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NELSON HOUSE, MANITOBA: AN ETHNODEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY

by

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INTRODUCTION

Contrary to prevalent interpretation, European contact did not necessarily lead to the depopulation of native North American societies. Conclusions concerning the depopulation of native societies are, at times, based on generalizations from specific cases of presumed contact depopulation. In many of these reports, depopulation is not properly documented. Moreover, alternate but related causal factors have not been examined; for example, European economic strategy, the socio-economic organization of the native population, and population size. Hence the conclusions are questionable. It would seem clear that native populations were seriously affected by contact. However, the problems they faced depended on the situation in which they were involved. The demographic consequences of contact were not consistently negative. A case study, a Cree population in northern Manitoba, is presented in this paper.

Basic inadequancies in depopulation theory are noted in a brief history of its development. Early researchers responded to explorers', fur traders', missionaries', and Indian agents' reports which described native populations ravaged by epidemics, starvation and war. For example, in an article dealing with the extinction of the New England Indians, Sherburne Cook reported the following comments made by 17th century Europeans concerning the plight of the natives at contact:

Thousands of men have lived there, which died in a great plague not long since . . . for that war had consumed Bashaba and most of the great Sagamores . . . and those that remained were sore afflicted by the plague so that the country was in a manner left void of inhabitants (1973:490).

Samuel Hearne, in an account of his exploration in the Northwest Territories between 1769 and 1772, stated:

Northern Indians by annually visiting their Southern friends, the Athapuscow Indians, have contacted the small-pox which carried off nine-tenth of them . . . (Glover, 1958:115)

After having explored the Canadian prairies in the mid-19th century for the British government, Hind reported:

Some twenty years ago, before the smallpox and constant wars had reduced the Plains Cree to one-sixth or eighth of their former numbers, this post was often the scene of exciting Indian display . . . (1859:46)

In 1904, David Laird, Indian Commissioner for Manitoba and the Northwest Territories in his annual report to the Department of Indian Affairs, commented:

. . . the mortality is so great in some of the principal bands (in Manitoba), according to the latest returns to hand, that, in spite of the fact that the birth rate among our Indians is generally greater than that of the average European countries, if it continues, their bands must at no distant day become nearly extinct (1904:34-35).

Specific accounts such as these led anthropologists such as Sherburne Cook (1973, 1976), H.F. Dobyns (1966),

Walter Hlady (1960), Diamond Jenness (1932), James Mooney (1928), and M. Smith (1974) to generalize, associating native depopulation with the presence of Europeans. For example, Jenness, in relating the history of the Cree, commented:

The acquisition of firearms by surrounding tribes, and a terrible epidemic of smallpox that devastated them in 1784, checked their further expansion. The Cree then became demoralized through spirituous liquors, underwent constant attack from the Blackfoot confederacy, and were decimated by a second epidemic of smallpox about 1838. From these disasters they never recovered . . . (1932:284)

M. Smith, in analysing the contact period in Central America, commented:

. . . the arsenal of the conquistadors included another weapon, European disease, whose deadly ravages plagued New World inhabitants for centuries after conquest . . . Smallpox struck the indigenous population with a virulency unmatched in the annals of European medicine (1974:5-6).

Cook, in reporting on a similar period in the San Joaquin Valley, U.S.A., stated:

. . . warfare, massacre, forced conversion, starvation, and exposure plus sweeping epidemics together destroyed in the aggregate fully 75% of the aboriginal population . . . (Dobyns, 1966: 411)

Researchers, such as Cook, Wherrett, Bone, and Dobyns, have used statements concerning the size of native populations at contact to calculate the rate of native

depopulation. Generally, a comparison is made between the pre-contact population figures and the earliest censuses to produce the following comments concerning the decline of native populations. Cook bases his comments on James Mooney's work.

According to James Mooney (1928) there were originally about 36,500 natives living east of the Hudson River and within the present limits of the United States. In 1907, there were close to 2,400 left, many of them of mixed derivation . . . (Cook, 1973:485)

Bone's estimates are also based on Mooney's work.

During the fur trade era, the population of the north, while subject to considered regional migrations, probably declined, perhaps by as much as half of Mooney's precontact estimate of 220,000. In 1881, the Indian population of Canada was estimated at just over 100,000. Starvation, disease, and war-lllll fare took their toll . . . (Bone, 1972:94)

Though Wherrett did not document his work, his estimate is close enough to Mooney's to suggest he used his data.

It has been estimated that when the first settlers arrived in New France in the early seventeenth century there were some 200,000 Indians and Eskimos in what we now call Canada. By the time the first census was taken in 1871 this number had fallen to 102,358 (Wherrett, 1977:98).

Dobyns makes the assumption that every native population declined at a particular rate with contact.

Assuming a 'standard' hemispheric depopulation ratio of 20 to 1

between initial contact and the beginning of population recovery should permit estimating aboriginal American population if sound figures on the size of the various Indian groups when they reached their respective nadirs can be found (Dobyns, 1966:414).

To date, most statements concerning native depopulation are generalizations based on reported occurrences. Research on the Canadian fur trade and ethno-demographic analysis of native populations have demonstrated both the inaccuracy of first hand reports and of the interpretation of these reports by previous researchers (Bayliss-Smith, 1975a & b; Bishop, 1976; Carroll, 1975b; Cook, 1976; McArthur, 1968; Smith, 1976). In terms of specific reports of depopulation, Hearne's estimated number of Chipewyan deaths due to smallpox in the late 18th century is "exaggerated" according to Smith (1976:77). According to Bishop, "despite the precarious mode of subsistence and the difficulties that the Indians had in procuring both food and fur", the Ojibwa population increased in size during the 19th century (1976:48). Mooney's figures on pre-contact Indian populations were over-estimates according to Kroeber (1953:132). Moreover, Mooney did not document the procedures used to calculate his figures. According to Cook (1976:84), within three centuries of contact, the native New England populations were extinct; however, previous calculations of their precontact size were too high.

In terms of interpretations, researchers generally have not taken into account demographic factors such as

distribution and size; for example, the spatial configuration of a population affects its death rate. A contagious disease can result in a greater number of deaths in a population with large sedentary units than in a population consisting of small mobile units. Moreover, the mortality in the small population may be more noticeable since a whole unit may be destroyed as a result of a few deaths. Also, small populations are subject to stochastic fluctuations and respond dramatically to changes in their demographic condition (Kunstadter, 1972). Hence, various demographic elements of small populations usually fluctuate and should be studied over a period of time to be understood by researchers.

To consider depopulation a consequence of contact is to view contact as a static event. This approach assumes the European and native societies involved in contact were similar and the resultant interaction was everywhere the same. Such was not the case. Variant European societies such as English, French, and Spanish mercantilists as well as various elements of those societies, were in contact with variant native societies such as hunter-gatherers and agriculturalists. Generally speaking, the type of relationship established between Europeans and natives depended on the commodities Europeans were extracting, the manner in which the commodity was extracted, and the role natives played in the extraction of these commodities. Consequently, the effect of contact on the demography of native societies was not universal. In an ethno-demographic study of small Pacific

island populations, Norma McArthur stated:

. . . the basic theme of this study remains as it has always been--that if enough were known about these populations at various times in their history, there would be no need to invoke the psychological reasons which Pitt-Rivers and others believed responsible for the supposedly universal decline in island populations in the Pacific when they were brought into contact with the superior 'white' civilization and culture . . . It is rather easier to demonstrate that the decline was not universal . . . (1968:xvi)

Demographic events related in historic reports should thus be interpreted in terms of the concrete population involved, their subsistence strategy, social organization, settlement pattern, and a demographic profile drawn for the period in question. Moreover, the specific relationship between the Europeans and native populations must be understood. Furthermore, descriptions of demographic events in European accounts of native societies should be assessed in terms of the author, his/her intentions, and the context in which the events are described. For example, in the Canadian fur trade literature, statements of massive depopulation, which are based on native deaths in and around trading posts, are probably exaggerations. Trading posts were havens for the Indians, according to Andrew Graham, a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) factor between 1767 and 1791.

There are commonly two families of home-guard entertained at each fort (besides widows, orphans, and helpless people) . . .

(Williams, 1969:192)

The hungry are fed, the naked clothed, and the sick furnished with medicines, and attended by the factory surgeon; all this gratis . . . (Williams, 1969:327)

This paper will deal with the ethno-demographic history of an Indian band from 1630 to 1968. The population under study resides in northern Manitoba and is designated the Nelson House band by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (DIAND). Members of the band identify themselves as Cree. The Cree Indians are part of the Algonkian linguistic family, which includes Blackfoot, Piegan, Cree, Ojibwa, Naskapi, and Montagnais. Their territories extend from Newfoundland to the Rocky Mountains. The Cree at present are located in northwestern Quebec, northern Ontario, north central Manitoba, south central Saskatchewan, and eastern Alberta.

The study is divided into three parts. The first chapter identifies and describes the Nelson House band. The ethnohistory of the Cree with emphasis on the Cree of northern Manitoba is presented in the second chapter. Data for this section was obtained primarily from secondary sources. Material from the Hudson's Bay Company archives as well as the DIAND archives is included. The demographic history of the band (1823-1942) is dealt with in the third chapter. Data for this section was primarily derived from the Hudson's Bay Company archives and the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development archives.

CHAPTER I

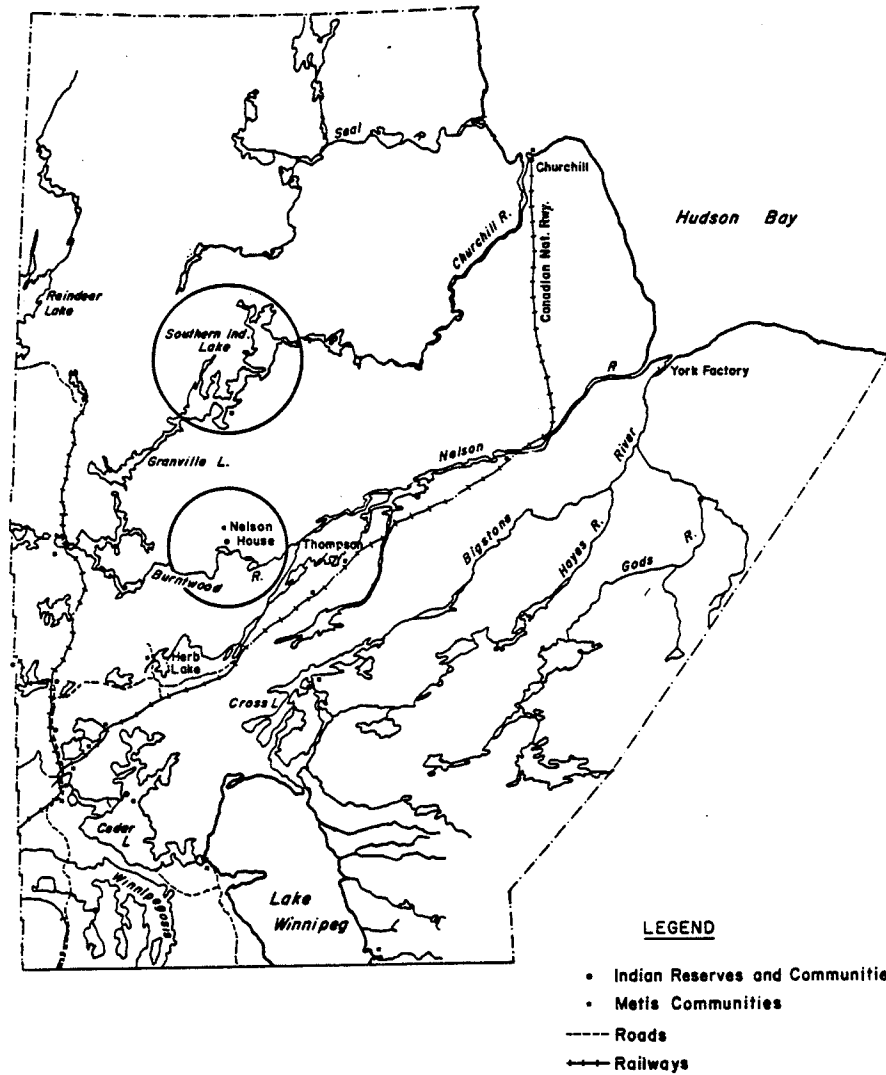
THE NELSON HOUSE BAND: MODERN ERA

Approximately 400 Cree were officially defined as the Nelson House Band in a 1908 adhesion to Treaty 5, an agreement made in 1875 between groups of Saulteaux and Swampy Cree and the Canadian government. In Treaty 5 and adhesions, the Indians surrendered "their right, titles, and privileges to the lands" in what is presently known as northern Manitoba. In return, they received a specific portion of land (160 acres per family of five, for the purpose of "farming"), farming equipment, the "right to pursue their avocations of hunting and fishing throughout the tract surrendered" and five dollars annually per band member (Canada, Treaty 5 and Adhesions). In 1914, a government surveyor, Donald Robertson, assigned the band four tracts of land (170, 170A, 170B, 170C) of approximately 14,452 acres in and around the Footprint River and Lake (55 45'N; 98 48'W; Annual Report, Department of Indian Affairs 1915). These segments of land form the Nelson House Reserve (Map 1, 2).

