, for instance, whether settlement would be dispersed or nucleated. Settlement patterns are the basis for much cultural activity which varies significantly

between tightly populated villages and isolated farms. Some cultural groups created villages that were realized, other ideas for town planning remained in plan only. Not only do lines drawn on the land mark territory, they establish and influence human relationships.

These lines were not drawn randomly of course. The long lot system was the first to be employed but the sectional survey was the system adopted for the large scale division of the prairies as it was considered the most efficient, inexpensive, and in its standardization, the most simple to administer. A discussion of the components of each system follows.

#### THE LONG LOT SYSTEM

The long lot survey system was the first type to be employed in the Red River settlement in Manitoba. It is associated mainly with river and lakeshore settlements, which were established originally by people of Aboriginal-European ancestry, including French Metis, during the fur trade era. In North America the long lot

system was first used by French-speaking peoples in the 1630s on the north shore of the St. Lawrence Valley near Quebec City, most likely originating from settlers who came from Normandy in northwestern France. In addition to the Canadian west, the system was used in southern Louisiana, transported there by French-Canadians immigrants, and in small areas of the American mid-west such as Detroit.

The long lot system is a geometric survey that produces regular, linear shapes. The basic unit is a long and narrow lot that stretches back from a river, lake or road and are often fifteen times longer than they are wide. Known as long lots, river lots, or strip farms, their shape provided as many farmers as possible with river access and sufficient land for house, farm and wood lot. The river lot system was used to divide the land in the Red River settlement that was settled by 1870 and between 1871-1878 river lots were laid out along the Red and Assiniboine south all the way to the U.S. border and west to just beyond Portage la Prairie.

The river lot system produced a landscape dominated by straight lines oriented to the rivers, but the curving nature of the rivers caused interesting patterns to emerge:

those along the Red were oriented east-west and those on the Assiniboine north-south, but sharp bends in the rivers and the crowding of the lots in the area around the Forks produced variations in both the length and orientation of the lots.<sup>4</sup>

Since most river lots were established before the Dominion Land Survey of 1872 the areas divided in this way prevented

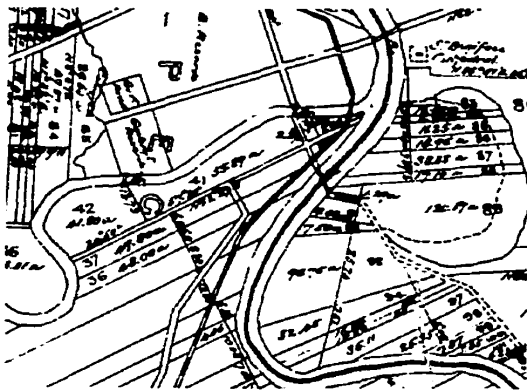


Fig. 13. River lots at the forks of the Assiniboine and Red Rivers, from Parish Lot Survey map, pub. by C. S. Lott, 1894.

establishment of a uniform and integrated system of survey. Although the actual land area covered by the long lot system is small it is a significant settlement pattern

in western Canada because it remains the basis for land division in some of the most densely settled parts of the prairies. A number of large western Canadian cities, including Winnipeg, owe their basic city plans to this system. Over 50% of Manitobans live on land laid out in this manner because the city of Winnipeg has spread out over many square miles of long lots.

#### THE SECTIONAL OR RECTANGULAR SURVEY SYSTEM

Of the two systems, this was the most significant as it covered the greatest amount of land mass in the prairie region. Essentially an American system, the sectional survey originated with the Ordinance of May 20, 1785 during the presidential office of Thomas Jefferson. This Ordinance defined the system of survey to be used to subdivide government land for settlers and became a basic formative influence on much of the American landscape. Regarding this system of land division as a democratic one, Jefferson

perceived the survey grid as a way of insuring not only orderly, but also equitable settlement "since all settlers would have to take an entire square parcel, some good farmland, some slough and some lowland — take the good, the bad, and the ugly."<sup>5</sup> After 1870 it was applied throughout western Canada in a slightly modified form. Some scholars have found a European precedent for the sectional survey in Centuriation, the Roman system of land division. It has not been proven, however, that Jefferson used this as a direct model.

The sectional survey is a regular, geometric land survey that imposes on the land a rigid, square pattern. The checkerboard pattern of squares is further subdivided into smaller squares. The basic unit is a section, a square of land one mile by one mile, six hundred and forty acres in area. In early stages of settlement land was most often purchased and sold as quarter sections of one hundred and sixty acres, an amount laid down by the Dominion Lands Act of 1872. A township consisted of a square six miles by six miles, containing

thirty-six square miles or thirty-six sections. The grid made no allowances for natural features, it was applied consistently regardless of the terrain. The government was pleased at the rapid and orderly division of their newly acquired land but there also existed a great deal of criticism toward the rigidity of the sectional survey.

#### IMPACT OF THE SECTIONAL SURVEY

The sectional survey was a major influence on the physical and cultural landscape of the prairie region. It seemed to transform the wild country into a neat and orderly 'settler-friendly' region.

After the Canadian government, established by Confederation in 1867, acquired the former fur-trade lands of Rupertsland in 1869 they must have found it economically and psychologically important to populate the area as soon as possible.

Doug Owrain writes that Canada had

acquired its great western frontier in one giant stride. The suddenness of Canadian expansion and the insistence that it be developed rapidly made it almost as if the nation wished to make up for lost time.<sup>6</sup>

Before mass settlement could take place the land had to be surveyed and its resources recorded. Unfortunately the government in Ontario was insensitive to the Aboriginal people and people of Aboriginal-European descent that were already settled there and impatient to apportion the land according to the new system. In fact, the first uprising of the Metis people in 1869 was a result of “premature attempts by Canada to survey lands which were not yet hers.”<sup>7</sup> Rees reports that these attempts resulted in “a confrontation between Louis Riel, the Metis leader, and a survey party attempting to run a base line across the river lots on the Red River near Winnipeg.”<sup>8</sup> The river lots were culturally important to the Metis as they represented their more spontaneous way of allocating and claiming territory. The two systems collided both physically and ideologically, as is clear even in the graphic representation used on maps:

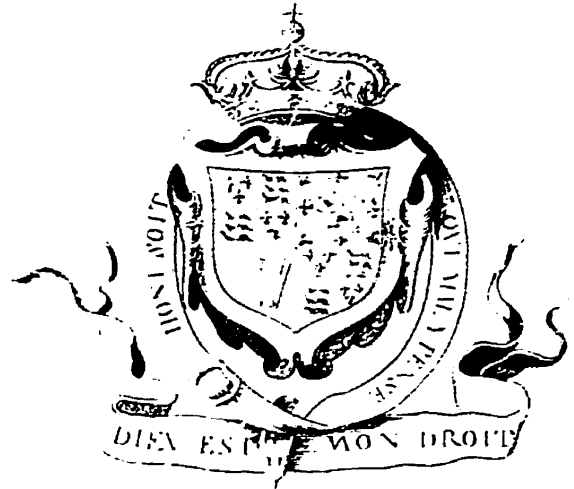


Fig. 14. Coat of Arms from Hessel Cerritz's map of 1612 of the Hudson Bay area, from Warkentin & Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, 8.



Fig. 15. Indian Chief's mark on 1817 map of Red River Settlement, from Warkentin & Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba*, 163.

For settlers, the sectional survey system presented a mixed blessing. On one hand farming families owned a continuous plot of land and could live and work rather autonomously which was the dream of the Canadian frontier myth. But there were many criticisms of the sectional survey; for one, the widespread scattering of farms

made the provision of services and facilities difficult and expensive. The natural character of the land was totally ignored — the egalitarianism that Jefferson delighted in was ecologically destructive as the structure of the grid system “chops up ecological areas, each portion to be dealt with as determined by independent landowner.”<sup>9</sup> It also meant that the “good, the bad and the ugly” were not equally distributed, with some farmers ending up with little or no water supply, or the opposite: a marsh land that needed extensive draining and reformation to become viable as cropland. In the Saskatchewan grasslands, for instance, the Dominion Lands Act of 1908

gave form to prairie settlement enabling farmers of the southwest to replace the softly-flowing landscape of untrammelled rangeland vistas with a new landscape marked by square quarter section farmsteads, grid roads that owed little to geography, equally spaced townsites along straight railway rights-of-way, unswerving fence lines, rectangular vegetable gardens, and

linear shelterbelts. It was a new landscape reflecting different economic imperatives.<sup>10</sup>

Perhaps the most serious social consequence of the system was the utter isolation created by the wide scattering of homes over vast distances; most were at least one half mile from another neighbour. To alleviate this some homesteaders agreed to build their homes on the interior corners of their quarter sections, others on the adjacent corners on those sections that faced roads. In this way they attempted to create a sense of community in an otherwise vast and unoccupied land. But attempts to counter the isolation of individual homesteads and gather groups together in closer living arrangements were difficult to achieve and often not successful.