The Nelson House Band presently occupies two communities: Nelson House and South Indian Lake (Map 1, 2, 4). The Nelson House community is located in the area of the reserve in the Footprint River Basin on Footprint Lake, 40 air miles west of Thompson, Manitoba. The South Indian Lake

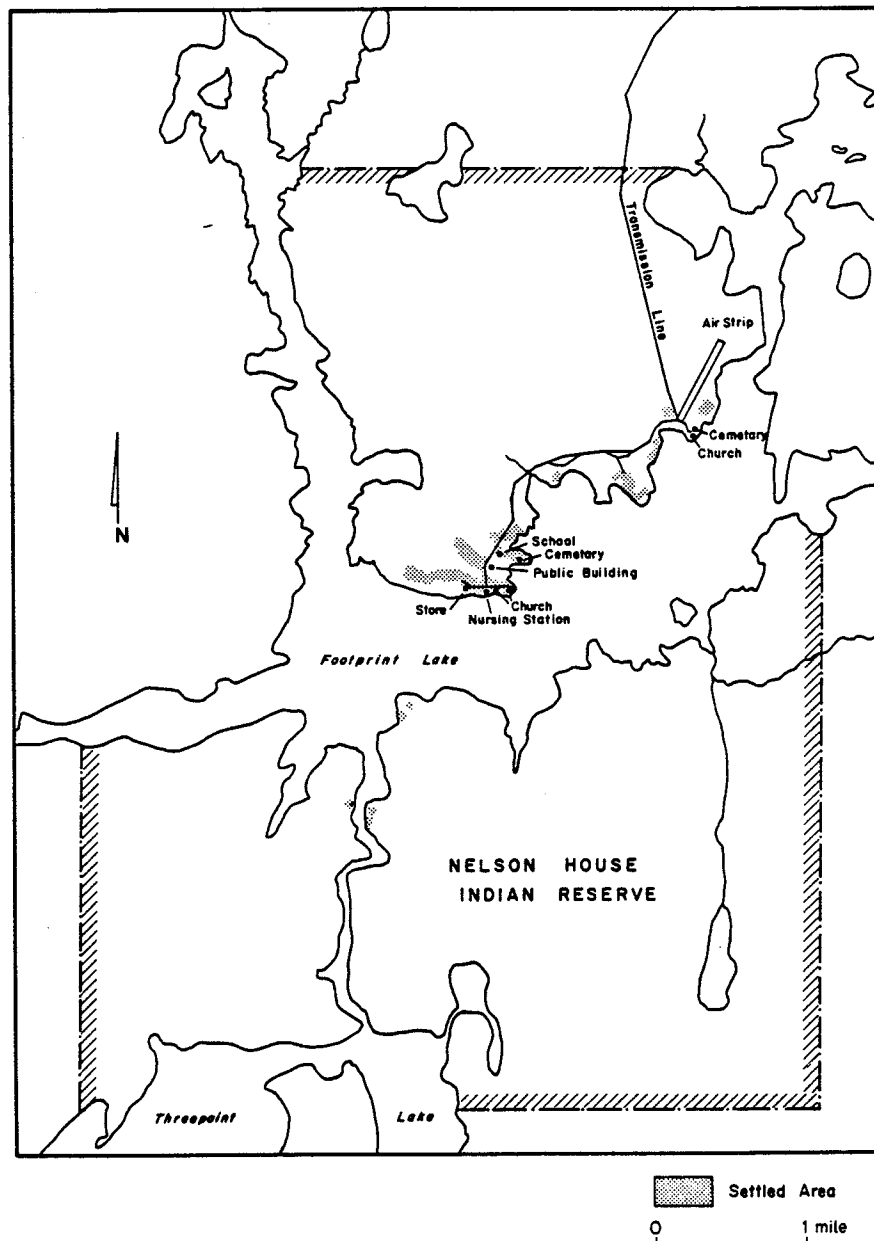
MAP 1.

AREAS OF NORTHERN MANITOBA POPULATED BY INDIANS & METIS



The Nelson House Band is composed of two communities, Nelson House and South Indian Lake. Nelson House is located near Footprint Lake. South Indian Lake is in the southern portion of Southern Indian Lake.

MAP 2.



SETTLED AREAS OF NELSON HOUSE INDIAN RESERVE, 1974

Adapted from Technical Report 6,
Department of Mines, Resources and
Environmental Management, Manitoba

In the 1930's the people of the band began to settle
in and around the area of present day Nelson House.

community is located on the narrows between the main body of Southern Indian Lake and South Bay, approximately 85 miles northwest of Thompson (57 10'N; 98 30'W; Map 1, 4).

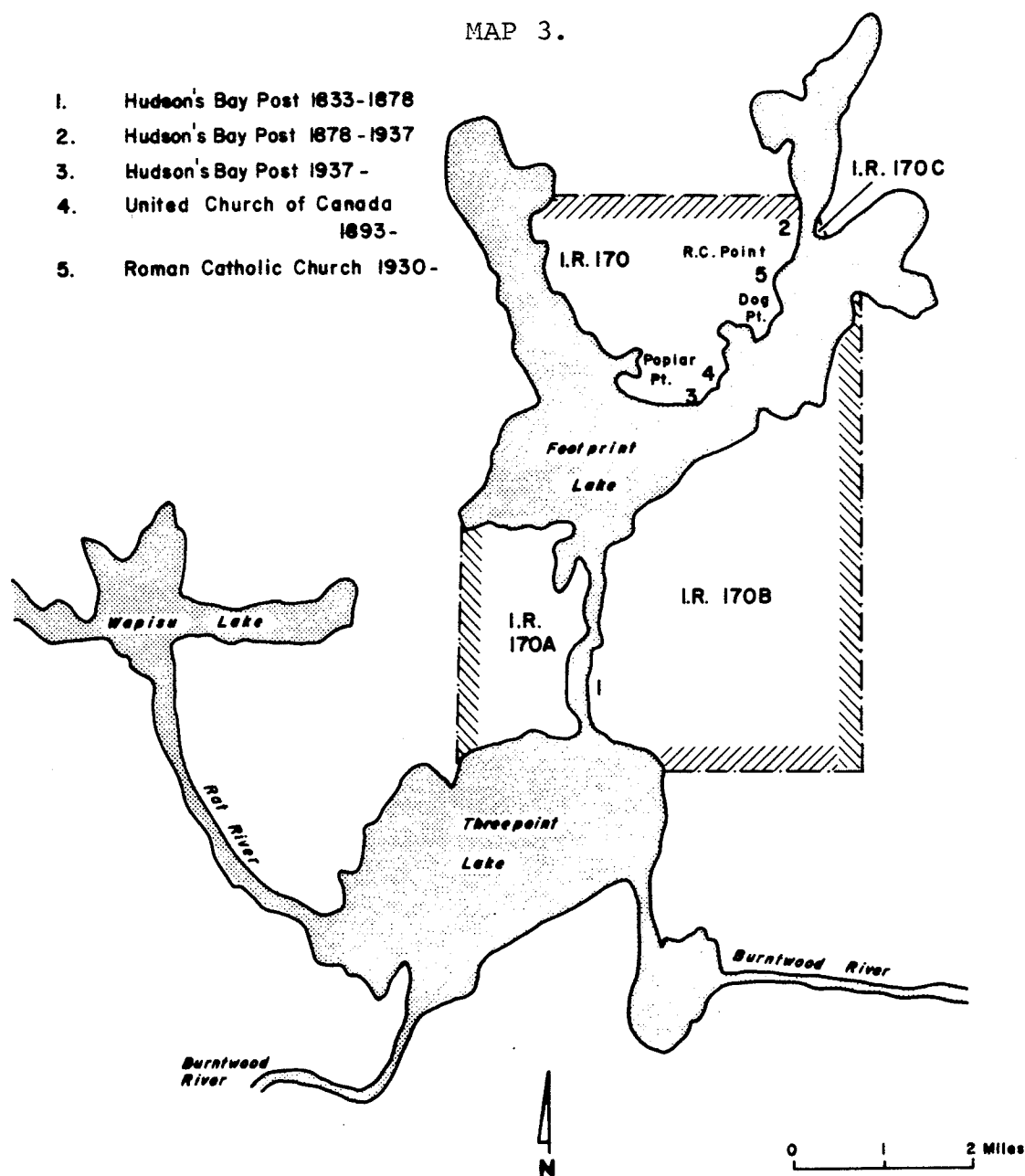
Community Structure

The population of Nelson House is largely located on three sites: Poplar Point, Dog Point, and R.C. Point which extend over a four mile area (Map 2, 3). A United Church, a Hudson's Bay Company post, a school and nursing station are situated on Poplar Point, as is a Manitoba Hydro power station (Map 2). A road built during the summers of 1970 through 1973 connects Thompson to Lynn Lake with an extension to Nelson House, thereby giving the residents of Nelson House easy access to Thompson and Winnipeg.

In 1968, there were approximately 51 half-breeds or Metis living within the confines of Nelson House (Manitoba Community Welfare Planning Council Map, 1968). They have since been relocated.

South Indian Lake is an offshoot of Nelson House. A Roman Catholic Church, United Church, Hudson's Bay Company post, school, and air field are located in and around the settlement. In 1968, the community included approximately 150 Metis in addition to 422 band members and a number of Euro-Canadians (Map 4).

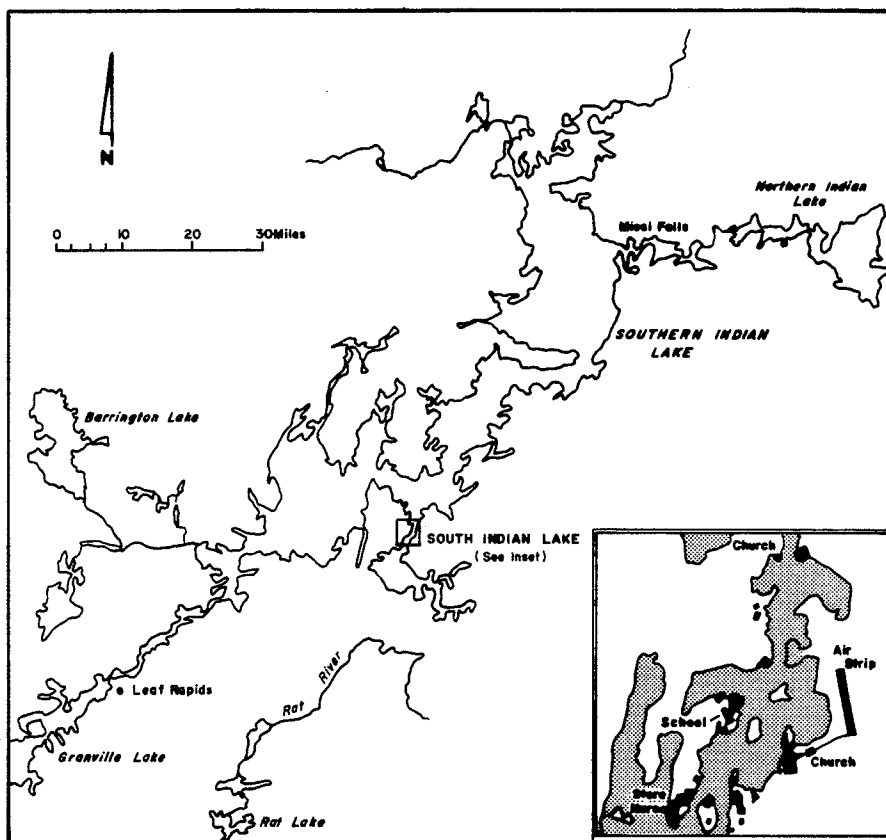
MAP 3.



NELSON HOUSE - LOCATION OF HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY POSTS AND UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA AND ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH FROM 1833 TO 1968. The Nelson House Band was granted a reserve (I.R. 170, A, B) in 1914 by the federal government. It was located in and around the Hudson's Bay Company and the United Church of Canada settlements.

MAP 4.

SOUTH INDIAN LAKE COMMUNITY



Adapted from the Technical Report of the Lake Winnipeg, Churchill and Nelson Rivers Study Board, 1971-75, pp. 8-63.

South Indian Lake is one of two communities which comprises the Nelson House Band. The community is approximately 70 miles north of the Nelson House Reserve.

Demographic Structure

As of December 31, 1968, one thousand three hundred and ninety-three individuals were registered members of the band (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, 1968). The age and sex composition for the band are presented in Tables 1 to 3. A graphic representation of this appears in Figures 1 and 2.

The large percentage (59.8%) of individuals in the under 20 cohorts or age groups would indicate that the population is demographically young and is expanding (Table 1, Figure 1). The sex ratio (number of males per one hundred females) indicates that in the population as a whole there were slightly more males than females (102.18, Table 3), but that between the cohorts the ratio fluctuated (Figure 2). On the average, there are more females in the younger cohorts than males, while in the older cohorts the opposite is the case. In small populations, as for example Nelson House, such a pattern may be the result of differential fertility, mortality, or migration, all with respect to sex (Boque, 1969:166) or stochastic fluctuation.

Of the 1,393 band members in 1968, 891 lived in Nelson House and 422 inhabited South Indian Lake (Canada, Department of Indian Affairs, 1968: Table 1). The age and sex composition for the two communities are presented in Table 1 to 3. A graphic representation of this is found in Figures 3 and 4. The compositions of the two locales are similar to one another and to the population as a whole.

TABLE 1 POPULATION DISTRIBUTION
NELSON HOUSE BAND, DECEMBER 1968

REGION	DISTRICT/AGENCY The Pas BAND Nelson House									
	Manitoba		Off reserve		On crown land		Unstated		Total	
	On reserve		MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
Age Groups	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE
0-4	83	96	9	5	45	53			137	154
5-9	89	60	7	6	32	29			128	95
10-14	65	60	1	6	24	25			90	91
15-19	44	44	4	1	19	26			67	71
20-24	36	32	1	7	19	19			56	58
25-29	23	23	7	4	8	13			38	40
30-34	17	18	2	5	7	7			26	30
35-39	14	17	2	6	8	13			24	36
40-44	15	13	3	1	8	2			26	16
45-49	12	17	1	1	12	4			25	22
50-54	7	12			3	6			10	18
55-59	14	4			7	5			21	9
60-64	13	10			6	3			19	13
65+	30	23		1	7	12			37	36
Total	462	429	37	43	205	217	0	0	704	689

TABLE 2

Nelson House Band - Age and Sex Composition for the Year 1968

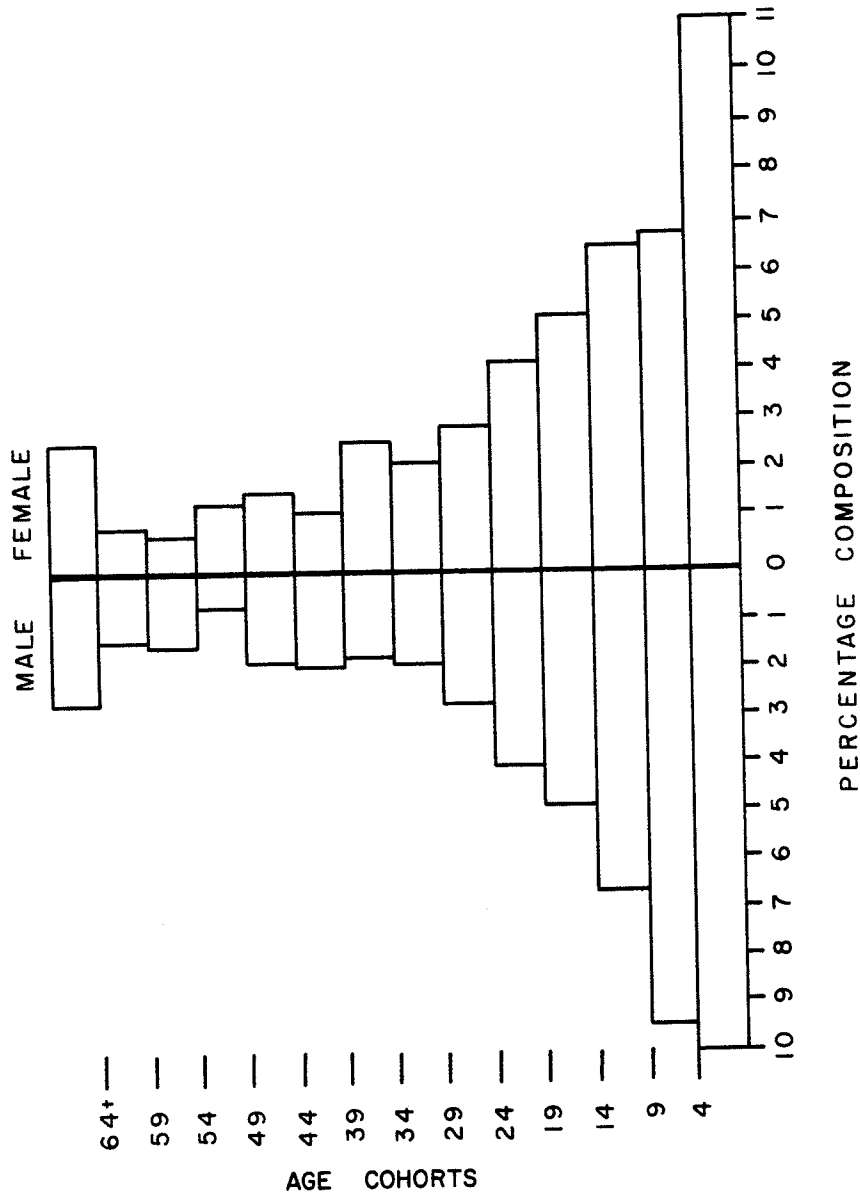
Age Cohorts	On Reserve		On Crown Land		Total	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
0 - 4	9.3%	10.8%	10.7%	12.6%	9.8%	11.1%
5 - 9	10.0	6.7	7.6	6.9	9.2	6.8
10 - 14	7.3	6.7	5.7	5.9	6.5	6.5
15 - 19	4.9	4.9	4.5	6.2	4.8	5.1
20 - 24	4.0	3.6	4.5	4.5	4.0	4.2
25 - 29	2.6	2.6	1.9	3.1	2.7	2.9
30 - 34	1.9	2.0	1.6	1.7	1.9	2.2
35 - 39	1.6	1.9	1.9	3.1	1.7	2.6
40 - 44	1.7	1.5	1.9	0.5	1.9	1.2
45 - 49	1.4	1.9	2.8	1.0	1.8	1.6
50 - 54	0.8	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.7	1.3
55 - 59	1.6	0.5	1.7	1.5	1.5	0.7
60 - 64	1.5	1.1	1.4	0.7	1.4	0.9
65 +	3.4	2.6	1.7	2.8	2.7	2.6
Total	51.85	48.15	48.58	51.42	50.54	49.46

"On Reserve" is the Nelson House Community.

"On Crown Land" is the South Indian Lake Community.

The Off Reserve category which is found in Table 1 is included in the Total.

FIGURE 1. NELSON HOUSE BAND - AGE, SEX PYRAMID 1968



The larger number of individuals within each of the younger cohorts is indicative of a growing population.

TABLE 3

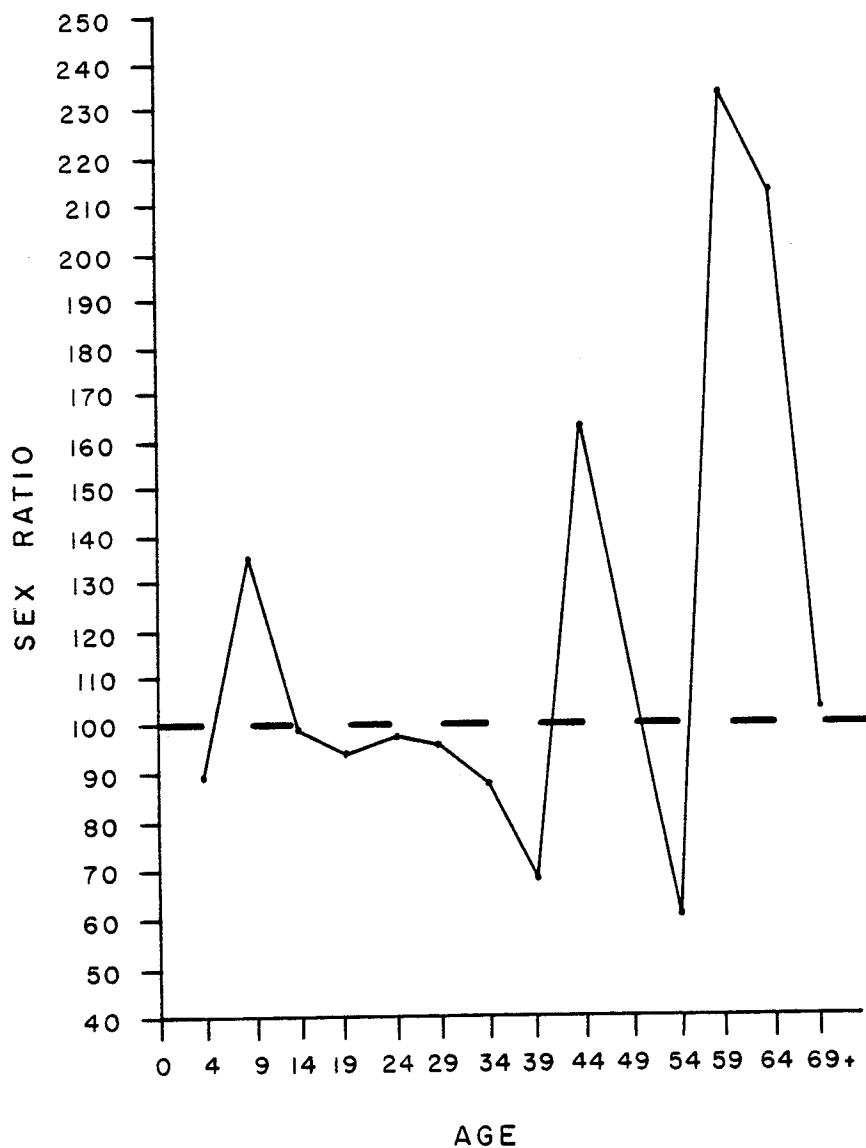
Nelson House Band - Sex Ratios for 1968

Age Cohorts	On Reserve	On Crown Land	Total
0 - 4	87	85	89
5 - 9	148	110	135
10 - 14	108	96	99
15 - 19	100	73	94
20 - 24	113	100	97
25 - 29	100	62	95
30 - 34	94	100	87
35 - 39	82	62	67
40 - 44	115	400	163
45 - 49	71	300	114
50 - 54	58	50	56
55 - 59	350	140	233
60 - 64	130	200	211
65 +	130	52	103
Total	107.88	94	102

The discrepancies between the Total Sex Ratio and the On Crown Land as well as the On Reserve Sex Ratio is due to the inclusion of the Off Reserve individuals in the Total Sex Ratio.

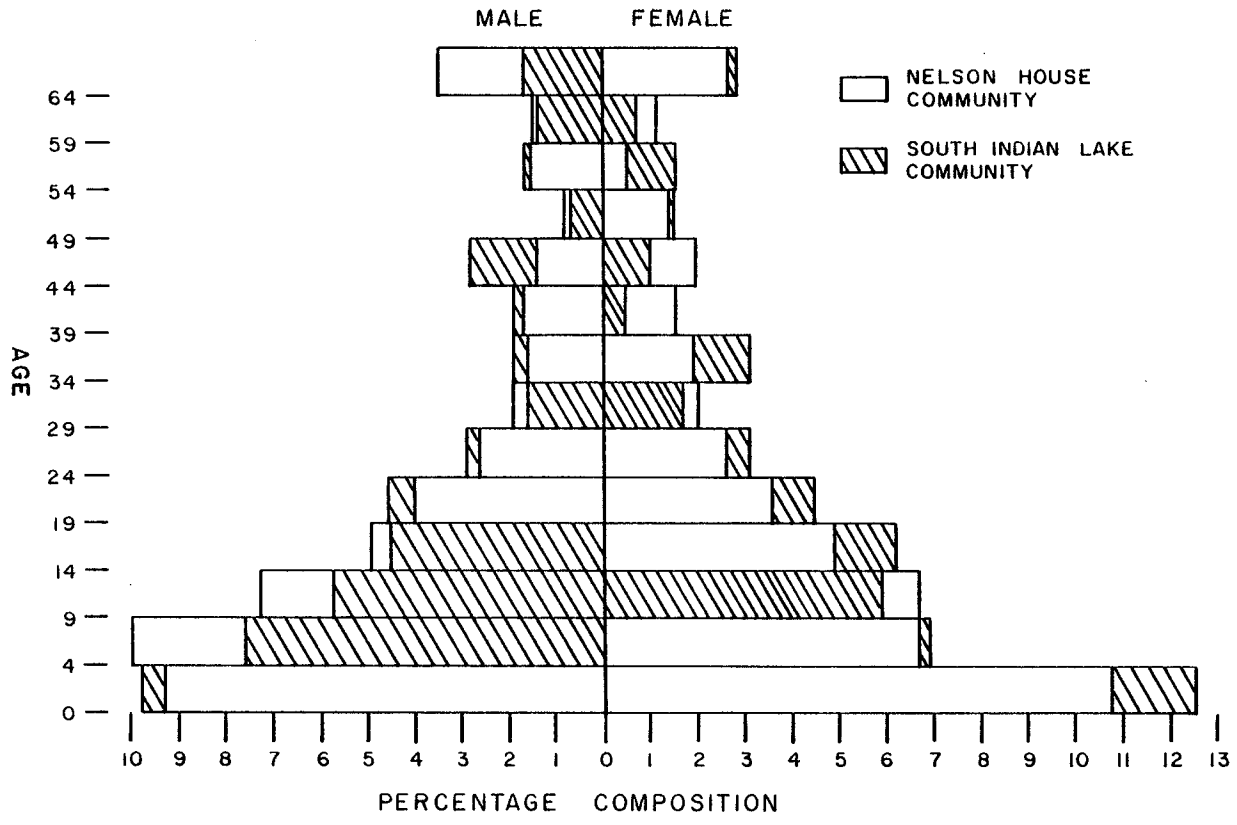
Sex ratio is number of males per one hundred females.

FIGURE 2. NELSON HOUSE BAND - SEX RATIOS BY COHORTS 1968



The sex ratio indicates that there were slightly more males than females in the population; however, the ratio fluctuates between age groups. Such a pattern may be the result of differential fertility, mortality, migration, or stochastic fluctuation.

FIGURE 3. NELSON HOUSE BAND - AGE AND SEX PYRAMID 1968



The population pyramids for both the Nelson House and South Indian Lake communities are indicative of a young and expanding population.

Economic Structure (1974)

A Social and Economic Impact Study Team of the Department of Mines, Resources and Environmental Management revealed that 14% of the total income of the Nelson House community was from hunting, fishing, and trapping, 58% was from gathering fuel wood and unskilled jobs with government and private organizations while 28% was from Family and Youth Allowances, Old Age Security, Unemployment Insurance and Disabled Persons Allowance (Manitoba Government, 1974b). Furthermore, the 14% associated with hunting, fishing and trapping was accumulated by 39-55% of the labour force whose members belonged primarily to the 40-65 age group. The majority of those working at unskilled jobs (61-45% of the labour force) were in the 20-40 age group. The figures quoted for the South Indian Lake community by the Impact Team were similar to that of the Nelson House community (Manitoba Government, 1973).

In recent years, both the methods of earning a livelihood and the attitudes and values of residents of Nelson House have been undergoing change. The Nelson House and the South Indian Lake populations, have been moving away from a lifestyle dictated by fishing, hunting, and trapping. The expanding need for energy resources, power, and recreation has caused industrialized white communities such as Thompson, Leaf Rapids, and Lynn Lake to encroach upon the land and resources of the native communities. Younger

native residents with their white education are more inclined to become involved in work associated with the industrial complexes rather than in traditional pursuits.

The Boreal Forest Ecosystem

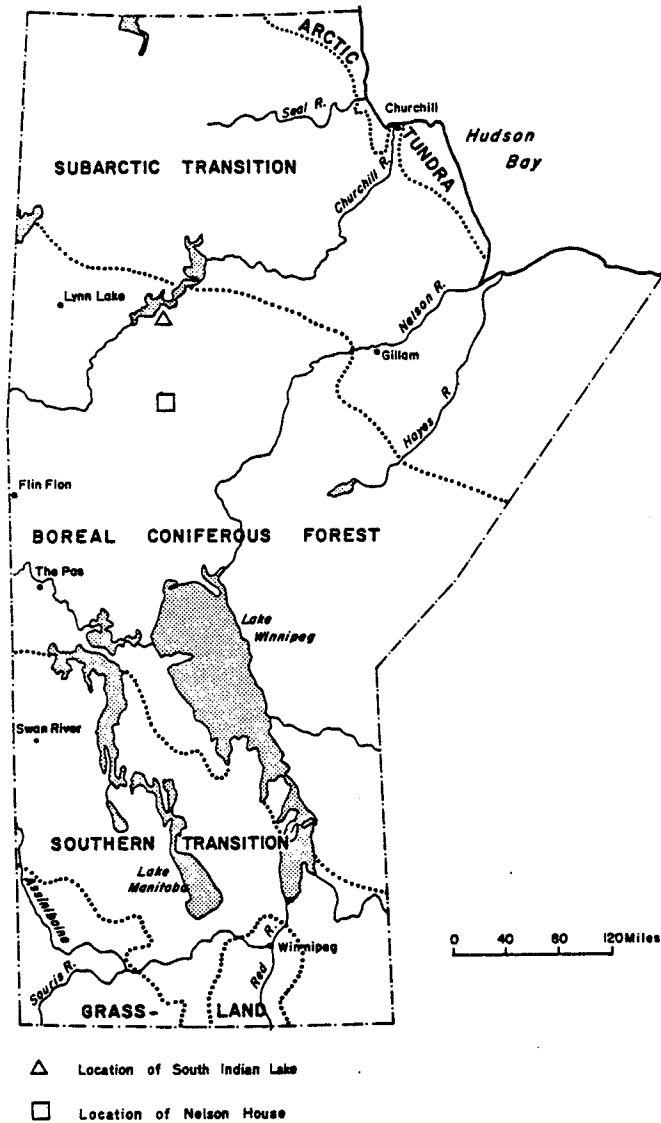
Both Nelson House band communities are located in the northern coniferous forest zone of Canada. The boreal forest in Manitoba stretches in a wide band across the north and central section of the province (Map 5). On the south, it is bordered by parkland along the southern shore of Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg, and on the north by the Churchill River. South Indian Lake community lies near the transition zone. In terms of the Koppen-Geiger system of climatic classification, the area is considered a Dfc, characterized by long, cold, snowy winters and short, cool summers, with annual temperatures ranging between -10°F and 70°F (Strahler, 1965:124).

The boreal forest is composed of large numbers of relatively few species.

The number of species of plants and animals that have adapted to the rigorous conditions of the north are quite limited . . . The forest is composed of a few species . . . The numbers of animals too are limited and in general only homeothermal land animals can be active in winter hence the most important mammals are the ungulates, the rodents and the carnivores.
(Feit, 1969:61)

MAP 5.

ENVIRONMENTAL ZONES IN THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA



Adapted from Wrigley et al, Animals of Manitoba.

Both communities of the Nelson House band are located in the Boreal forest. South Indian Lake is on the Churchill River system and Nelson House is on the Nelson River system.