The Dominion Lands Act established in 1872 in Manitoba contained a number of clauses meant to deter speculation and so were directed at the single family homestead. There was a “hamlet clause” that

groups could apply for that provided exemption from a residency aspect of the Act and consequently allowed for the formation of villages.<sup>11</sup> The Mennonites had come to Manitoba as groups and had arranged for blocks of land for their settlements in the south-eastern and south-western regions of the province, known as the East and the West Reserves. As an immigrant group the Mennonites were extremely well-organized and politically astute. They had applied for and received the residency exemption and did manage to establish villages that “followed the traditional North German Plain form of the *strassendorfer*, a form familiar to them from the northern Netherlands, the Vistula delta, and the Ukraine, all areas of earlier

settlement by Mennonites.”<sup>12</sup> However,

even the Mennonites, although they were to be permitted to fulfil their homestead obligations while residing off the homestead in a village, had difficulty maintaining their villages and open field system of agriculture because the government insisted that title to a homestead be held by an individual, not by a group.<sup>13</sup>

Many of these villages disappeared early in the twentieth century, although a “considerable number of them survive in virtually intact in the West Reserve, where soils are better and agriculture more secure.”<sup>14</sup> The Mennonites’ attempt to set up farm villages that recreated the farming life they had left were not entirely successful. But, in spite of the geometric grid imposed by the sectional survey system, groups and individuals did manage to imprint their own expressions on the land:

in the first decades of European settlement, the melange of peoples who settled Manitoba brought to the new land many elements of their material culture, although the rigidity of the sectional survey

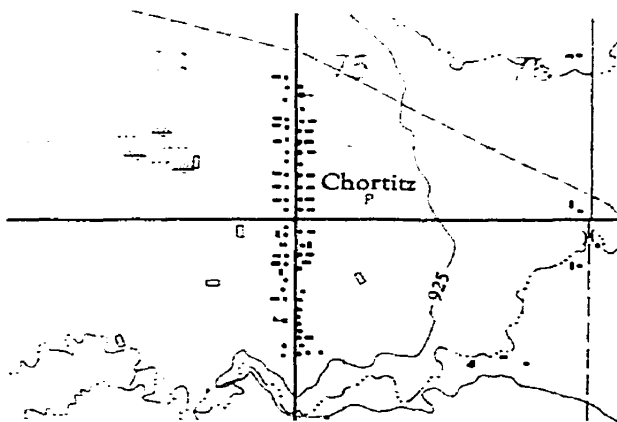


Fig. 16. Map depicting a *strassendorfer*, in A. Noble, *To Build in a New Land*, p. 269.



precluded the widespread transference of settlement patterns . . . the extent of cultural transfer varied between and within groups. The remoter and agriculturally poorer areas were less exposed to the forces of assimilation and modernity, hence the cultural landscapes of those who settled such areas retained a distinctive appearance longer than those in more prosperous areas.<sup>15</sup>

The physical evidence of settlement, such as that of the Mennonite *strassendorfer* or the unique house-barn, may be disappearing or already gone but it must be remembered that this is only one aspect of the cultural landscape. Settlers and their descendants have left much more subtle imprints on the land evidenced by gardening styles or the layout of individual yards. Subtler yet are connections to the land that are not made obvious by a single physical

example but show up in ways of thinking, speaking, writing. These physical and cultural landscapes are not only in rural areas; they are carried on in urban centres as well. The land division of the late nineteenth century imposed a grid that in spite of its uniformity and rigidity was quietly subverted as people went about creating their homes the in the best way they knew. The influence of land division and the earlier creations of home resonates as we change and adapt to current systems. Home is not a static thing but a continuously evolving process.

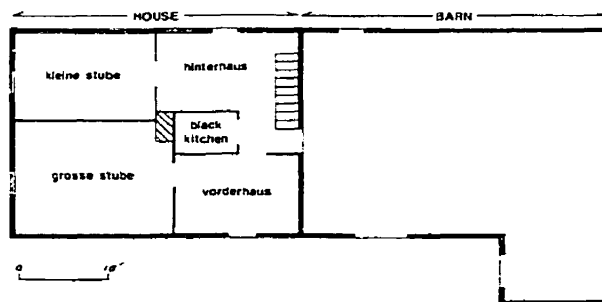
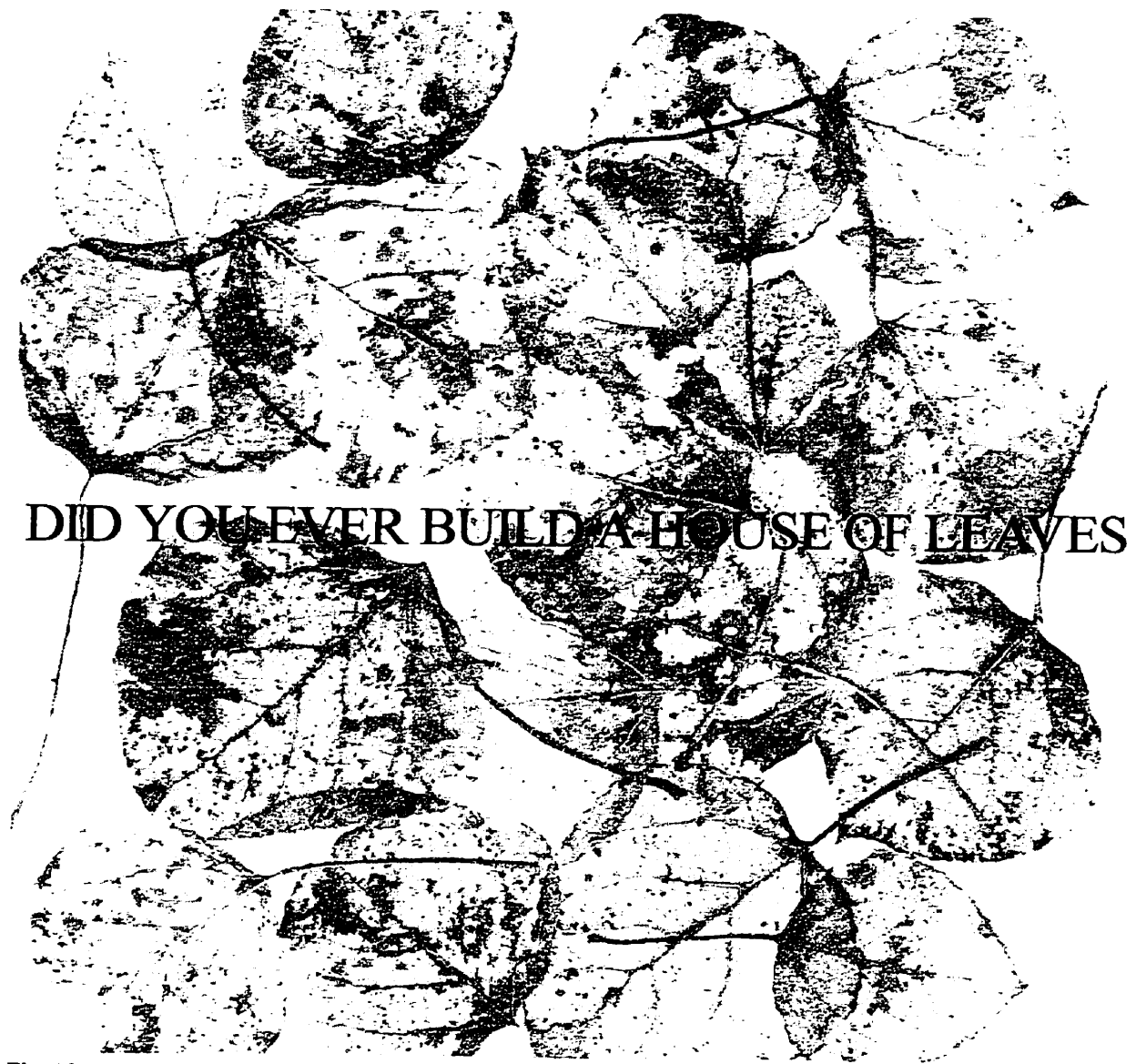


Fig. 17. Plan of a Mennonite house-barn, in A. Noble, *To Build in a New Land*, p. 277.



DID YOU EVER BUILD A HOUSE OF LEAVES

Fig. 18.

Did you ever build a house of leaves?

When we were kids we played this game, primarily in the fall I suppose, where we lined up fallen leaves to draw out the footprint of a house. We'd divide the house further into appropriate rooms, leaving openings for doorways. The house had no upright walls of course, but the divisions were made clear. The leaf house existed on the ground as a two-dimensional plan drawing where we played out its activities in our three-dimensional forms, moving through rooms, being something more than our ten-year old selves.

As quickly as the rooms were formed so too were our roles. We became a family inside that house, acting out the various attributes of what we knew to be family or what we guessed from what went on around us: "I'll be the daddy, you're the mommy". Dolls or what lay at hand became stand-ins for the kids or the family pet.

Once I recall playing this game with a little friend who announced "okay, I'm the daddy and I am coming home from work now and I'm drunk." That raised an eyebrow at the time but left me with the impression that far more was going on than I could have understood at the time.