This specialization combined with a low productivity, due to the limited amount of solar radiation that the northern forest is exposed to, creates a relatively unstable ecosystem. However, the shores of numerous streams, rivers, lakes, and marshes harbour a larger number and greater variety of plant and animal species than the forest (Feit, 1969:61). Hence there are areas in the subarctic which offer a variety of resources. Notably, these same areas offer the attraction of easy transportation. The resources consist of such plants as berries; of such mammals as caribou, moose, lynx, river otter, wolverine, mink, fisher, black bear, marten, fox, wolf, muskrat, beaver, and hare; of such birds as loon, Canada goose, duck, hawk, grouse, ptarmigan, and swan; of such fish as trout, whitefish, pike, sucker, pickerel, and perch (Wrigley, et al, 1974; Feit, 1969; Gunn, 1760). Due to their natural cycle, the exploitability of the plants and animals varies with season and locale; duck, for example, are more readily available in late summer/early fall, and fish in the summer.

To utilize the food resources available in the forest, a population must be flexible. The boreal forest can not sustain large populations for long periods of time in particular locales. Small groups, however, can be maintained for limited periods in various locations.

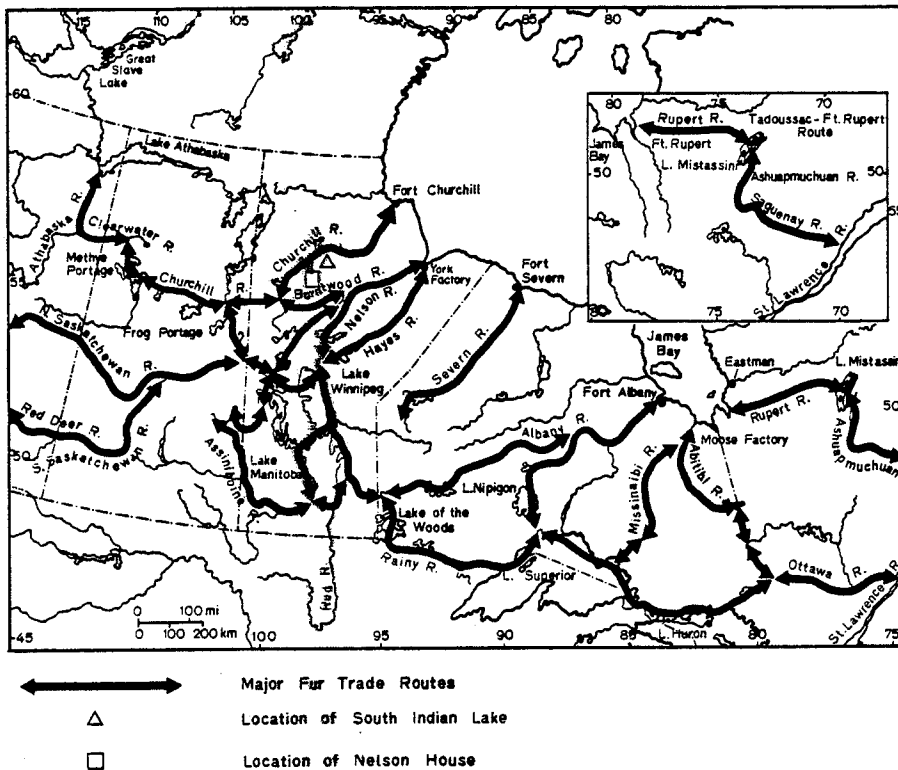
CHAPTER II

ETHNOHISTORY

Contact between European and Cree was the result of the European fur trade. European settlements or trading posts were established in strategic locations in Canada during the 17th century for the purpose of obtaining furs from the native population (Map 6). Trading posts were manned by European males. Goods such as guns, axes, blankets, chisels, knives, coats, and twine were traded for the Indian's fur pelts.

The role of the Cree in the fur trade changed as the nature of the trade altered. Bishop and Ray have generated a descriptive model ". . . predicated upon a consideration of the changing nature of Euro-Indian interaction . . ." within which Cree society can be viewed from pre-contact to the modern era (1976:128). In the model a chronological framework is established with three periods: Prehistoric, Protohistoric (1630-1730), Historic (1730-), which are divided into one, two, and five "eras" respectively: Archaic to Late Woodland Era, Indirect Trade Era, Middleman Era, Early Fur Trade Era (1730-1763), Competitive Trade Era (1763-1821), Trading Post Dependency Era (1821-1870), Era of Early Government Influence (1870-1945), and Modern Era (1945-).

MAP 6.



MAJOR FUR TRADE ROUTES

Adapted from Ray & Freeman,
 'Give Us Good Measure', 1978
 p. 28.

Both communities, Nelson House
 and South Indian Lake, developed
 as a result of the fur trade.
 Both were on fur trade routes:
 Nelson House on the Burntwood;
 South Indian Lake on the Churchill.

According to Bishop and Ray, the arrival of Europeans delineates the Prehistoric Period from the Protohistoric Period. The latter period is characterized by the relative independence of the Indian in spite of the presence of Europeans. European axes, blankets, chisels, coats, guns, knives, and twine were secured by the natives for use in their daily activities. The transition to the Historic Period is marked by the increasing use and thereafter dependence of the native population on European goods and by changes in European marketing methods and policies. In the early part of the Historic Period (1730-1763), Europeans travelled inland to trade with the Indians. After the English gained control of Canada in 1763, numerous trading posts were established in Indian territory by a number of trading companies. The major companies involved were the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company. In 1821, the companies amalgamated, placing control of western Canada and the fur trade in the hands of one mercantile company, the Hudson's Bay Company. In 1870, control of western Canada was transferred from the company to the Canadian government. The transition reflects a major change in Euro-Canadian marketing policy. Other profitable resources found in western Canada such as land for settlement and agriculture and minerals for export were to be utilized.

The intensity with which the fur trade was developed, the policies advocated by the traders, and changes in those policies, demonstrate the importance of the trade to

the Europeans involved.

Prehistoric Period

Prior to contact, northern Manitoba was occupied by Cree and Chipewyan speaking peoples. The region northwest of the Churchill River was inhabited by the Chipewyan, whereas the area below was occupied by the Cree (Wright, 1968:3; Map 7). In contrast, the Hudson Bay Lowlands were unoccupied (Orecklin, 1975; Map 5).

During this period the Cree were dispersed in small hunting, fishing, and gathering units over large tracts of land. The units were not isolated: there was a continuous fusing, dispersing and regrouping in relation to seasonally differentiated resources and social forces. Rogers calls such a unit a hunting group (1969:28). It consisted of ten to thirty-five individuals (Bishop, 1970:8; Dunning, 1959:55; Fisher, 1969:15; Hallowell, 1949; Leacock, 1969:9; Rogers, 1963:26). The group spent the greater part of the winter together in what has been called a hunting territory. Large game--bear, caribou, and moose--was the primary source of subsistence.

Ties between hunting groups were a reflection of their alliance system and the spatial arrangement of hunting territories (Wertman, 1976:3-5). Alliances were for the purpose of creating "productive group unity" (Wertman, 1976). In such a system, economically important members of the hunting unit were able to move between groups and gain

access to other territories. According to Wertman

In a system of alliances based on creating productive group unities, the kinship system will generally reflect the fact that people from one group can be residing on the territory of some other groups, and also reflects the possibility of people from another group potentially residing on one's own group's territory. The manner in which this is done is by considering, once the alliance has been decided upon, the incoming group as a part of one's own group (1976:6).

Residence as well as affinals were pragmatically determined. Such a system Wertman terms "incorporative" (1976:8).

In early spring, May/June, the hunting groups of contiguous territories would meet at "favourable fishing sites" where they hunted and fished communally. The period during which the group fused varied from a few weeks to a few months. Rogers defines such groups as

. . . loosely structured units . . .
 . . comprising 75 to 125 people,
 inhabiting a drainage basin alone
 or in conjunction with other such
 groups . . . all of whom were
 generally under the leadership of
 a head man . . . (1969:46)

The term "band" has been applied to this larger unit (Rogers, 1963:71; 1969:26; Leacock and Helm, 1971:365; Honigmann, 1959:59).

Ray has suggested that the Cree were involved in two different subsistence patterns. In the regions near the lowlands, the boreal forest was exploited. In the regions near the parkland, both the forest and the parkland

were exploited (Ray, 1974:35-46; Map 5). The Parkland Cree would gather in large groups in the spring and early summer at lakes and rivers in the northern forest. In the late summer they would move on to the parklands to hunt bison (Ray, 1974:46).

Protohistoric Period 1630-1730

The French in New France were the first Europeans to establish trading relations with the Cree. The Cree traded their furs to natives in the Lake Nipigon region who in turn traded the furs to the French in the St. Lawrence Valley (Mandelbaum, 1940:172; Ray, 1974:12). As a result, the Cree migrated to the east abandoning the Southern Indian Lake region (Map 7). With the establishment of an English trading post, York Factory, at the mouth of the Nelson River in the Hudson Bay in 1683, the movement was halted. The Cree in northern Manitoba became directly involved in the fur trade. Boreal forest Cree inhabiting the regions around the Hudson Bay gravitated toward the Bay Post becoming the "Home Guard" and later the Swampy Cree. Boreal forest-parkland Cree became "middlemen" in the fur trade (Plains Cree).

The Cree traded furs for European axes, blankets, chisels, coats, guns, knives, and twine (Bishop, 1972:63). With the firearms, the Cree were able to expand at the expense of their northern and southwestern neighbours (Kenney, 1932; Mandelbaum, 1936: 1940). Between 1717 and

1784, they were occupying the region between the Churchill River and Lake Manitoba and Lake Winnipeg (Map 9). By 1714, they had actually moved beyond the Churchill River in northwestern Manitoba (Map 8); however, with the establishment of a HBC post at the mouth of the Churchill in 1717 (Luchak, 1977:12), the Chipewyans were able to arm themselves and drive the Cree back into the Churchill River region (Ray, 1974:22-23; Map 9).

The Cree territorial expansion during this period is an indication of their demographic stability. The Cree were able to increase the size of their territory at the expense of their neighbours. Presumably, if a population were suffering from repeated or long term demographic declines they would not be able to accomplish this, even with superior military technology.

Historic Period:

Early Fur Trade and Competitive Fur Trade Era 1730-1821

The transition to the Historic Period is marked by changes in European conduct of the fur trade. The changes were in response to intense trade competition. Between 1730 and 1751, the French established trading posts in southern Manitoba (Fort Maurepas 1734, Lake Winnipeg; Fort Dauphin 1741, Lake Winnipegosis) and along the Saskatchewan River (Fort Bourbon 1741, Fort Paskoyac 1750, Fort la Corne 1751). Following the collapse of the French regime in New France, numerous trading posts were located in

Manitoba and Saskatchewan by several companies. Of these the Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) and the Northwest Company (NWC) were the most significant. The changes made in European trading methods resulted in economic as well as demographic reversals for the Cree.

The Cree had once extracted a healthy profit as middlemen in the fur trade (Milloy, 1972:31-34). Guns, purchased for fourteen beaver furs from the HBC could be sold for fifty beaver furs to the Blackfoot after a year of use (Milloy, 1972:69). A knife, bought for a third of a beaver fur, could be sold for four beaver furs (Milloy, 1972:69). The establishment of inland posts allowed the Europeans to circumvent the Cree trading network, consequently reducing Cree involvement and profit in the trade. It has been suggested that the Cree response was to move onto the prairies to serve the inland posts as food suppliers.

After the year 1774 . . . the fur trade placed a new demand upon the Indian and his environment. Whereas previously the traders wanted only the valuable fur . . . they now needed a constant supply of nourishing portable food to support their increasingly far-flung operation . . . the beaver were still abundant but the Cree had chosen to opt out of the peltry trade and to adopt the plains, to become fully involved in hunting the buffalo. (Milloy, 1972:86-90)

As a result of company competition, the number of European males in western Canada grew between 1730 and

1821; consequently, native exposure to Europeans also increased. The possibility of their contracting European diseases grew. In 1737, La Verendrye reported "the Winnipeg Cree . . . at Fort Maurepas had all died of smallpox" (Milloy, 1972:169). Hayden, Peeco, McConnell, Umfreville, Thompson, and Hearne reported the Assiniboines, Blackfoot, Cree, Chipewyans as well as many other native groups contracted smallpox between 1778 and 1784 (Mandelbaum, 1936:66).

Small pox is not an age selective disease, though, as with any disease, the physically and/or psychologically weak are more susceptible (Dixon, 1962). Hence, the "widows, orphans and helpless people" (Williams, 1969:192), "the hungry . . . , the naked . . . , the sick" (Williams, 1969:327) natives who were harboured by the European traders at their posts were the most susceptible element of the native population. They were probably "devastated" by the epidemic. It may well have been these individuals which were described by Hearne in his statement ". . . smallpox . . . carried off nine-tenth of them . . ." (Glover, 1958:115).

Researchers such as Hlady and Jenness have described the epidemic as demographically "devastating" for the Cree. However, Hlady bases his conclusion on Jenness (1960:29). Unfortunately, Jenness does not document his own statement (1932:284). Heidenreich, in his study of Huronia, concluded that an unvaccinated population would suffer a fifty to

seventy percent loss as a result of smallpox (1971:97). However his figures are based on those of S.F. Cook, H.F. Dobyns, and David Thompson which are exaggerated (1971:96). Moreover, differences in the demographic distributions of the societies on which the calculations are based were not taken into account. He assumes smallpox will affect an agricultural society with large population aggregates to the same degree as it would a hunter-gatherer society. This is not the case. Furthermore, he does not take into account possible differences in the virulency of the disease from one population and period to another. There are two different types of smallpox. One of which is more deadly than the other. Heidenreich's figures are not reliable.

Ray suggests thirty-three to fifty percent of the Cree population died in the 1778-1784 epidemic, on the basis of the estimated number of Assiniboine deaths (Ray, 1974:111). As his figures are generated from a similar population during the same epidemic and are based on a critical analysis of available period data it would seem fairly safe to apply this figure to the Cree situation. With a thirty-three to fifty percent loss in the population, the number of hunting groups and possibly bands would have been reduced and their territorial base would have decreased in size. However, the children, the old, and the sick would have been most affected by the epidemic (Dixon, 1962; Heidenreich, 1971). Hence the child bearing segment of the population was probably maintained and demographic recovery

was possible.

Between 1784 and 1815, Southern Indian Lake was abandoned by the Cree (Ray, 1974:98, 100). The cause was either a migration southwest to Cumberland House District (HBC Archives B49/3/1:4) which was precipitated by the change in their economic condition (Ray, 1974:102), or the decimation of hunting groups in the region as a result of the 1778-1784 epidemic, or both migration as well as depopulation.

In spite of the decline in the Cree population in northwestern Manitoba, the trading companies struggled for control of the trade in the region. The NWC had built posts on Cross Lake, Sipiwesk Lake, and on Three Point Lake (1789-90) which were successful in intercepting a percentage of furs destined for the HBC posts on the Bay: Fort Prince of Wales (Churchill Factory) and York Factory (Wiersum, 1973: 23; Morton, 1939:440-442). Although none of the posts remained in operation for more than a year, their strategy was effectively causing a loss of trade at York Factory between the years 1789-1790 (Morton 1939:444). In response to the loss of trade, both HBC factories established posts in the region. York Factory built posts in 1793-1794 on Wintering Lake and Sipiwesk Lake, and in 1794-1795 on Cross Lake and Three Point Lake. Churchill Factory built posts along the Churchill River. Unfortunately for Churchill Factory, trade declined as a result of the establishment of the inland York Factory posts. A conflict ensued

(Davies, 1975:34; Luchak, 1978:124-125). In order to resolve the conflict, it was decided in 1799 that York Factory would not establish posts beyond Split Lake (Johnson, 1967:LIX). Churchill Factory controlled the fur trade in northwestern Manitoba for the HBC.