What is clear to me now is that the leaf walls never remained innocuous or unbiased lines. They instantly became meaningful boundaries, separating what went on in the outside world very clearly from what occurred inside. These separations brought with them emotions, memories, ways of being in the world. They created roles and distinct spheres of activity: you can't "come home" unless you have created a threshold that marks it as such, separated *here* from *there*.

## SECTION III

# TRANSFORMATION

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### INTRODUCTION

Place is fundamental to the establishment of personal and group identities and the formation of biographies. Place is both 'internal' and 'external' to the human subject, a personally embedded centre of meanings and a physical locus for action.<sup>1</sup>

The transformation of large areas of land into communities and private yards asserts identity that is expressed in the landscape. In this section an example of regional or community identity is explored through *Public Space: Monuments, Place and Identity - Cairns, Memorials, Town Mascots*. The strength and significance of individual expression is explored in *Private Space: The Yard and the Garden*.

It was a relief to single out the freestanding, lonely farm house in the countryside. It was only when we could divide and subdivide it into a million small private spaces, each clearly bounded and protected by fences and hedges and rows of trees, that the monolithic landscape acquired a human scale.<sup>2</sup>

## PLANNING FARMSTEAD SHELTERBELTS

Prepared by

FOREST NURSERY STATION, INDIAN HEAD, SASK.

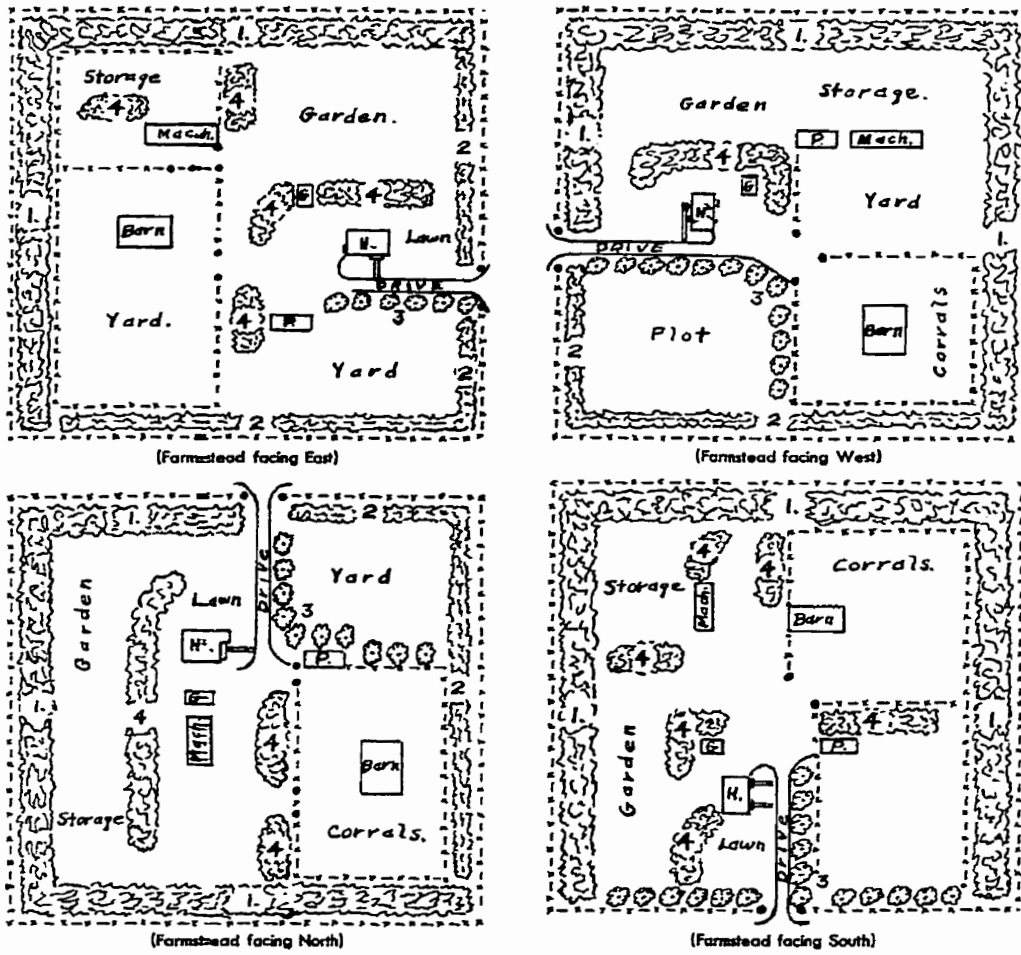


Fig. 19.

**SERVICE** WITH A **SMILE**



*Welcome to*  
**GLADSTONE**  
**MANITOBA - CANADA**

Fig. 20. Tourism flyer from Gladstone, Manitoba.

# PUBLIC SPACE

## MONUMENTS, PLACE AND IDENTITY

### CAIRNS, MEMORIALS, TOWN MASCOTS

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Apart from aspen stands dotted across the land and moisture-seeking trees such as willow that proliferate on the banks of rivers, most of the vertical elements on the prairies are of our own making. Shelterbelt plantings follow the grid-lines of the survey system and announce the presence of farmsteads and yards, a private world of homes, machinery, personal monuments. Of course, private and public space are constantly overlapping; one is not possible without the other. Often the most visible elements in the prairie landscape are those of infrastructure — power and telephone

lines, for example — that tower above the geometry of cropland.

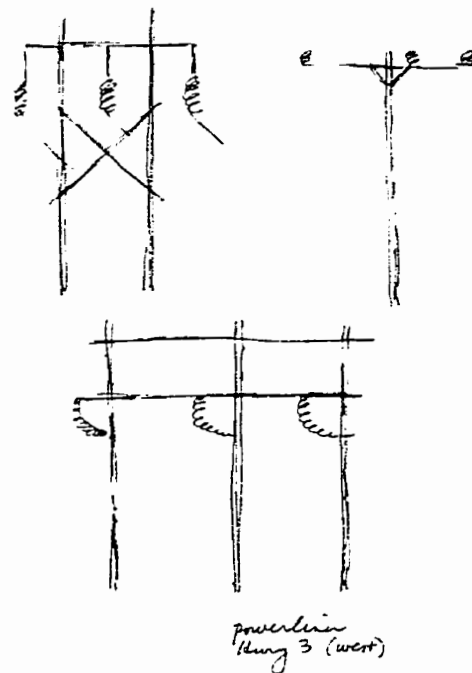


Fig. 21.



As good public servants these structures are more or less consistent in appearance and placed at regular intervals; they are ignorant of natural or private boundaries and serve the needs of an entire community. They are also private in that their very existence depends on the day-to-day activities of individuals:

Infrastructure, the great constructed pattern of grids, channels, pipes and networks that course across the land, sets the underlying circumstances of our daily lives.<sup>1</sup>

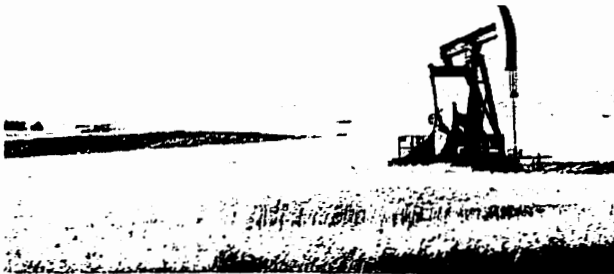


Fig. 22. Postcard, "Dual Harvest, Oil and grain - near Estevan, Saskatchewan, The Energy City," photo John Empey.



Fig. 23.

Other such elements have become synonymous with the image of the prairie: rail lines, oil rigs, and particularly the grain elevator.

There is, however, another kind of vertical element in the prairie landscape that does not serve a practical purpose *per se*, in that it does not store grain, send electricity or retrieve crude oil. The memorial, or cairn, or town mascot, rather, serve various purposes related to identity: respect for the past, hope for the future and community pride. To outsiders these markers, especially the giant mascots that sit at the entrance to many towns, may seem silly or trite. Mascots tend to be cartoon-like and non-threatening; their acceptability to a wide audience is not only their appeal but their purpose.

Writing of North American town welcoming signs (a close relative of the town mascot) geographer Wilbur Zelinsky notes:

After reading scores of welcoming signs I am also struck by how eloquently

they express a seemingly permanent trait of our national character: our remarkable extroversion and gregariousness. I am reminded of a wildly friendly puppy yelping with joy, madly wagging its tail, and trying to jump up and launder my face.<sup>2</sup>

But the lightheartedness belies a more serious function of the mascot: they are often a symbol of a town's invention, or reinvention of itself, representing in a sense the town's future hopes in an era where the population and economic base of most small towns is declining. Cairns and memorials, on the other hand, show a more serious approach in celebrating the past and marking spots of historical significance by their more conservative markers.