Between 1799 and 1821, Churchill Factory built a number of posts in northwestern Manitoba. In 1799, there were posts on Southern Indian Lake, Loon Lake and Split Lake. In 1800, Southern Indian Lake was abandoned for a year and Nelson House on Nelson Lake was built. Between 1801 and 1821, fairly permanent HBC posts were maintained on Southern Indian Lake, Nelson Lake and Split Lake. On several occasions a post was established on Reindeer Lake. As the HBC built posts up and down the Churchill River, so did the NWC. In the journals of Southern Indian Lake (HBC Archives, B91/a/1 to 8) and Nelson House on Nelson Lake (HBC Archives, B141/a/1 to 11), mention was made of those "Frenchmen" from the Northwest Company.

The clientele of these various posts included both Chipewyans and Cree. The Chipewyans had moved into the areas abandoned by the Cree. HBC post journals for the region and period indicate that the Chipewyans not only occupied Southern Indian Lake but also the area between it, the Burntwood River and Reindeer Lake (HBC Archives B91/a/1-3). However, by 1821 the Cree were returning to the Churchill River region as the number of "Southern" (Cree) Indians

trading at the Southern Indian Lake post was increasing substantially (Map 11, 12; HBC Archives B91/a/4, 5).

Historic Period: Trading Post Dependency Era 1821-1870

In 1821, the Hudson's Bay Company and the Northwest Company merged. Control of western Canada and the fur trade was in the hands of the Hudson's Bay Company. With amalgamation, trading policy changed. The number of posts were reduced, the value of furs was regulated more closely and access to posts and trade goods were restricted to hunting groups in the vicinity of the posts (Rothney, 1975: 124-131). Changes in policy are reflected in letters and journal entries of the Chief Factor of the New Churchill District. In a letter to district personnel he comments on the effects of the merger.

. . . prove of Beneficial to the Country, the Natives and Ourselves tho' for the present the Indians are but too likely to be dissatisfied as losing the Harvest they expected from a Continued Competition, no now is the time for bringing them to their Senses and making them pay fairly and not unjustly . . .
(HBC B91/a/7)

In a journal entry he states his disapproval of behavior exhibited by an Indian family and suggests they may change their habits.

. . . to a party of N. Indians who came to the house with us I did not forget to relate the circumstances of the country being free from opposition this family being among those of their country man very fond of Roving from one place to another . . . (HBC B91/a/7)

In a letter to district personnel he approves of action taken to control native trading activities.

. . . I had but just arrived from Deers Lake when I received your letter sent here by the Indian . . . The manner in which you treated those few Indians who belong to this place (South Indian Lake), is just as you ought and which I highly approve of, this will, I hope prevent them, from deserting the Post to which they belong, and wasting their time in useless journeys to places they have no claim upon . . . in order to prevent this from happening posts are to exchange debit lists . . .
(HBC B91/a/7)

Moreover in a letter from Simpson in 1821 the Chief Factor is told to reduce the number of men on staff.

. . . you will be good enough to leave no more Servants Inland than are absolutely Required and not renew the Contracts of men whose Engagements expire as it is intended to make a very considerable reduction in that branch of the Establishment
(HBC B91/a/7)

The Indian's trading position had been undermined as a result of the merger of the two companies, and their reliance on European trade goods (Wertman, 1976:106). The changes in policy resulted in the association of particular hunting groups with particular trading posts. Such communities have come to be called trading post bands (Hickerson, 1956).

In 1821, "the Country between the Nelson and Churchill River . . . extending no further down the Churchill River than Indian Lake, and no lower in Nelson River than Split Lake" (HBC Archives B91/a/8) was called the New Chur-

chill District by the HBC. That year, there were four posts located in the area, one on Southern Indian Lake, one on Nelson Lake, one on Reindeer Lake, and one on Split Lake. In 1822, Reindeer Lake was abandoned while a winter post was built at Three Point Lake, so that in 1823 there were again four posts in the New Churchill District: Split Lake, Three Point Lake, Nelson Lake, and South Indian Lake. In 1824, the South Indian Lake post was abandoned and then in 1827 the Nelson Lake post, leaving only the Split Lake post (McRitchie, 1974:5). According to the Minutes of Council of the Northern Department of Rupert Land, the trade around Split Lake post had impoverished the region of Split Lake (1940:211). It was therefore decided in 1833 that the post would be abandoned and one established in its stead at Three Point Lake (Map 3). The post was initially called Fort Seaborn, but later it came to be known as Nelson House and was moved up to Footprint Lake (Map 3). The post journal from Fort Seaborn, 1833-1834 states:

I John Tod left York Factory 22nd Augt. in a small canoe, manned by two Indians and Benjn. Sinclair and reached the lake called Three Rivers this morning. Found the men, on entering the lake, at John Scott's old establishment, where they had landed the property with the intention of erecting a fort . . . the situation not being considered the most eligible for an establishment, it was immediately resolved to remove to another quarter of the lake . . .

Dried provisions was easily obtained from the natives who had had previous information of our determination to remove hither from Split Lake and had collected about the neighbourhood in anticipation of the arrival of the boat with the outfit. (HBC B195/a/1)

Between 1821 and 1833, the number of posts in the New Churchill District was reduced from four to one and the remaining post was built in the geographic centre of the district. The Chief Factor of the district had reported in 1823 that in his district the four posts served three groups of Swampy Ground Indians whose "hunting Grounds is the lowest down in the Nelson River . . .", six groups of Indians from the lower Nelson River region and the Burntwood River, six groups of Indians on the Churchill River between the Manitoba border and Southern Indian Lake, and four groups of Chipewyans in the Southern Indian Lake region (HBC Archives B91/a/8).

The hunting units reported in 1823 probably made up the Indian complement of the Nelson House post in 1833. The reported territories of natives frequenting the new post indicates that it was situated in the demographic as well as the geographic centre of the district. In 1866 and 1886, permanent trading posts were established at Cross Lake and Split Lake (Manitoba, Social Impact Team, Cross Lake Community Profile, 1974:17; Voorhis, 1930:166). In 1900, a permanent post was built on Pukatawagon Lake (McRitchie, 1974:6). These new posts undoubtedly drew some of their clientele from Nelson House.

In 1837, a major smallpox epidemic was reported in western Canada. It had begun in the mid-western states. In an attempt to forestall the epidemic, the HBC carried out an extensive vaccination program in the Plains region (Milloy, 1972:171) with the result that "the further spread of the disease was checked by late winter and the Woodland Indians were spared from its ravages" (Ray, 1975: 13). Consequently, there were fewer Cree deaths than would be expected (Milloy, 1972:171; Ray, 1975:13).

Historic Period:

Era of Early Government Influence 1870-1945

In 1869, the HBC relinquished, to the Canadian government, its title to the Hudson Bay Basin. The company's monopoly and major interest in the fur trade ended as indicated by their 1869 Annual Report,

We believe that the interests of the Company and the Dominion are identical, and we look forward with hopefulness to increased facilities in carrying on the trade. (HBC Annual Report, 1869:6)

and the 1871 Annual Report,

Besides the fur trade, we have other sources of profit open to this company . . . Hitherto we have had to deal with this country as one almost uninhabited except by Indians and our own servants; but now immigration is beginning, and a new population is beginning to spread over Manitoba and the Saskatchewan and other districts. That population will require supplies of all kinds,



and we have . . . the system of organization . . . to supply immigrants . . . I need not point out to you that anything we do to advance the interests of the Settlement tells directly upon the value of our own land in the Settlement, because the value of our land, if it is merely wild land, is nothing but the value of our land when Settlement begins will very rapidly increase . . . (HBC Annual Report, 1871:6-7)

With the sale, more Euro-Canadians for example government agents and independent traders were able to move into northwestern Manitoba. By the turn of the century, the Roman Catholics, Methodists, HBC and Hyer (an independent fur trader) were established in Nelson House (Gaudin, 1944; Morice, 1936; Shipley, 1955; Young, 1890; Map 3). They formed a nucleus around which the village community of the later decades developed. The Indians themselves resided in hunting units which maintained camps on the shores of lakes and rivers in northwestern Manitoba. At certain times of the year (in particular, December, June, July, and August) members of the hunting groups would venture to the post, or an outpost, to trade. Occasionally the trader would visit the Indian camps.

In 1908, the Indians of Nelson House entered into treaty relations with the government of Canada. The names which appear on the Nelson House Treaty List are essentially the same names that appear in a 1893-1894 Debt List for the Nelson House post (Table 15). This similarity between the two lists indicates there is continuity between

TABLE 15

Names associated with Post Debt List (1893) and Treaty List (1908)

Name	Year	
	1893	1908
Angus	1	1
Bonner	3	3
Chammuck	5	0
Charlush	1	0
Celestin	0	1
Donkey	2	1
Flett	3	4
Francois	1	4
Hart	10	10
Hartie	5	3
Hearty	0	4
Hood	0	1
Hunter	1	1
Januick	0	1
Linklater	13	13
Lobster	0	1
McDonald	1	2
Mitchell	2	0
Moody	2	Girl
Moore	1	1
Moose	8	10
Ninnie	2	1
Pasced	1	0
Pipoonway	0	1
Sinclair	2	0
Spence	10	12
Tood	2	0
Wood	4	2

The numbers under the years represent the number of male heads of families that are found with the name. The word, girl, indicates that there are no males with the name but there is a female.

The information for this table has been taken from an 1893 post debt list housed in the HBC archives and the 1908 Nelson House treaty list housed in the archives of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, Ottawa.

the trading post band and government bands.

Between 1908 and 1932, the Hudson Bay Railway was built between Winnipeg and Churchill to facilitate grain export (Map 1). Between 1919 and 1940, a large number of Euro-Canadian men trapped in northern Manitoba (HBC Archives B195/a/5-6; Jackson, 1926:26). Ease of access as well as a scarcity of jobs in southern Canada after World War I and an increase in the value of fur (HBC Annual Reports, 1932; 1939) were the causes of the influx. Competition for furs was keen and the number of independent traders increased (HBC Archives B195/a/4-6). To deal with the competition, the HBC built a permanent post at Southern Indian Lake. The region was heavily trapped and by the 1930's, fur resources in northwestern Manitoba were depleted (Melven, 1938:6). It is at this time that the Nelson House Indians began moving into the reserve and settling in the community.

Summary

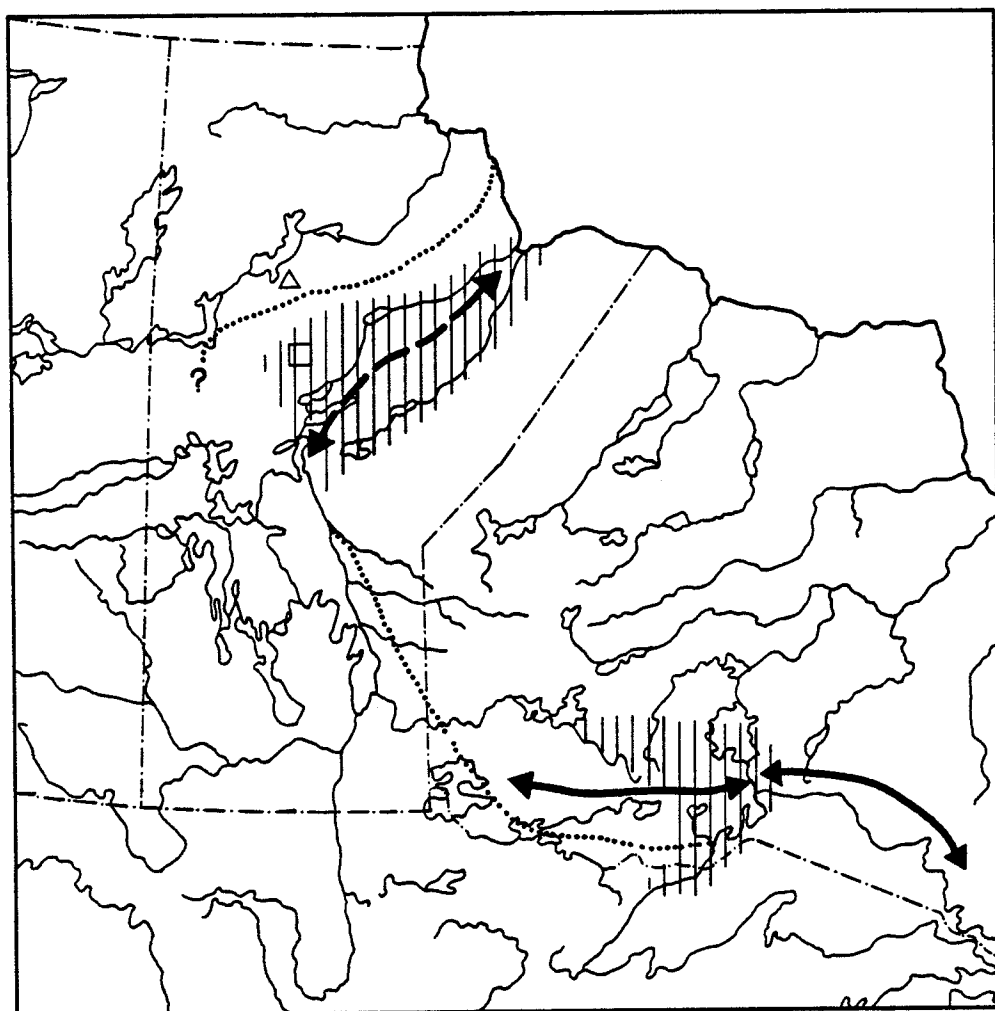
For the Cree, involvement in the European fur trade over a 300 year span resulted in a change in their economic orientation. More emphasis was placed on trapping and trapping associated activities. Hunting (trapping) groups were maintained but decreased in size such that by the 20th century hunting groups consisted of two male trappers and their families (Turner and Wertman, 1978:13). Productive group unity was emphasized as it allowed a necessary degree of movement between hunting groups and hunting territories.

Since the best trapping regions were along shore lines, territories were aligned accordingly, emphasizing the importance of the riverine environment. Band associations were maintained. The annual meeting may have coincided with their trading activities. Hunting groups and/or bands which were associated with particular trading posts came to be called trading post bands during the 19th century. In the late 19th century/early 20th century, these larger groupings entered into treaty relations with the Canadian government and as such were listed as bands in government documents.

The role of the Cree in the fur trade changed as the nature of the trade altered. In the protohistoric period, the Cree functioned as merchants (middlemen). Furs were obtained from native groups further inland, then traded to Europeans at a profit. Europeans changed their marketing methods in the first half of the Historic Period. Trading posts were established beyond Cree territory, circumventing the Cree trading network and relegating the Cree to the role of supplier. Fur and/or food was traded for European goods and services. In the mid-19th century, European marketing policy changed. Land was sought for settlement and agriculture. Mineral resources such as nickel were to be extracted for use in industrialization. The effects of the change were not immediately felt by the boreal forest natives (Asch, 1977). At the time, there were few resources in the subarctic, besides fur, which the Europeans could exploit.

The importance of the trade to the European is documented, in the struggle between the NWC and HBC in the late 18th and early 19th centuries, in the care with which the HBC located their posts after their amalgamation with the NWC, and in the intensity with which they attempted to control the native population in the 19th century. Moreover, the various roles the native played were important to the trade (Fisher, 1977; Innis, 1956; Nelson, 1973; Zlotkin and Colbourne, 1977). Hence Europeans had a special interest in the health and welfare, that is, maintenance, of the native population. The sick and elderly natives were cared for at posts (Williams, 1969:327), attempts were made to quell native warfare (Kenny, 1932), and natives were vaccinated against diseases when possible (Milloy, 1972: 172; Ray, 1975).

The following series of maps (7-12) illustrates changes in the cultural geography of the Cree between 1690 and 1860. The fluctuations were responses to changes in their subsistence base, to technological innovations as well as to changes in their demographic profile. In spite of these fluctuations, the Nelson House region remained Cree while the South Indian Lake region was shared with the Chipewyans.



----- Assiniboine Tribal Territory 1658-90

..... Probable Limits of Cree Territory 1658-90

▨ Areas frequented for Trade by Assiniboine 1658-90

Principal Orientation of Fur Trade:

 Prior to 1670
 After 1670

0 100 200 Miles
 0 100 300 Kilometres

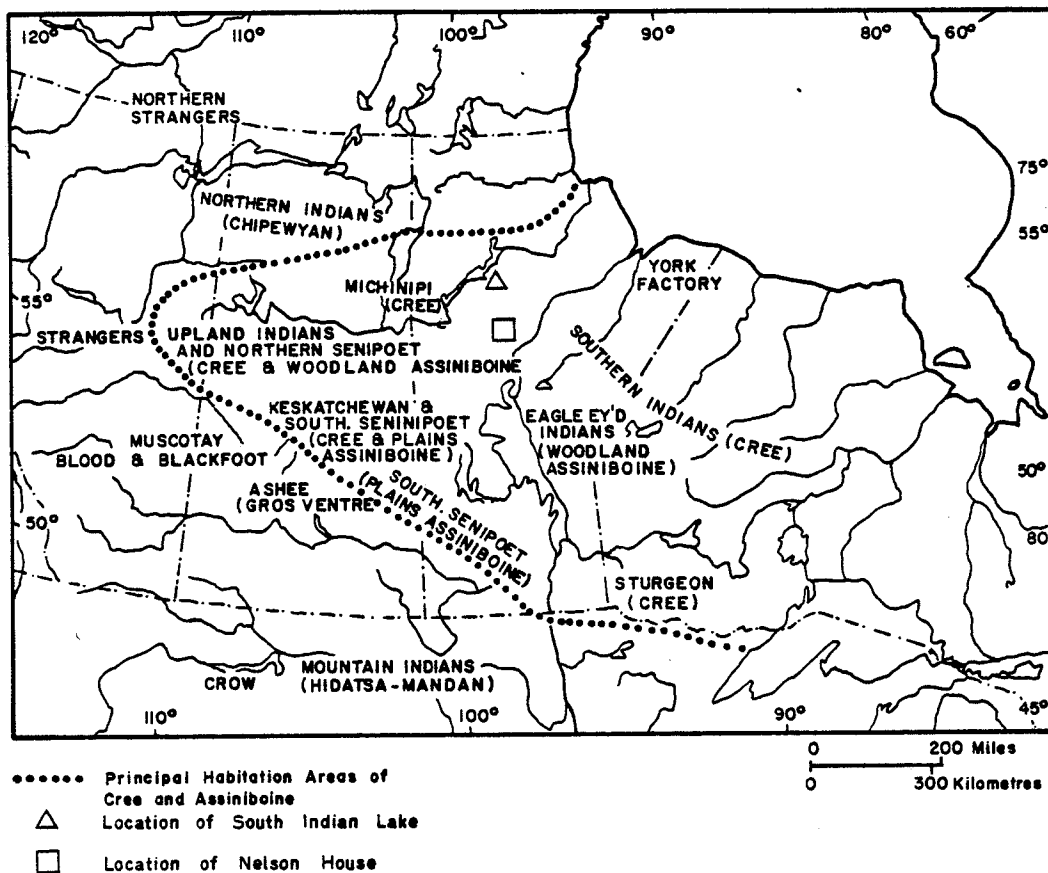
△ Location of South Indian Lake

□ Location of Nelson House

MAP 7. CULTURAL GEOGRAPHY OF NORTHERN ONTARIO AND MANITOBA TO 1690

Adapted from Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 1974, p.5

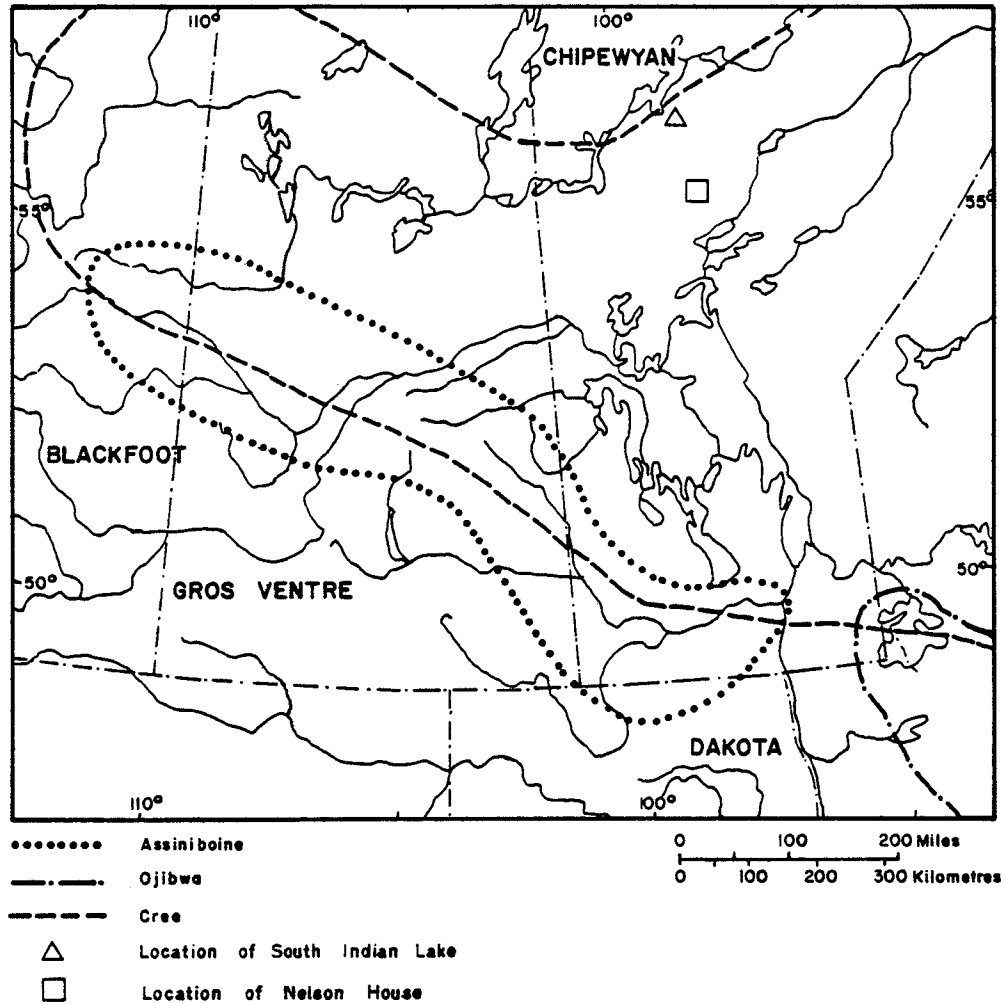
MAP 8.



DISTRIBUTION OF INDIANS TRADING AT YORK FACTORY
1714-1717

Adapted from Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 1974, p.20

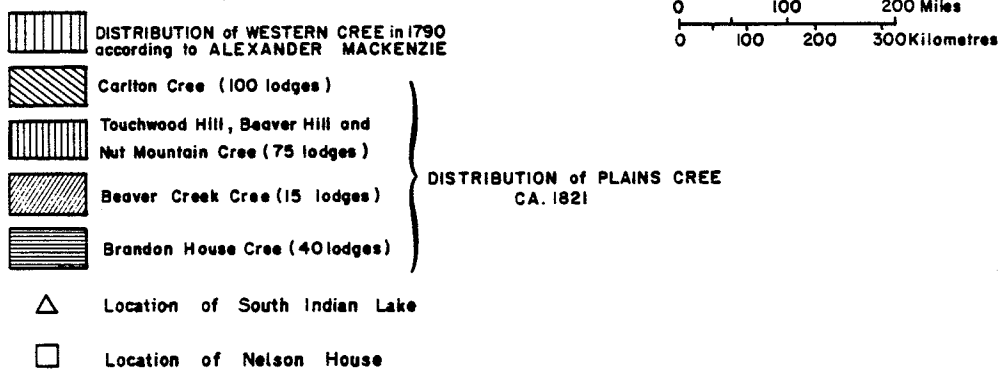
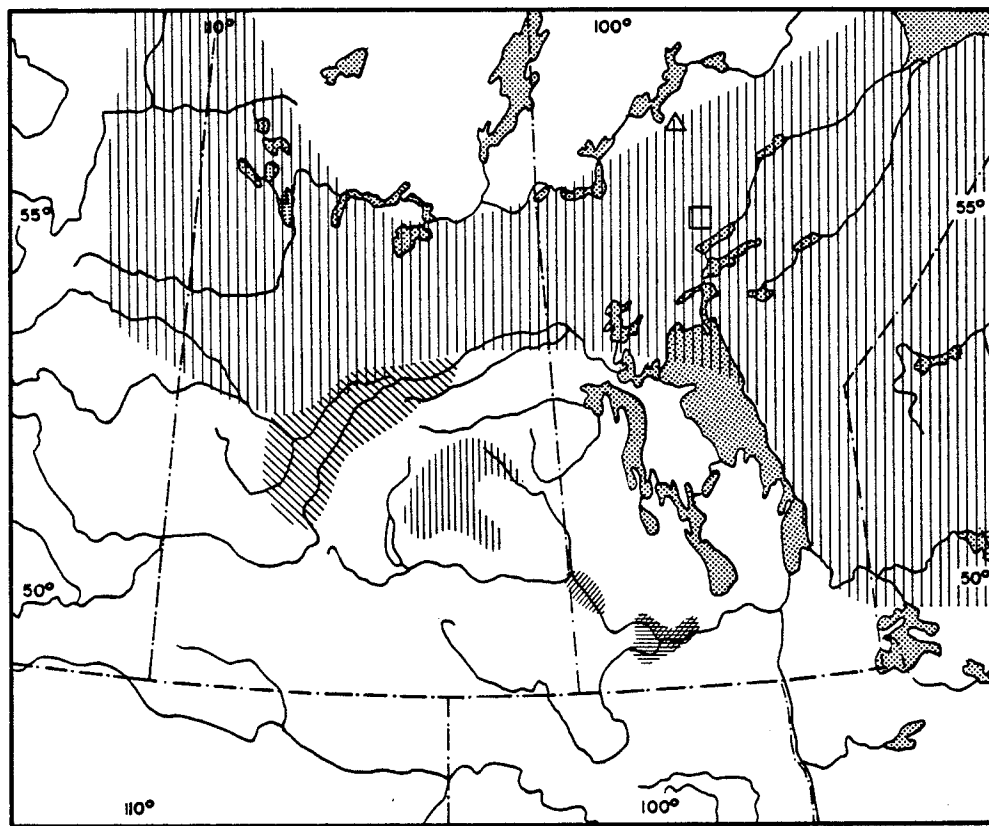
MAP 9.



TRIBAL DISTRIBUTIONS CA. 1765

Adapted from Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 1974, p.22

MAP 10.

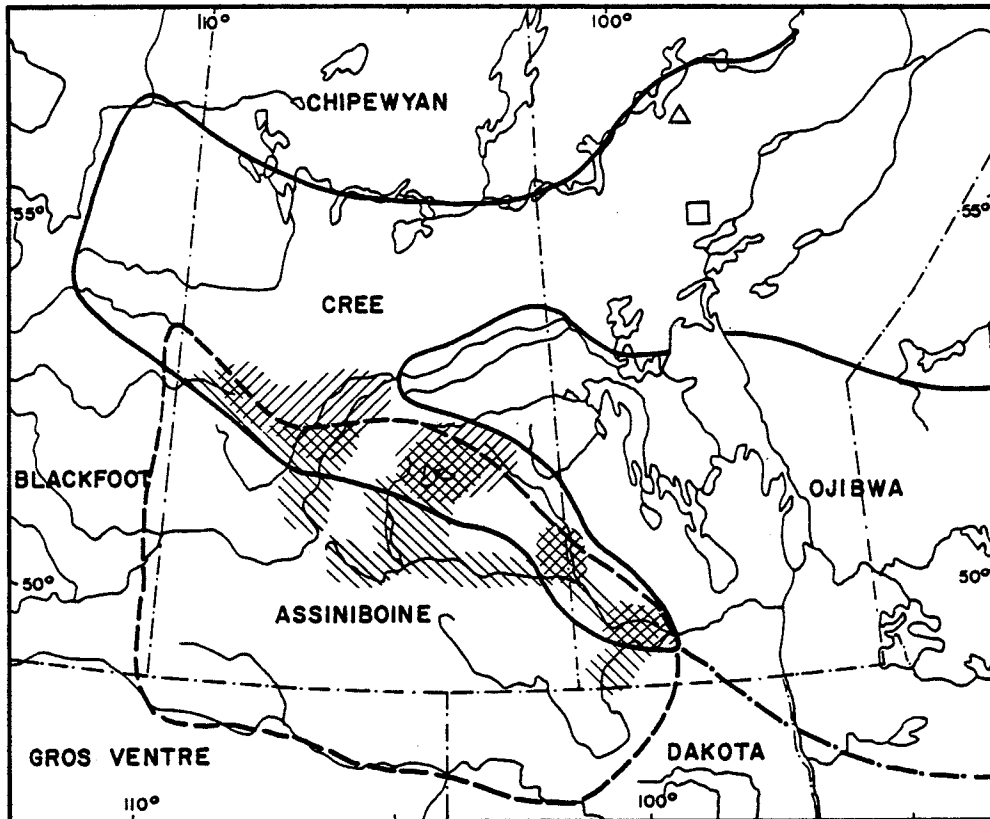


DISTRIBUTION OF CREE 1790-1821

Adapted from Ray, Indians in the Fur Trade, 1974, p.100

MAP 11.