The need to 'mark the spot' is an ancient and universal one. As Kevin Lynch notes "once a history, a sign or a meaning attaches to an object, its value as a landmark rises."<sup>3</sup> Anyone who has visited Europe knows the significance placed upon the great numbers of monuments that commemorate the history of the place.

Ancient cities are sometimes the locus of



Fig. 24. Boboli Gardens, Florence, 1998.

many layers of historically important events. By contrast the Canadian prairies are much younger. Habitation is not new; Aboriginal people have lived here for many thousands of years, and celebration of sacred and meaningful sites is an integral part of their culture. But the European tradition of building permanent structures and marking spots with large and immovable objects is a relatively new concept by comparison. Memorials are conservative in design, usually realistic renderings of a

person responsible for some achievement. The memorial is intended to be an indisputable icon but the question of whose history is being celebrated can become immensely controversial. Lucy Lippard writes:

American Indian history, so integrally entangled with place, has been ill-served by the ubiquitous brave-on-a-horse monuments . . . Gutzon Borglum's Mount Rushmore defiles rather than commemorates the sacred Paha Sapa, or Black Hills, by transforming them into a monument to American colonialism . . . for many Native American nations, the land itself provides the monuments, marked by innumerable sacred sites where mythical and historical events took place, known only to those who care.<sup>4</sup>

Representation is a tricky thing. There exists debate about whose history is being served but there is also a language of representation that can become controversial:

Because public art addresses itself to a community, its content and symbolism ought to be easily understood by most members of that community. Artists have historically

depended upon their audience's familiarity with a visual lexicon of forms that functioned as signs, images that translated into specific meanings — the square-jawed general on the horse meant "hero", the classical figure, blindfolded and holding scales meant "justice". As communities change, however, this shared language changes as well and may even become extinct.<sup>5</sup>

The language of representation is not necessarily divided along cultural lines either. A good example of this is the controversy that surrounded the memorial to Louis Riel that sat for many years behind the Legislative grounds, on the bank of the Red River in Winnipeg. The memorial is unconventional in that it is not the man-on-a-horse variety of sculpture. It is an abstracted representation of Riel; elongated and twisted, it resembles in some ways a gnarled tree leaning forward from the ground. Some thought the sculpture beautiful and saw in its writhing shape the symbol of a great man who struggled, who endured pain, and in its very unconventionality a powerful symbol of the oppressed.

Others, such as the Manitoba Metis Federation who lobbied for its removal, saw the sculpture as deformed and ugly. They believe the sculpture depicts Riel as a crazy man and feel this is a great insult to the Metis leader known as the Father of Manitoba. The MMF wanted a more conventional representation of Riel, a more “statesman-like” treatment that would be the norm for any European leader or hero. Both Metis and non-Metis people hold disparate views about the sculpture, however, something Catherine Howett suggests is not uncommon in this kind of debate:

A public monument of any kind, because of what it stands for, may become the target of criticism by factions either within or outside the society that produced it — the word *iconoclast* has its roots in disputes over public art.<sup>6</sup>

In addition to debate over the sculpture, there is conflict over the political symbol of Riel as noted by historian John Herd Thompson: “during the 1960s, Prairie regionalist ideology appropriated Louis Riel from the Metis and French Canadians

and transformed him into a powerful symbol of regional, rather than ethnic protest.”<sup>7</sup> It is not surprising, therefore, that confusion over the depiction of Riel exists since what he stands for has resonance for a variety of people and reasons.

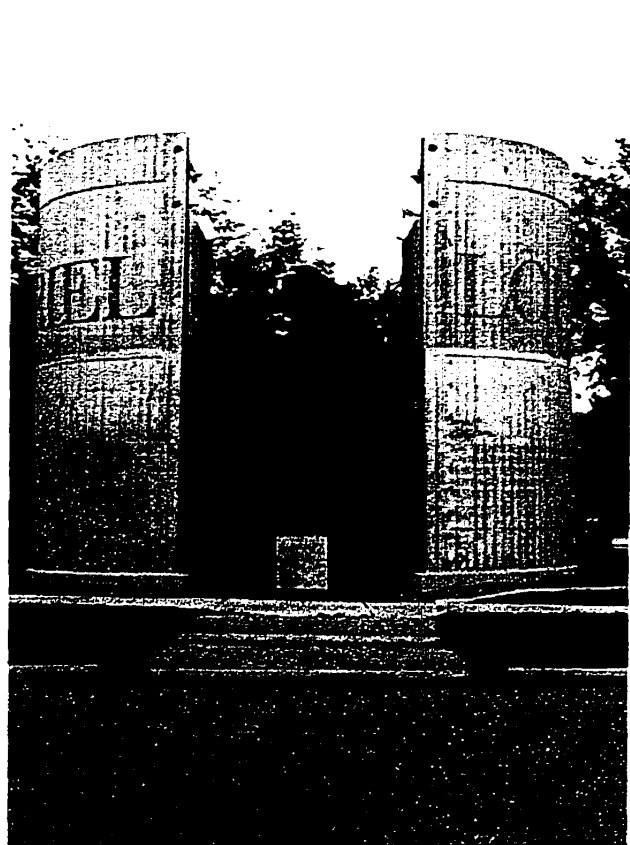


Fig. 25.

The abstracted sculpture, created by architect Etienne Gaboury and sculptor Marclen Lemay for Manitoba’s centennial celebrations in 1970, was removed from the grounds of the Legislature in 1995. At the



Fig. 26.

request of the students' association, the sculpture was relocated to the grounds of the St. Boniface College where Riel was once a student. A more "stateman-like" sculpture now sits in its place behind the Legislature. Reaction to Maya Lin's now famous Vietnam Veterans' Memorial in Washington was also mixed. Of Lin's memorial Lippard writes that

it overwhelms the conventional bronzes nearby — Frederick Hart's heroic soldiers and Glenna Goodacre's noble nurses — demanded by

conservatives who were outraged by the great black wall and its youthful Asian designer. Most literal representations are melodramatic and banal to an extreme, but abstracted monuments can seem to deny experience. Monumental architecture and sculpture rarely hold their own against space or time. The feeling of reverence sought by monument makers is not easy to come by in our irreverent society.<sup>8</sup>

Cairns are much more subtle monuments. A Gaelic word, cairn refers to a heap of stones set up as a landmark or monument. In the prairie landscape a cairn is sometimes a heap of stones, usually mortared together in an obelisk shape, bearing a plaque that describes its purpose or just a sign. Unlike memorials which usually commemorate a person or event of historical significance on a national or regional scale, cairns are much more localized marking the spot, say, of the first homestead in the area. They exist within provincial and national parks but are sometimes found standing quite alone in a field. There doesn't seem to be much controversy about

cairns. They are quiet markers with a consistent look.

Town mascots are quite a different kind of creature. Standing at the entrance to many prairie towns they present mixed messages about a town's identity; perhaps they are symbols in a sense of an identity crisis. Some like Sara the Camel make roundabout reference to natural landforms, in this case the Carberry 'desert' which is near the town of Glenboro, Manitoba where the statue stands.

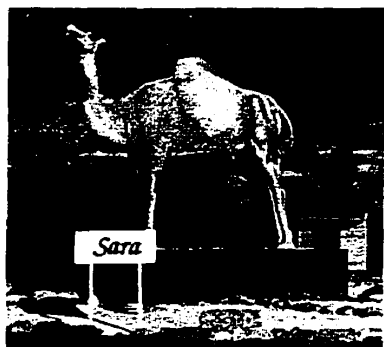


Fig. 27. Detail of tourism brochure from Glenboro, Manitoba.

Others, like the twenty-two foot high Tommy the Turtle at Boissevain, Manitoba have little to do with the prairie town itself. In this case, "Tommy" references the turtle races the town created for the purpose of tourism. The local chamber of

commerce is often the economic force behind such mascots and the tourist attraction they represent, always looking for new ways to draw visitors and their dollars. Such marketing of the town seems a strange concept since, as Mira Engler writes, "before mid-century, districts or neighbourhoods, with a distinct unified character — retail or ethnic — were not created as a marketing strategy, but rather, evolved unconsciously."<sup>9</sup> Presently, Engler suggests:

Theming, based on consumer-society marketing concepts, continues to transform communities into comm-odities . . . without a theme for your town, claim the proponents, you have nothing that pulls the community together, no identity, certainly no guide to future development, leaving alone the fact that you simply cannot market yourself.<sup>10</sup>

The town of Drumheller, Alberta is currently in the middle of such a scheme. The area is rich in dinosaur remains and the Tyrell Museum is a major centre for the study, dissemination and display of dinosaur materials. Dinosaurs are also a

favorite in the public's imagination and as a result the museum is a popular destination for scholars and tourists alike. Unfortunately, the museum is just outside the town of Drumheller and the town of eight thousand is often overlooked by visitors to the museum. The chamber of commerce wanted to find a way for people to stop, and to drop some cash at the same time. They are counting on achieving this by building the world's largest dinosaur and charging people \$2 to walk up inside the twenty-five metre structure to gaze out upon the town through the creature's mouth, passing by gift shops on the way up and down. The president of the chamber of commerce anticipates the attraction will generate \$50,000 per year in revenue for the town. Funding for the dinosaur (which is a Tyrannosaurus Rex, but five-times larger than a real one would have been according to a museum official) came from federal government millennium funding (\$250,000) and provincial funding (\$125,000). The remaining \$625,000 needed for the one million dollar project is expected to come from town fundraising.<sup>11</sup>

The town feels, as it watches tourists pass them by, that it must reinvent itself to remain economically viable.

The story of Drumheller is not an uncommon one. Prairie towns that were once centres of community life and commerce for the farms that surrounded them are steadily losing ground in population and economic opportunity. The family farm has actually been on the decline for a very long time, a slow death that affects everything around it. Consolidation and centralization are more economically efficient. The grain elevators that once actually stored grain in every town along the railway are now being torn down or desperately retained, converted to museums or other unrelated community facilities. In their place are superstructures located at much longer intervals, making the transportation of grain more efficient. Wal-Mart builds on the edge of small towns and the local hardware store flounders and eventually closes. It is no wonder that towns cling desperately to an identity, or invent a new one.

Sometimes the history of a town is so layered that a clear identity is difficult to mine. The town of Dauphin, for example, is located in the Parkland region of western Manitoba, an area whose population has been consistently declining over the last number of years from over 60,000 people to under 40,000. Dauphin is known for its strong Ukrainian heritage; the town is dotted with lovely architecturally significant churches and every summer the town plays host to the Ukrainian National Festival. The railway historically played an integral role in the town of Dauphin - the railway station was a "first class" station in Manitoba, pointing to the town's importance on a regional scale. The rail line originally determined the orientation and street layout in the town; now the station stands empty and the rail is seen as a divisive line that cuts symbolically and physically through the town.

Dauphin, like lots of other prairie towns, is trying to find a niche for itself by expanding its arts and entertainment facilities, by



Fig. 28. Postcard of Dauphin CNR Station; artist Earl Graham.

considering the redevelopment of the railway station. But its mascot, a giant beaver, represents none of these things and is a curious choice. This layering and subsequent confusion of identity is not uncommon but neither is the very real desire to create identity in a concrete way:

For some towns, developing a theme requires amplifying an existing rudimentary theme. For others, it requires reincarnating a past entity, physical or cultural; and for towns with neither existing or past resources, developing an image entails the imposition of a foreign reality. For all towns, promoting a theme involves a desire to make the imaginary real, to embody an image visually and physically in the landscape.<sup>12</sup>





Fig. 29. The back of this postcard from Dauphin reads: "*Amisk* (Cree Indian for Beaver). A historic link between the pioneer days of the Dauphin Valley and the years spanned since, is symbolized by this 16 foot statue created 1967 Centennial Year." Photograph by R. Tubbs-Avalon.

[I wonder, what does a giant beaver wearing a football jersey have to do with historic links to Dauphin Valley? And why does he have a Cree name?]

## PRIVATE SPACE

# THE YARD AND THE GARDEN

---

The notion of place in which one owns and cares for a plot of land still exerts enormous influence on contemporary Americans. The extent and condition of our property, and our choice of style in dwelling create a powerful emblem of identity and status.<sup>1</sup>

The small private garden remains true to its instinctive, unchanged purpose of expressing, protecting and consoling.<sup>2</sup>



Fig. 30.

∞∞∞

Visiting Toronto a few years ago I stayed with a friend who lives in that city's "Little Italy" district. The yards in this part of Toronto are rich with vegetables, flowers and small outbuildings, all crammed into a small plot of land surrounding a modest-sized house. Across the street from my friend's house a five-foot fence barely contained massive sunflowers and a peek over the fence revealed a kitchen garden that could rival a much larger farm garden in sheer variety and planting efficiency. From my friend's kitchen window I could look out on the yard of her neighbour to the west which had, in addition to vegetable and flower gardens, a grape arbour, a large shed of some kind, fruit trees and a smoke house. A smoke house? In a yard within minutes walking district of Bay Street? When I mentioned this to my friend she related a story of how one Saturday morning she was awakened by a non-human cry from this yard where her neighbours were slaughtering a pig. She said she kept an eye on the activities throughout the day as women brought out food and whiskey to the men as they prepared and smoked the meat. It sounded like a scene from a village in pre-twentieth century Europe and most likely that was its origin.

∞∞∞

The private yard is more than a tangle of gardens and sheds; it is also a potent representation of self. In addition to producing food and practising self-sufficiency the Toronto urban farmers are recalling a way of living that most likely has great resonance for them culturally, emotionally and spiritually. Private yards and gardens allow us to assert our identity in another degree beyond that of community. Like the home it surrounds the yard is a locus of personal meaning, a “repository of cherished memories.”<sup>3</sup> Regardless of the size, yards and gardens often become a place where what we have learned to care about takes physical shape.

The rural prairie yard is unfettered by the concern for space faced by gardeners in Toronto. In fact the very notion of space is regarded profoundly differently. In an excerpt from his long poem *Seed Catalogue*, Robert Kroetsch characterizes a common notion of space in the prairie farmstead:

My mother was marking the first row  
with a piece of binder twine, stretched  
between two pegs

The hired man laughed: just  
about planted the little bugger.  
Cover him up and see what grows

My father didn't laugh. He was puzzled  
by any garden that was smaller than a  
quarter section of wheat and  
summerfallow.<sup>4</sup>

(Robert Kroetsch, excerpt from *Seed Catalogue*)

This was very much my own experience growing up on a small farm just outside the city of Winnipeg. My father did not have a quarter section, rather a piece of a river lot long ago divided up by private land and municipal roads. But the division of space and of labour within that space was clear. My mother planted and tended the vegetable garden; us kids helped by dropping seeds into furrows and hauling water by pails from the ditch or from the water barrels that were parked under downspouts on the house and the many sheds on our property. Except for tilling the earth in the fall and spring, my father did not help in the vegetable garden although he was insistent that my mother plant one every year. I think, like the

character in Kroetsch's poem, my father was unsure what to make of land that, once planted, need not be traversed in a large farm machine.

From what I have seen of prairie farm yards there seems to be two types: one, like my father's, is a glorious clutter of machinery and many small weathered sheds; the



Fig. 31.

Our yard had clear divisions as well. The grassy lawn immediately surrounding our house was tended to by my mother and was always quite neat and tidy; from the edge of this lawn outward was my father's domain that consisted of leaning, weathered sheds and a seeming jumble of farm machinery where the well-oiled and operational sat side-by-side with the rusting and ruined.

other (the one my mother always envied) is neat as a pin, with a trim house and yard, and a few large barn-like buildings that looked as though they are repainted every year, usually red.

One would think that at issue here was pride of ownership (i.e. that my father did not have any) but I would argue vehemently that this was not the case. On the contrary, my father's yard was his working

space, his studio if you will, where everything suited him and was at hand when needed. He took his yard very seriously and the fact that he did not throw anything away was *because* he cared, not because he didn't. Cultural geographer Peter Johnson refers to this kind of yard as "junk treatment" or the "junk landscape" and while he points out that derelict vehicles and other untidiness may be linked to carelessness especially among renters as opposed to owners of land, he more correctly goes on to suggest that:

the components of the junk landscape may not be viewed by the occupant as junk at all . . . the rusting metal and rotting wood in the yard have endowed meaning and significance. They form the yardscape memorabilia of past events and experiences. For all sorts of idiosyncratic reasons the bits and pieces many have intrinsic qualities that are considered interesting or unusual, and in pack rat fashion are saved rather than discarded. Other items are seen to have utilitarian purpose and worth. Apparently abandoned cars and trucks are kept for spare parts. Mental maps of yards can be precise and in the apparent chaos the exact

location of each item is known. The landscape is a form of self-expression and a statement of identity. It reflects the theme of expressionism that runs through all landscape treatments.<sup>5</sup>

I have been using the term 'yard' to describe the plot of land that surrounds a residence, regardless of the size. A 'garden', in my definition, is where flowers and/or vegetables are grown and is usually contained within a yard. Cultural landscape historian Paul Groth discusses the etymology of these terms in an essay called "Lot, Yard and Garden: American Distinctions" and suggests that there is a hierarchy among the terms:

when we call something a yard, it generally implies more value than something called a lot. In turn, we often treasure something called a garden . . . *where* we use the terms *lot*, *yard*, or *garden* suggests deep-seated cultural meanings.<sup>6</sup>

Groth explains where the words may have originated and notes that the meanings attached to the various terms are multiple and differ between countries, even those as

close in proximity as Canada and the US.<sup>7</sup> My experience is that the words don't have hard and fast definitions, that their meanings may as be as idiosyncratic as the treatments they describe.