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTIONS IN 1821



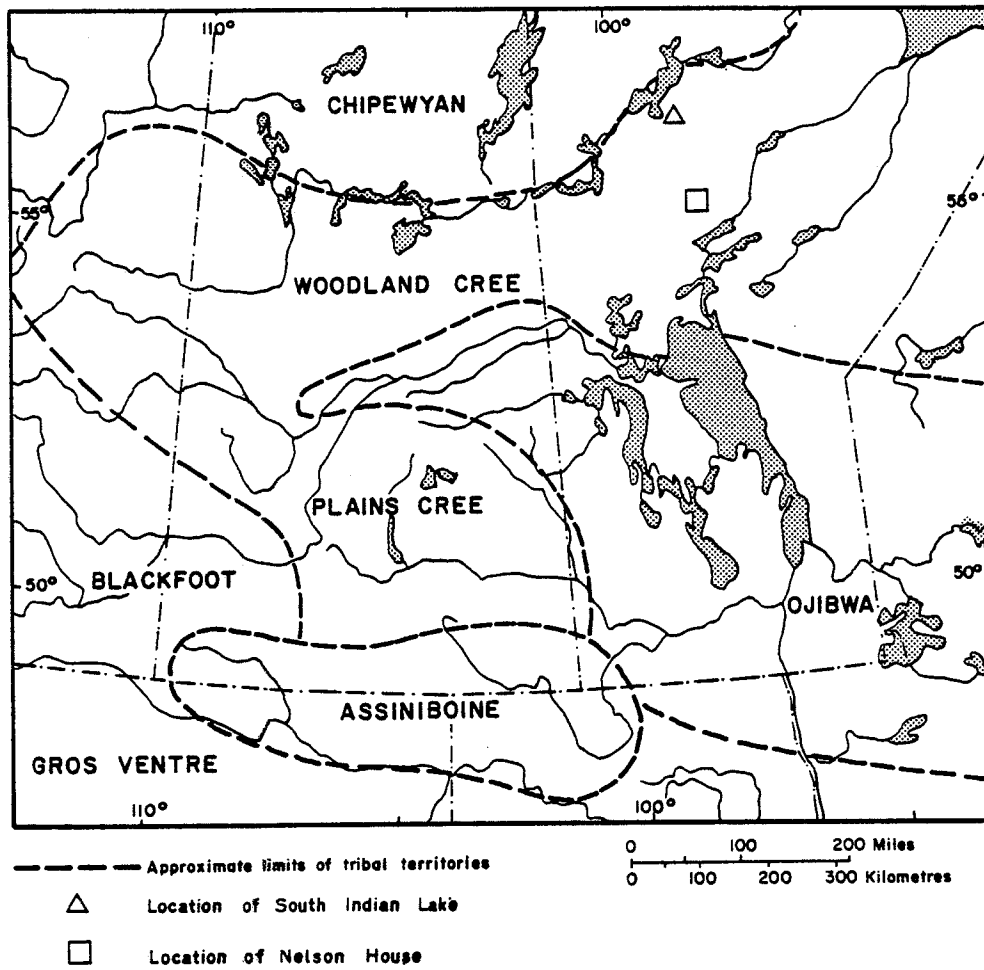
- Approximate limits of Cree Territory
- - - Approximate limits of Assiniboine Territory
- · - · - Approximate limits of Ojibwa Territory
- ▨ Principal wintering of the Plains Cree
- ▩ Principal wintering of the Assiniboine
- △ Location of South Indian Lake
- Location of Nelson House

0 100 200 Miles
0 100 200 300 Kilometres

Adapted from Ray, *Indians in the Fur Trade*, 1974, p.101

MAP 12.

TRIBAL DISTRIBUTIONS IN 1860



Adapted from Ray, 1974, p.184

CHAPTER III

DEMOGRAPHIC HISTORY

The age and sex composition as well as the number of births, deaths, and migration, are important determinants of the rate of growth or decline of a population (Bogue, 1969; Smith and Zopf, 1976). Hence, demographic data acquired for the Nelson House band has been analysed, when possible, in terms of the determinants.

No demographic data has been obtained for either the Protohistoric Period or the Early Historic Period, that is, the Early Fur Trade and Competitive Fur Trade Era. Information for the Trading Post Dependency Era has been acquired from the chief factor's report for the New Churchill District (HBC Archives B91/a/8). Data for the Era of Early Government Influence has been extracted from the Annuity Lists for Nelson House (Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa) which cover the years 1908 to 1942. Tables 4-7 present the 1823 data. The 1908-1942 data is presented in Tables 8-14. Figures 5-11 illustrate this data.

Reliability of Demographic Data

Neither the factor's report or the Annuity Lists are accurate demographic representations of the population described. Inaccuracies in the data have been noted in an

effort to evaluate its usefulness.

The HBC factor dealt primarily with the Indian hunters. In his report, he appears to distinguish between Indians and halfbreeds/Metis, and has listed Indian hunters in his district by name (Tables 4-7). The number of women and children accompanying or associated with a particular hunter are noted. The factor obtained the information from his own visual assessment and by questioning hunters. The listing was generated over a twelve month period. The number of individuals under any one category (hunter, number of women, number of children) may have changed due to a birth or a death and not have been recorded.

Government treaty obligations necessitated that five dollars be given to each member of an Indian family on Treaty Day. In order to fulfill the obligation, the native population was enumerated each year. Enumerations were carried out in a similar fashion to that of the HBC factor, with exceptions: 1) the government's enumeration took place within one to three days rather than 365, 2) births as well as deaths were noted. The resultant listing is called an annuity list (Tables 8-9).

The size of Indian bands can be accurately estimated from annuity lists. In describing the demographic structure of the Island Lake band for 1924, Sawchuk states:

. . . size and age-sex composition
issued from an analysis of the
tentative genealogical histories
of the Island Lake residents and
the application of information
yielded from the analysis of

marital patterns . . . Reconstruction of the Island Lake population aggregate as of 1924 resulted in the enumeration of a total resident population of 635 individuals. This value represents an increase of less than 1 percent over that figure of 625 quoted by the Department of Indian Affairs, 1924 (1972:44).

Demographic Data for 1823

In 1823, 375 Indians inhabited the New Churchill District, and of these 98 were men, 92 were women, and 185 were children (Table 5-6). Fifty-one percent of the population was adult and forty-eight percent were women. Of the 98 men, 80 (82%) were accompanied by a woman; 11 of these were associated with more than one woman (14%; Table 7). If these are in fact polygynous matings (they are not specifically identified as such by the factor), this percentage is below that reported for the Cross Lake, Island Lake and Berens River bands in 1875 by Hallowell (1938:240).

There were 19 hunting groups with a mean size of 19.7, with a range from 8 to 32 (Table 6). Four of the 19 hunting groups were Chipewyan, totalling 63 individuals (Table 5). The average group size was 15.8. The Chipewyan population was composed of 22 men, 18 women and 23 children, giving an average of 5.5 men, 4.5 women and 5.8 children per unit. A predominance of males (sex ratio 122.2) and of adults (63% of the population) was noted. Two of the fourteen hunters were accompanied by more than one woman (Table 7).

Fifteen of the hunting units, incorporating 312 individuals, were Cree (Table 5). The mean size of the groups was 20.6 with a range from 8 to 32 (Table 6). The population, composed of 76 men, 74 women and 162 children, had an average of 5.1 men, 5 women and 10.1 children per group. Males outnumbered females (sex ratio 102.7) and children outnumbered adults by 1.3%. The number of hunters accompanied by more than one woman totaled 9 or 16.4% (Table 7).

The Cree hunting groups were on the whole larger than the Chipewyans as a result of the larger number of children in the Cree units. In both cases the size of the units are smaller than that reported for the Osnaburgh House Ojibwa for that period (Bishop, 1974). The Cree population may have been growing faster than the Chipewyan which would help to explain the Cree movement into the Southern Indian Lake region at this time (Map 12).

Both the Cree and Chipewyan units are reported to have more adult males than adult females. The difference, however, is not large. As the factor dealt directly with the hunters rather than the women, the number of adult men is probably more accurately reported than the number of adult females. Hence the reported difference in size of the two sexes may not be real. If the difference was larger, more credence could be placed in it. The sex ratio does however contradict Clark Wissler's theory (1936a & b) that pre-reserve populations, such as pre-1908 Nelson

House, were characterized by an "excess of females".

The Hudson's Bay Company employees in the New Churchill District numbered 27 while their wives and children accounted for a further 23. In all there were, in 1823, approximately 425 people inhabiting the New Churchill District (Table 4).

Demographic Data for the Years 1908 to 1942

In 1908, one thousand and ninety-one Indians were listed as members of the Nelson House, Cross Lake and Split Lake bands. If Pukatawagon were to be included, the figure would likely increase to one thousand, four hundred. This was a four-fold increase from 1823.

In 1908, Nelson House was listed as having 392 band members. Of these, 73 were men, 84 were women, 113 were boys, and 122 were girls (Table 8). There were more females than males in the population (sex ratio 87) and more children (20% more) than adults (Tables 10-11, Figures 5-6). The sex and adult/children ratios are the reverse of the figures reported for 1823. This may be the result of enumeration bias, differential birth/death/migration rates, stochastic fluctuations which are expected in small populations, or a combination of two or more of these factors (Carroll, 1975a; Kunstadter, 1972; Salzano, 1972).

In 1942, Nelson House had 621 band members. Of these 149 were men, 155 were women, 159 were boys, and 158

were girls (Table 8). There were more females than males in the population (sex ratio 96) and two percent more children than adults (Tables 10-11, Figures 5-6).

Between 1908 and 1942, the number of adults increased, particularly the number of adult males (Tables 10-11, Figure 6). This was due to a decrease in the male birth rate (Tables 9, 11) and female emigration (marriage to Euro-Canadians). The population was young and expanding. On the average the birth rate was higher than the death rate (Table 12, Figures 7-8). Interestingly, between 1930 and 1942, the birth rate is increasing as the death rate increases. Not surprisingly the increase in the death rate was mainly among children (Table 13, Figures 9-10). The increase may be due to the depletion of fur resources in the region which resulted in starvation and malnutrition for many young children.

Very little is known of emigration and immigration rates in the region. However, between 1910 and 1914, approximately 21 individuals transferred to the Pukatawagon band from the Nelson House band. Further, during the period from 1908 to 1942, there were approximately 16 marriages entered into by members of the Nelson House and Pukatawagon bands and 30 people from Nelson House transferred into Pukatawagon. There were seven marriages plus two transfers between Nelson House and Cross Lake. Between Split Lake and Nelson House, there were two transfers. The amount of movement and the number of marriages between the

four bands may be correlated to the time of establishment of the trading posts involved. Permanent trading posts had been established on Cross Lake in 1866, on Split Lake in 1886 and on Pukatawagon Lake in 1900. These posts undoubtedly drew some of their clientele from Nelson House. The later a post was established, the closer its biological relationship is to Nelson House.

Between 1916 and 1942, there is a 38% increase in the Nelson House population (Table 14, Figure 11). An increase in size is shown, in spite of years in which they suffered as much as a 7% loss during an influenza epidemic in 1925 (Table 14, Figures 8-9). The growth in population is associated with the permanent settlement of numerous hunting groups in proximity to Euro-Canadian agencies. In the 26 year period between 1942 and 1968, the band increased 124%. The rapid growth was the result of improved medical care. This growth is correlated with the modern era.

Summary

Between 1823 and 1968, the Nelson House band increased in size. The increase between 1823 and 1908 was smaller than that between 1908 and 1968. The difference may be attributable to improvements in medical services.

TABLE 4
 New Churchill District¹ - HBC Employees 1823

Name	Comments	Size of Family
1. John Charles		6
2. Joseph Spence		3
3. Edward Mowat		5
4. John Scott		
5. David McKenzie		
6. John Robertson		3
7. John Ballenden		
8. James Corrigall		
9. James Fouquan		
10. Andrew Flett		
11. William Folster		
12. David Garson		1
13. Joseph Johnson		
14. James McBeth		
15. William Morm		
16. George McDonald		
17. William Tate		
18. James Yorston		
19. Charles Leask		
20. James Norquay		
21. Andrew Wilson		
22. David Rabbit	Indian	
23. Wah, pah, Sah, gy	Indian	
24. Francois Loyer	Half-breed	5
25. William Harper	Half-breed	
26. Magnus Harper	Half-breed	
27. William Raymond	Half-breed	
		23

Total number of people associated with HBC ---- 50.

* Wife and children

1. HBC B91/a/8

TABLE 5

New Churchill District - Indian Population Composition 1823¹

Groups	Number of Sub-groups	Number of Hunters	Number of Women	Number of Children	Total
1	3	19	17	37	73
2	6	32	34	78	144
3	6	25	23	47	95
4	4	22	18	23	63
Total	19	98	92	185	375

A sub-group is a hunting unit.

A group is made up of sub-groups.

Group 1 is made up of sub-groups 1, 2, 3.

Group 2 is made up of sub-groups 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9.

Group 3 is made up of sub-groups 10 through 15.

Group 4 is made up of sub-groups 16 through 19.

Each group exploits a specific area. Groups 1, 2 and 3 are all Cree and inhabited the regions to the east, south and west of present day Nelson House. Group 4 inhabited the South Indian Lake region and were Chipewyan.

1. HBC B/91/9/8

TABLE 6

New Churchill District - Indian Sub-group Composition 1823¹

Sub-group	Number of Hunters	Number of Women *	Number of Children #	Total
1	5	4 (N)	11 (N)	20
2	5	5 (P,N)	11 (N)	21
3	9	8 (N)	15 (N)	32
4	6	6	15 (N)	27
5	5	5	11 (N)	21
6	5	5 (P,N)	9 (N)	19
7	6	6 (P,N)	15 (N)	27
8	5	6 (P)	15	26
9	5	6 (P)	13	24
10	3	3	2	8
111	6	6 (P,N)	16 (N)	28
12	4	3 (N)	9 (N)	16
13	4	5 (P)	5 (N)	14
14	4	2 (N)	2 (N)	8
15	4	4 (P,N)	13 (N)	21
16	6	5 (P,N)	7 (N)	18
17	6	5 (P,N)	4 (N)	15
18	5	3 (N)	4 (N)	12
19	5	5	8 (N)	18
Total	98	92	185	375

* P indicates that there is more than one woman accompanying an individual hunter in a sub-group. No inferences can be made as to the relationship between these men and women.

* N indicates that a hunter(s) in a sub-group does not have a woman accompanying him.

N indicates that a hunter(s) is/are without children.

1. HBC B/91/9/8

Mean number of people per group was 19.7.

TABLE 7

New Churchill District -
 Number of Women Accompanied by Individual Hunters in the Indian Population
 1823

Sub- groups	Number of Hunters	Number of Hunters Accompanied By One Woman	Number of Hunters Accompanied by More than One Woman	Number of Hunters Not Accompanied By Women
1	5	4	0	1
2	5	2	1	2
3	9	8	0	1
4	6	6	0	0
5	5	5	0	0
6	5	3	1	1
7	6	4	1	1
8	5	4	1	0
9	5	4	1	0
10	3	3	0	0
11	6	2	2	2
12	4	3	0	1
13	4	3	1	0
14	4	2	0	2
15	4	2	1	1
16	6	3	1	2
17	6	3	1	2
18	5	3	0	2
19	5	5	0	0
Total	98	69	11	18

1. HBC B91/a/8

* Of the eleven individuals in this category, ten have two women accompanying them. In one case, one individual was accompanied by three women. Whether these associations are indicative of polygynous matings is not known.