I think my definition of yard and garden comes from my own eastern European agrarian upbringing, and that of my parents. Even my mother's parents who lived in the north end of the city had a large vegetable and flower garden that took up most of their small yard, and had another large plot on an empty lot across the street. These gardens were never considered a luxury or an indulgence; they seemed to me a serious and utilitarian part of a working class life. Not that they weren't lovingly cared for and enjoyable places. The vegetable garden took precedence in terms of space allotment, but my grandmother always grew fragrant sweetpeas along the fence and funny little snapdragons whose petals we manipulated to mouth words like wooden puppets. The raspberry bush and rhubarb patches were prominent as well. Perennial beds, cultivated into showy

masses as I now see them, were unknown to me then except perhaps for old fashioned peonies and tiger lilies and hollyhocks.

My relationship to gardening probably would have been very different if my family had not made it such an important part of their lives. I know too that my ethnic background has had an influence on the type of gardening I practice as well. Although I like the showy perennial yards now so popular (and am cultivating some myself) I have to say I *understand* the working yards with their mixture of vegetables and flowers and fruit trees. This kind of cultural diversity is exactly what the garden and yard are capable of preserving. When I timidly began to plant my first adult garden years ago I realized how much I already knew from helping my mother and grandmother, as though I had learned how to plant through some kind of gardening osmosis and that as such I was part of a continuum. As Lucy Lippard writes that as "mediators between nature

and culture, gardens are, paradoxically, communal places that encourage solitude and self-reliance.”<sup>8</sup>

Gardening has become a very popular pursuit of late. The media tells us that it is because we have more leisure time and more money to indulge our hobbies. Whatever the reason, its popularity is evident. Garden centres have become larger and more sophisticated, books on the subject are proliferating. Organic gardening “once considered the purview of aging hippies and earnest enviros, has gone mainstream.”<sup>9</sup> Locally in the prairie environment gardening with indigenous plant materials is more acceptable and accessible and more people are experimenting with ecologically-responsible methods such as xeriscaping. The one place where the home yard and garden is still lacking in respectability is in the design studio.

I have found it a strange thing that as a student of landscape architecture I have been encouraged and taught to appreciate, as well as look critically, at the great

gardens of the world — the grand Renaissance-era Boboli Gardens of Florence, the contemplative Japanese stone garden at Ryoan-Ji in Kyoto — but the study and design of small residential and vernacular gardens has been largely ignored in the interest of larger urban design projects.

Not one design studio was devoted to this subject in my years of study, although I did participate in an enjoyable and informative “home design” workshop held informally over a weekend. I find this even more surprising in a discipline where the faculty and many of the students have wonderfully inventive gardens that they care for with enthusiasm that I believe comes only partly from their design backgrounds. The private yard and garden seem to be lacking in academic status and yet they are they are a very real microcosm of the larger cultural landscape. Landscape architect Margie Ruddick writes of this dilemma in an essay about her neighbour Tom’s non-designed, working-class yard that includes “a big blank lawn cut from the grasses; trees jammed up against the house; a basketball hoop; [a] vegetable garden”<sup>10</sup> :



in the case of many of those landscapes that we studied and held up as monuments of design, it is the objects of everyday life that begin to unravel the illusion of integrity . . . in practice, it is relatively easy to create a landscape that, sealed off from the visual noise of people and their things, seems beautiful, arresting, of a piece. The training of most landscape architects in America begins with the assumption that there's no one home — the work of design begins with the plan, with a few supporting sections or perspectives into which ghostly figures are inserted . . . it is more difficult, or rather goes against a traditional formalist training in a more disquieting way, to create a landscape that is accepting of the commonplace, and more accepting of more ideas or facts that can fit within an overall, unified, formal gesture. Tom's design by accretion . . . took the opposite approach to the professional's overall strategy.<sup>11</sup>

At the risk of sounding naive, I believe that gardens are for people, and always have been. Ruddick says that to appreciate her neighbour's garden "it is essential to understand what it looks like with people in it; it is necessary to see Tom, his family,

and his friends in it . . . without them, it is an array of unlike spaces, materials and objects. With them, it is a gathering space; a series of gardens; a recreation place."<sup>12</sup> Even the grand and historically important gardens were designed with people in mind. A major purpose of the Boboli Gardens was for family and public events<sup>13</sup> and the Japanese Zen garden became a place to practice meditation, for "lay persons to achieve enlightenment without leaving home."<sup>14</sup> Personally my greatest enjoyment visiting Hadrian's Villa at



Fig. 32.



Fig. 33.

Tivoli was imagining the emperor alone contemplating life in the Maritime Theatre, where its drawbridge guarantees privacy or entertaining large numbers of guests at parties around the Canopus. Being in these spaces makes it clear that they were designed with these distinct purposes in mind.

Almost fifty years ago J.B. Jackson worried that the enclosed yard, especially that of the farmstead, was on the decline, and that “the desire to identify ourselves with the place we live is no longer strong.”<sup>15</sup> It is true that the farmyard itself is disappearing as small-scale farming becomes less and less a viable occupation. But the interest in gardening has increased dramatically over the last few years and it seems that people are still very much engaged with the place where they live. Whether the garden is a working one like the ones I remember from my grandparents’ or a showy one with all the latest

gadgets or a farm yard full of possibility contained in junk, it is still a strong representation of identity and connection with one’s environment and history.

Jackson worried about the demise of the private yard because he knew its cultural importance and its influence:

even the poorest among them, even those which are meager and lonely and without grace, have the power to remind us of a rich common heritage. Each is a part of us, evidence of a vision of the world we have all shared.<sup>16</sup>

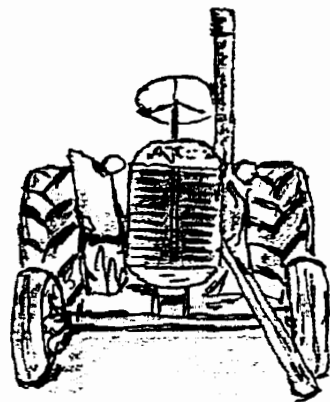
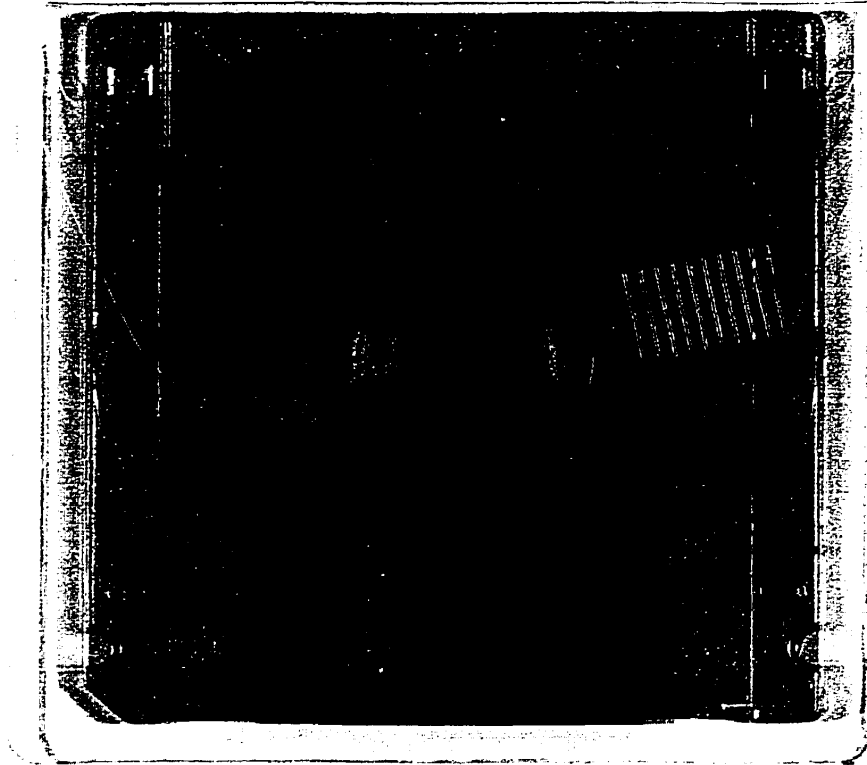


Fig. 34.



Fig. 35.

# yard



This disk contains a web site designed for Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.0 and Netscape Communicator 4.76. The *Panorama* page holds a QuickTimeVR movie created with QuickTime 4.0. The home page is named *index.htm*. If double-clicking on the file fails to open it, then open *index.htm* via a browser's *File->Open* menu command or drag-and-drop the *index.htm* icon into an open browser's window.

With the exception of some text, referenced on the site's *References* page, Patricia Wasney created all the disk's content with technical assistance from Richard Dyck .

## have a look

in your yard today dad the first time since the snow retreated  
i expected you to emerge just like your baler or the greening  
grass and you did in a way your absence a huge presence  
but your figure green patched trousers hand-made jean  
jacket did not step out of the open granary door did not lope  
forward to kiss me ask about the car you caught me off-  
guard not being there



Fig. 36.

## EPILOGUE

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All landscapes are to some degree a human construction. Our very presence within a landscape begins a process of change according to needs and desires. Cultural traditions combine with natural features to form new identities of place. The Canadian prairie has been particularly subject to changing perspectives and identities. Its geographical remoteness, harsh climate, and unconventional beauty have made it a

mythical place and its vastness and emptiness a locus of possibility of new beginnings. In its extremes the prairie experience is a paradoxical one and impressions of it are continuously evolving as R. Douglas Francis has noted:

Throughout its history, the Canadian West has evoked strong images in the minds of those who visited, settled in, or sometimes simply wrote about,

the region . . . people saw in the West what they wanted, or were conditioned by their cultural milieu, to see. At different times, they perceived a West that was a wasteland, a pristine wilderness, a source of national greatness and imperial grandeur, a utopia, a harsh and cruel land, or a mythical region shaped by the attitudes and beliefs of its people. Each of these images held sway for a period of time and then gave way to a new image, resulting in changing images of the Canadian West.<sup>1</sup>

No landscape is a static thing and what motivates transformation most profoundly is what we do to make it home.

Making a place home is not restricted to the design professions. Identity is expressed through notions of home, both communally and individually, by a multitude of disciplines and interests. 'Sense of place' has become almost a hackneyed term. That this is so reflects just how much concern placed on the importance of meaning in our environments. What is most interesting is that in spite of forces capable of homogenization and rigidity, whether it be the sectional survey imposed

one hundred and twenty five years ago or the contemporary imported corporate landscape, meaning is still embedded in the landscape by those who have made it their home. At the heart of this is recognizing the significance of the ordinary and the everyday, the vernacular as well as the formal, expressed through physical elements, habits, customs, photographs, stories, poems.

My aim in this practicum was not to provide a set of design guidelines or definitive conclusions about landscape creation or to make judgments about home or place. The purpose of this project is to recognize that constructing landscape is a cultural as well as a physical process and that acknowledging different forms of expression and the contribution of many disciplines can only enrich the landscapes that we create. I realize that perspectives on place are as varied as the people who hold them and that my work in this practicum very much reflects my own set of beliefs and biases.



I was always quite sure that I wanted to explore some aspect of the prairie landscape for my final project. Now that I am at the end of the program and of this practicum I can see that the prairie landscape has shaped me even more than I first thought and is very likely why I entered the program in the first place. So focussing on the physical and cultural experience of the prairie made sense to me. I was influenced by writers like J.B. Jackson and others who wrote about cultural landscape concerns in such journals as *Landscape* and liked that kind of vernacular approach to landscape studies. I was also very interested in the physical and metaphorical function of maps and other navigational tools and at first thought I would use this as a model for my exploration of the prairie landscape. But the more I looked at what I had written and what was most compelling about what I was reading, I realized that what was at the core was the notion of home. This became even clearer to me at a mid-point committee meeting where I still floundering a bit and really wasn't very comfortable with the factual and rather dry

essays I had written. As it turned out, neither was my committee. They all agreed that I needed to become looser with my investigation, that I needed to have some fun with it if I was going to create the multi-disciplinary project I had originally envisioned.

This was a turning point that caused me to return home — literally. I decided to document my childhood home that was on the verge of a major transformation, one that is common to small farms in our region. I wanted to explore how a yard is a strong representation of the work and life of the people who live, and lived, there. I photographed and mapped out the yard, then combined those images with text I had written and text I borrowed to create the web site contained on a disk in this document. This led to further writings about home and focussed the practicum more squarely on this topic.

I know that I have only touched on some examples of the prairie experience to

explore the notions of home and identity. In some ways it feels like the beginning, not the end of a project. Once again, the prairie is a place of new beginnings, a starting point for further inquiry. It is an exciting place to be, physically and intellectually. There is still so much more to be done.

## ENDNOTES

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### 1) INTRODUCTION: MAKING IT HOME - the invention of the prairie landscape

<sup>1</sup>J.B. Jackson, *Discovering the Vernacular Landscape* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1984), 7.

<sup>2</sup>Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion Limited, 1976), 29.

<sup>3</sup>Relph, 39.

<sup>4</sup>Relph, 79.

<sup>5</sup>Michael Hough, *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1990), 19.

<sup>6</sup>James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Three Tyrannies of Contemporary Theory and the Alternative of Hermeneutics," *Landscape Journal* 10:2 (1991), 115.

<sup>7</sup>Corner (1991), 115.

<sup>8</sup>Hough, 2.

<sup>9</sup>Hough discusses design solutions and principles in *Out of Place: Restoring Identity to the Regional Landscape*.

<sup>10</sup>Steven Harris, "Everyday Architecture" in Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, eds., *Architecture of the Everyday* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 3.

<sup>11</sup>James Corner, "A Discourse on Theory II: Sounding the Depths—Origins, Theory and Representation," in *Landscape Journal* 9:2 (1990), 60.

<sup>12</sup>James Corner, "Introduction: Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice" in Corner, James, ed. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 9.

<sup>13</sup>Hough, 12.

<sup>14</sup>John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1998), ix.

<sup>15</sup>Corner, 1999, 3.

<sup>16</sup>Barry Potyondi, *In Palliser's Triangle: Living in the Grasslands, 1850 - 1930* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1995), 14.

<sup>17</sup>Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 7.

<sup>18</sup>Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 3.

<sup>19</sup>Douglas R. Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 233.

<sup>20</sup>Henri Lefebvre, *Henri, The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991), 165.

<sup>21</sup>Lefebvre, 165.

<sup>22</sup>Allan Pred, "Structuration and Place: On the Becoming of Sense of Place and Structure of Feeling," *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour* 13:1 (1983), 45-68.

<sup>23</sup>Russell Scott Sanders, "Buckeye," *Orion* 14:2 (1995), 13.

<sup>24</sup>Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), 107.

## **2) SECTION I: IMPRESSION - Introduction**

<sup>1</sup>John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (New York: Viking, Penguin, Inc., 1977), 7.

### **i) Lost (and found)**

<sup>1</sup>Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), 4.

<sup>2</sup>Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 105.

<sup>3</sup>Dan Ring, Guy Vanderhaeghe and George Melnyk, *The Urban Prairie* (Mendel Art Gallery exhibition catalogue, Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1993), 33.

<sup>4</sup>Ronald Rees, *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1988), 36.

<sup>5</sup>Rees, 37.

<sup>6</sup>Harold Gatty, *Finding Your Way Without Map or Compass* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1958), 21.

<sup>7</sup>Lynch, 125.

<sup>8</sup>Rudy Wiebe, *Playing Dead: A Contemplation Concerning the Arctic* (Edmonton: NeWest Publishers Ltd., 1989), 49-50.

<sup>9</sup>Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 7.

<sup>10</sup>Rees, 92.

<sup>11</sup>Rees, 90-91.

<sup>12</sup>Allen G. Noble, "German-Russian Mennonites in Manitoba" in Allen G. Noble, ed. *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 268.

<sup>13</sup> Noble, 272.

<sup>14</sup> Rees, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Allen, "Transplant," in D. Cooley, ed., *Draft: An Anthology of Prairie Poetry* (Winnipeg: Turnstone Press, 1981), 7-9.

## ii) Empty (and full)

<sup>1</sup> Susan Sontag, *A Susan Sontag Reader* (New York: Vintage Books, 1983), 186.

<sup>2</sup> John Welsted, John Everitt and Christoph Stadel, eds., *The Geography of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 9-10.

<sup>3</sup> Wallace Stegner, *Wolf Willow* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990 orig. pub. 1962), 8.

<sup>4</sup> Malcolm Andrews, *Oxford History of Art: Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 132.

<sup>5</sup> Andrews, 134.

<sup>6</sup> Andrews, 134.

<sup>7</sup> Edward McCourt, *The Road Across Canada* (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1965), 136.

<sup>8</sup> Christopher Dafoe, *Winnipeg: The Heart of the Continent* (Winnipeg: Great Plains Publications, 1988), 10. Dafoe contrasts the well-treed canopy that currently covers much of city of Winnipeg with what the photographer H.L. Hime saw in the 1860s.

<sup>9</sup> Douglas R. Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 7.

<sup>10</sup> Dan Ring, Guy Vanderhaeghe and George Melnyk, *The Urban Prairie*, (Mendel Art Gallery exhibition catalogue, Saskatoon: Fifth House Publishers, 1993), 33.

<sup>11</sup> Ronald Rees, *New and Naked Land: Making the Prairies Home* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1988), 35.

<sup>12</sup> Rees, 37.

<sup>13</sup> Robert Ballantyne, *The Young Fur Traders*, London, n.d., 200-1, quoted in Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987), 105.

<sup>14</sup> Friesen, 105.

<sup>15</sup> Francis, 37.

<sup>16</sup> Francis, 38.

<sup>17</sup> William F. Butler, *The Great Lone Land: A Narrative of Travel and Adventure in the North-West of America* (London: Sampson Low, Marston, Searle, & Rivington, 1879), 199-200.

<sup>18</sup> Pamela Shurmer-Smith and Kevin Hannam, *Worlds of Desire, Realms of Power: A Cultural Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1994), 47.

<sup>19</sup> *The Art Journal 1860*, 221, quoted in Richard J. Huyda, *Camera in the Interior: 1858* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1975), frontispiece.

<sup>20</sup> Joel Snyder, "Territorial Photography" in W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 189.

<sup>21</sup> Rees, 87.

- <sup>22</sup>Catherine Howett (1997), "Where the One-Eyed Man Is King: The Tyranny of Visual and Formalist Values in Evaluating Landscapes," in Paul Groth and Todd W. Bressi, eds., *Understanding Ordinary Landscapes* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 92.
- <sup>23</sup>Howett, 92.
- <sup>24</sup>Neil Evernden (1983). "Beauty and Nothingness: Prairie as Failed Resource," *Landscape* (1983) 27:3, 3.
- <sup>25</sup>Evernden, 3.
- <sup>26</sup>Evernden, 3.
- <sup>27</sup>Evernden, 6.
- <sup>28</sup>John A. Jakle, *The Visual Elements of Landscape* (Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1987), ix-x.
- <sup>29</sup>Jakle, 86.
- <sup>30</sup>Jakle, 89.
- <sup>31</sup>Jakle, 91-92.
- <sup>32</sup>Jakle, 73-74.
- <sup>33</sup>Jakle, 74.
- <sup>34</sup>Tadahiko Higuchi, *The Visual and Spatial Structure of Landscapes*, trans. Charles Terry, trans. (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1983), 95.
- <sup>35</sup>Higuchi, 4.
- <sup>36</sup>Howett, 97-98.
- <sup>37</sup>James Corner, "Introduction: Recovering Landscape as a Critical Cultural Practice," in James Corner, ed. *Recovering Landscape: Essays in Contemporary Landscape Architecture* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1999), 7.
- <sup>38</sup>Evernden, 8.
- <sup>39</sup>Stegner, 269.

### **3) SECTION 11: APPORTIONMENT - Introduction**

<sup>1</sup> Alessandro Scafi, "Mapping Eden," in Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1999), 56.

#### **i) The Idea of Mapping**

- <sup>1</sup> Mark Monmonier, *How to Lie With Maps* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87.
- <sup>2</sup> Christian Jacob, "Mapping the Mind" in Denis Cosgrove, ed., *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1999), 25.
- <sup>3</sup> Monmonier, 2.
- <sup>4</sup> D. Dorling, "Human Cartography: when it is good to map," *Environment and Planning* (1998) 30:2, 287.
- <sup>5</sup> Dorling, 277.
- <sup>6</sup> Peter Jackson, *Maps of Meaning: An Introduction to Cultural Geography* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 177.
- <sup>7</sup> Christian Jacob, 27-28.

<sup>8</sup> John Warkentin and Richard Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba: A Selection of Facsimile Maps, Plans and Sketches from 1612 to 1969* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1970), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Warkentin & Ruggles, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Virginia G. Berry, *A Boundless Horizon: Visual Records of Exploration and Settlement in the Manitoba Region 1624-1874* [catalogue for exhibition, The Winnipeg Art Gallery September 15-October 30, 1983] (Winnipeg: Winnipeg Art Gallery, 1983), 1.

<sup>11</sup> Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 105. (In a footnote following this passage Owram makes reference to Department of Agriculture, *Province of Manitoba: Information for Intending Emigrants* (Ottawa 1873), in Spence, *The Saskatchewan Country* (Montreal 1877).

<sup>12</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), 124.

<sup>13</sup> Lynch, 124.

<sup>14</sup> James Corner, "The Agency of Mapping: Speculation, Critique & Invention," in Denis Cosgrove ed. *Mappings* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 1999), 213.

<sup>15</sup> Adrienne Mason, "Mapping Home," *Canadian Geographic* (September/October 1998) 118:6, 60.

<sup>16</sup> Stephen S. Hall, "I, Mercator," *Orion*, (1994) 13:2, 8.

## ii) Dividing the Land

<sup>1</sup> Much of the background information in this section comes from Dr. Barry Kaye's geography class *The Making of the Prairie Landscape*, University of Manitoba, Geography Department, 1998/99.

<sup>2</sup> Rob Shields, *Places on the Margin: Alternative Geographies of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 12.

<sup>3</sup> Kirk Lambrecht, *The Administration of Dominion Lands, 1870-1930* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1991), 32.

<sup>4</sup> Barry Kaye, "The Historical Development of the Cultural Landscape in Manitoba to 1870," in J. Welsted, J. Everitt and C. Stadel, eds., *The Geography of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 83.

<sup>5</sup> Arlene J. Kwasniak, "A Framework for How Laws and Legal Policies Shape Landscapes". *Landscape Journal* (1996) 15:2, 156.

<sup>6</sup> Doug Owram, *Promise of Eden: The Canadian Expansionist Movement and the Idea of the West 1856-1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980), 103.

<sup>7</sup> Irene M. Spry, "The Transition from a Nomadic to a Settled Economy in Western Canada". *Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada*, (June 1968) vol. vi, series iv, 199.

<sup>8</sup> Rees, 63.

<sup>9</sup> Kwasniak, 157.

<sup>10</sup> Barry Potyondi, *In Palliser's Triangle: Living in the Grasslands, 1850 - 1930* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 1995), 113.

<sup>11</sup> Lambrecht, 109-110.

<sup>12</sup> Allen Noble, "German-Russian Mennonites in Manitoba" in Noble, Allen G., ed. *To Build in a New Land: Ethnic Landscapes in North America* (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 268.

<sup>13</sup> John C. Lehr, "Settlement: The Making of a Landscape," in J. Welsted, J. Everitt and C. Stadel, eds., *The Geography of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 99.

<sup>14</sup> Noble, 268.

<sup>15</sup> Lehr, 99.

#### **4) SECTION III: TRANSFORMATION - Introduction**

<sup>1</sup> Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths and Monuments* (Oxford/Providence, USA: Berg, 1994), 18.

<sup>2</sup> J.B. Jackson, "The Accessible Landscape" in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, ed. *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America, J.B. Jackson* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1988), 69.

#### **i) Public Space: Monuments, Place and Identity - Cairns, Memorials, Town Mascots**

<sup>1</sup> Donlyn Lyndon, "Re-Placing," *Places* (1996) 10:3, 2.

<sup>2</sup> Wilbur Zelinsky, "Where Every Town is Above Average: Welcoming Signs along America's Highways". *Landscape* (1988) 30:1,6-7.

<sup>3</sup> Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press, 1960), 81.

<sup>4</sup> Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentred Society* (New York: The New Press, 1977), 108.

<sup>5</sup> Catherine Howett, "The Vietnam Veterans Memorial: Public Art and Politics," *Landscape* (1985) 28:2, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Howett, 2.

<sup>7</sup> John Herd Thompson, *Forging the Prairie West* (Toronto: Oxford University Press Canada, 1988), 164.

<sup>8</sup> Lippard, 107.

<sup>9</sup> Mira Engler, "Drive-Thru History: Theme Towns in Iowa," *Landscape* (1993) 32:1, 9.

<sup>10</sup> Engler, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Source: CBC-TV Midday, Monday, May 22, 2000.

<sup>12</sup> Engler, 8-9.

#### **ii) Private Space: The Yard and the Garden**

<sup>1</sup> Deborah Tall, "Dwelling: Making Peace with Space," *Orion* (1995) 14:2, 16.

<sup>2</sup> Geoffrey & Susan Jellicoe, *The Landscape of Man: Shaping the Environment from Prehistory to the Present Day*, 3rd ed. (London: Thames and Hudson, 1995) 7.

<sup>3</sup> Peter C. Johnson, "Rural Residential Landscapes of Douglas County, Oregon," *Journal of Cultural Geography* (Fall/Winter 1991) 12:1, 21.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Kroetsch, "Seed Catalogue" in Michael Ondaatje, ed., *The Long Poem Anthology* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979), 22.

<sup>5</sup> Johnson, 22.



<sup>6</sup> Paul Groth, "Lot, Yard and Garden: American Distinctions," *Landscape* (1990) 30:3, 30.

<sup>7</sup> Groth, 29.

<sup>8</sup> Lucy Lippard, *The Lure of the Local: Senses of Place in a Multicentred Society* (New York: The New Press, 1997), 253.

<sup>9</sup> Lippard, 257.

<sup>10</sup> Margie Ruddick, "Tom's Garden" in Steven Harris and Deborah Berke, eds., *Architecture of the Everyday* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997), 1

<sup>11</sup> Ruddick, 110-111.

<sup>12</sup> Ruddick, 109.

<sup>13</sup> Judith Chatfield, *A Tour of Italian Gardens* (New York: Rizzoli, 1988), 127-128.

<sup>14</sup> Norah Titley and Frances Wood, *Oriental Gardens: An Illustrated History* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 1991), 113.

<sup>15</sup> J.B. Jackson, "Ghosts at the Door," in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, ed., *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America, J.B. Jackson* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1997), 116.

<sup>16</sup> Jackson, 117.

## **5) EPILOGUE**

<sup>1</sup> R. Douglas Francis, *Images of the West: Responses to the Canadian Prairies* (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1989), 231.

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