Table 8

Nelson House Annuity List¹

Year	Women	Men	Boys	Girls	Others		Total
					Male	Female	
1908	84	73	113	122			392
1909	91	77	117	127			412
1910	91	75	126	136			428
1911	82	66	112	134			395
1912	89	71	129	138			430
1913	85	69	129	136			420
1914	84	77	130	151	7	2	461
1915	102	78	128	140	8	3	456
1916	98	75	126	144	9	4	456
1917	103	78	144	148	9	4	483
1918	108	81	139	153	9	3	493
1919	115	85	140	148	8	2	498
1920	117	84	147	157	8	2	515
1921	117	86	152	161	7	2	525
1922	126	96	167	163	5	2	559
1923	123	95	163	158	7	2	548
1924	122	91	162	152	8	3	538
1925	122	91	138	127	12	9	499
1926	121	95	143	117	12	8	496
1927	126	98	146	118	15	9	512
1928	124	101	151	116	16	9	517
1929	117	100	144	123	16	11	511
1930	117	101	145	117	8	8	496
1931	121	111	154	120	4	1	511
1932	126	112	148	133	3	1	523
1933	129	116	145	134			524
1934	132	122	149	126			529
1935	134	124	156	131			549
1936	135	127	160	137			559
1937	141	132	158	139			570
1938	141	134	163	142	5	2	593
1939	143	139	156	146			584
1940	150	139	162	146			597
1941	149	145	159	151			604
1942	155	149	159	158			621

1. Department of Indian Affairs (Ottawa).

TABLE 9

Nelson House Annuity List¹

Year	Born		Women	Died		Other ²	
	Girls	Boys		Men	Girls	Boys	In
1908							
1909	6	7	1	0	0	5	
1910	9	12	1	3	0	3	
1911	8	2	1	1	0	1	40
1912	11	13	0	0	1	0	37 22
1913	8	8	1	0	3	4	26 44
1914	14	9	3	1	4	7	36 3
1915	4	8	1	4	4	2	1 3
1916	13	6	2	2	3	2	0 13
1917	11	13	0	2	1	1	12 4
1918	9	9	0	1	5	3	7 0
1919	11	15	2	6	4	3	0 7
1920	14	11	1	4	5	5	8 0
1921	10	11	3	2	5	4	0 0
1922	11	18	5	2	6	2	3 0
1923	11	12	5	2	5	9	1 0
1924	11	9	0	4	7	2	
1925	17	17	11	7	28	30	1 3
1926	8	17	4	0	6	6	16 28
1927	10	14	5	1	6	5	28 19
1928	3	10	1	0	3	5	20 19
1929	15	5	3	2	3	12	6 12
1930	7	5	1	0	4	5	15 13
1931	10	10	4	3	7	5	20 25
1932	17	8	2	2	2	6	15 16
1933	13	4	2	4	8	5	23 20
1934	6	14	5	1	5	6	25 25
1935	16	14	1	2	6	4	9 10
1936	16	12	3	1	7	5	12 11
1937		29			18		16 16
1938		33			21		9 11
1939		32			33		15 10
1940		38			26		1 0
1941		35			25		12 15
1942		35			21		18 15

1. Department of Indian Affairs (Ottawa)
2. Other category indicates the number of individuals which were absent the previous year but are present in the year in question and the number absent in any given year.

Table 10

Nelson House - Age Percentage Composition

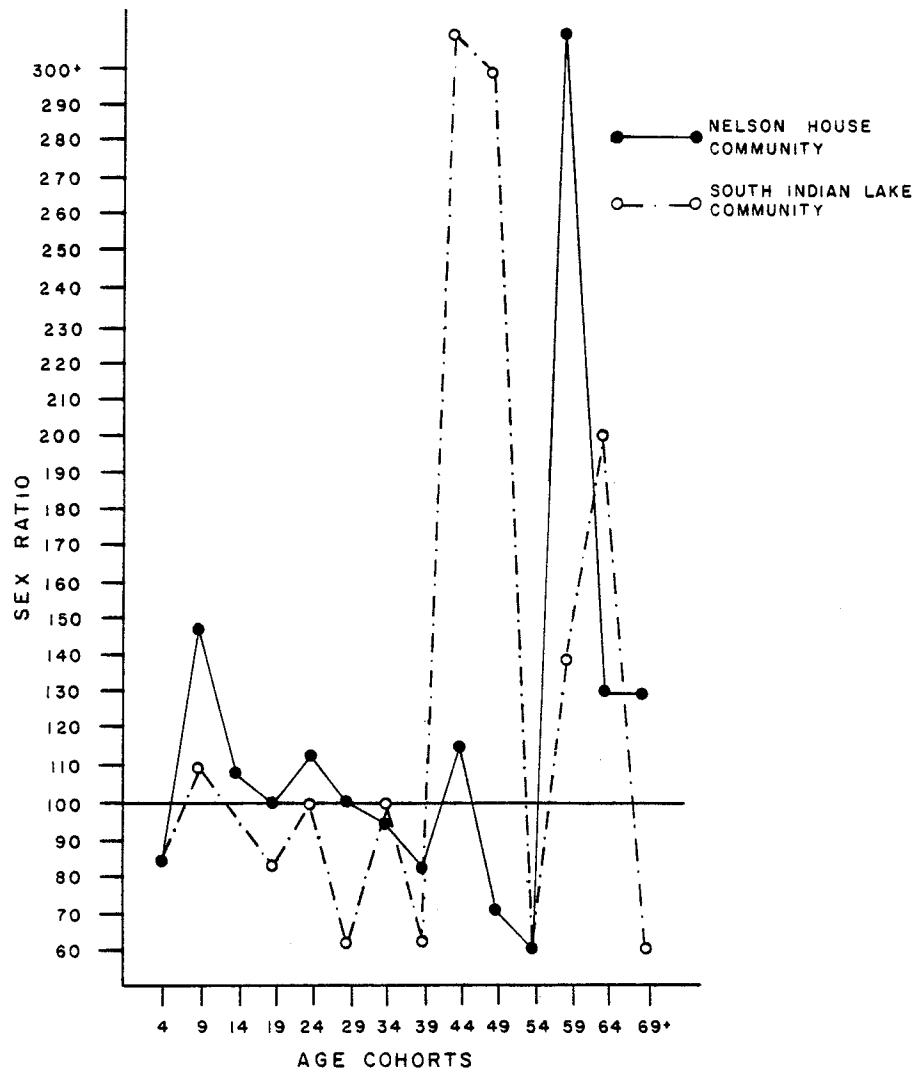
Year	Adults	Children
1908	40%	60%
1909	41	59
1910	39	61
1911	37	63
1912	37	63
1913	37	63
1914	38	62
1915	40	60
1916	39	61
1917	39	61
1918	39	61
1919	41	59
1920	40	60
1921	39	61
1922	40	60
1923	40	60
1924	40	60
1925	45	55
1926	45	55
1927	46	54
1928	46	54
1929	47	53
1930	47	53
1931	46	54
1932	46	54
1933	47	53
1934	48	52
1935	47	53
1936	47	53
1937	48	52
1938	47	53
1939	48	52
1940	48	52
1941	49	51
1942	49	51

Table 11

Nelson House - Sex Ratios for 1908 to 1942

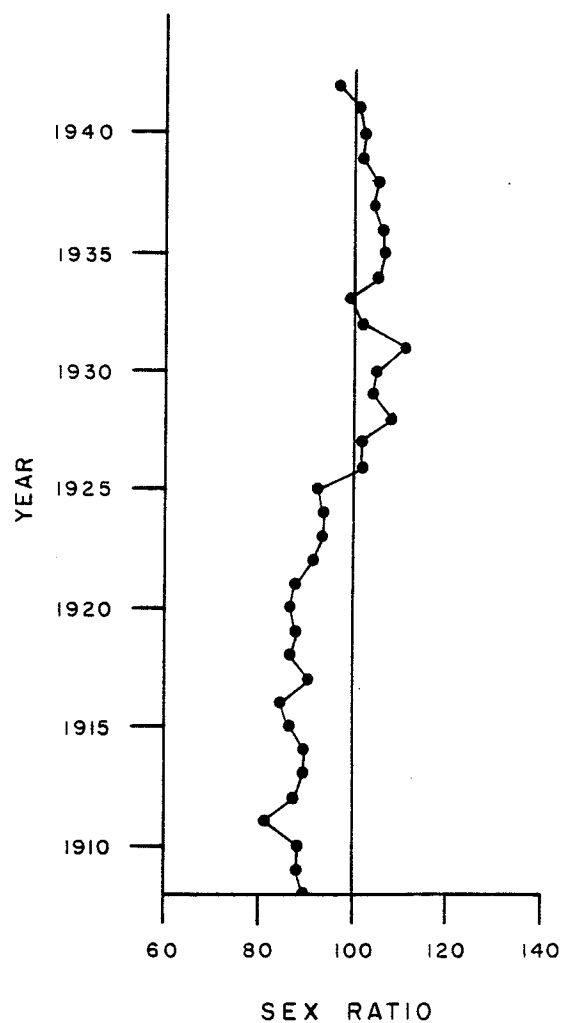
Year	Adult	Children	Birth
1908	87	93	
1909	85	92	117
1910	82	94	133
1911	83	84	25
1912	80	93	118
1913	81	95	100
1914	82	86	64
1915	76	91	200
1916	77	88	46
1917	76	97	118
1918	75	91	100
1919	74	95	136
1920	72	94	79
1921	74	94	110
1922	76	102	164
1923	77	103	109
1924	75	107	82
1925	75	109	100
1926	79	122	213
1927	78	124	140
1928	81	130	333
1929	85	117	33
1930	86	124	71
1931	92	128	100
1932	89	111	47
1933	90	108	31
1934	92	118	233
1935	93	119	88
1936	94	117	75
1937	94	114	
1938	95	115	
1939	97	107	
1940	93	111	
1941	97	105	
1942	96	101	

FIGURE 4. NELSON HOUSE BAND - SEX RATIOS BY COHORTS 1968



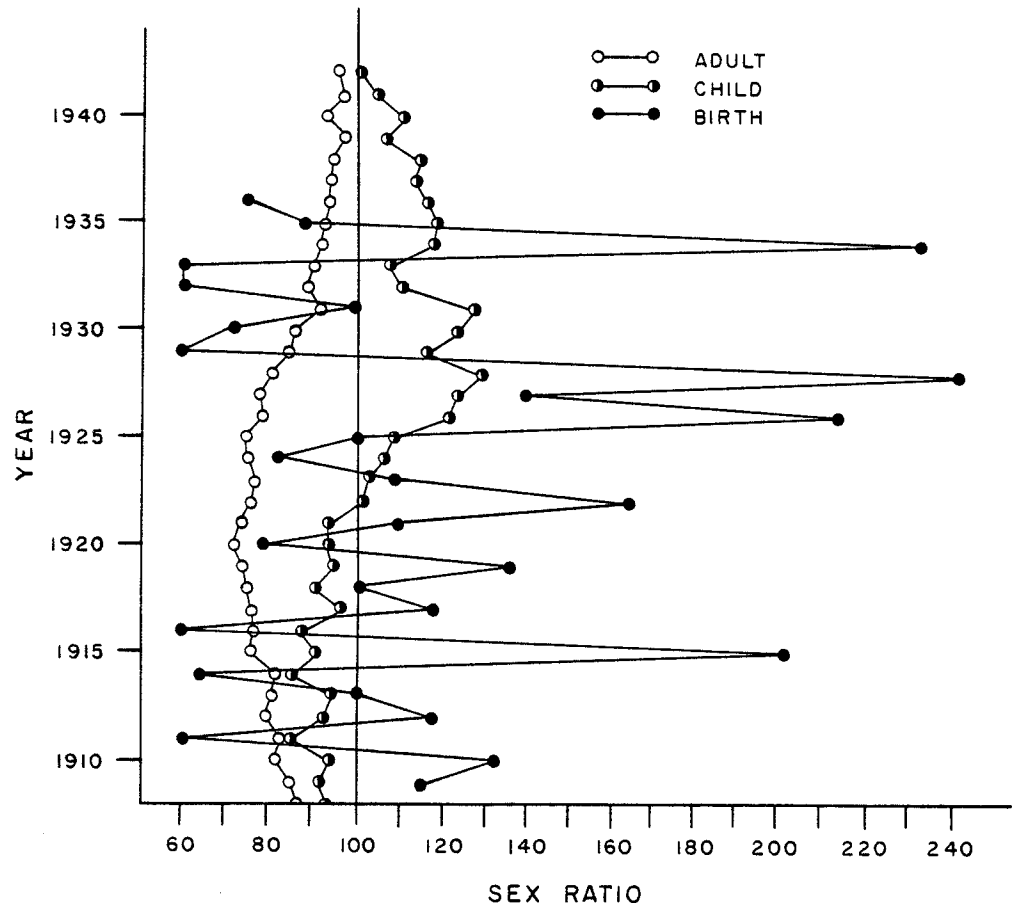
The fluctuating sex ratios are in part a reflection of the size of the population.

FIGURE 5. NELSON HOUSE BAND - SEX RATIO FOR YEARS 1908-1942



Between 1908 and 1925, there were a larger number of females in the population than males. However, in 1925 an influenza epidemic caused the death of more females than males resulting in more males than females in the population during the following 15 years.

FIGURE 6.



NELSON HOUSE BAND - ADULT, CHILDREN BIRTH SEX RATIO
FOR YEARS 1908-1942

Between 1908 and 1942, a greater proportion of the adult population was female, but a greater proportion of children were male. Such a pattern may be the result of differential fertility, mortality, migration or stochastic fluctuations.

Table 12

Nelson House - Crude Birth and Death Rate for 1908 to 1942

Year	Crude Birth Rate	Crude Death Rate
1909	59.6 per 1000	14.6 per 1000
1910	92.5	16.4
1911	46.3	7.6
1912	105.7	2.3
1913	58.8	19.1
1914	93.1	32.5
1915	49.0	24.1
1916	73.2	19.7
1917	94.1	8.3
1918	68.2	18.3
1919	98.1	30.1
1920	87.0	29.1
1921	78.6	26.7
1922	99.7	26.8
1923	81.7	38.3
1924	72.2	24.2
1925	131.8	141.3
1926	101.6	32.3
1927	94.9	33.2
1928	52.2	17.4
1929	79.7	39.1
1930	49.6	20.2
1931	82.6	37.2
1932	96.2	22.9
1933	64.7	36.3
1934	77.5	32.1
1935	113.2	23.9
1936	102.9	28.6
1937	103.6	31.6
1938	113.4	35.4
1939	110.7	56.5
1940	128.4	43.6
1941	116.7	41.4
1942	111.8	33.8

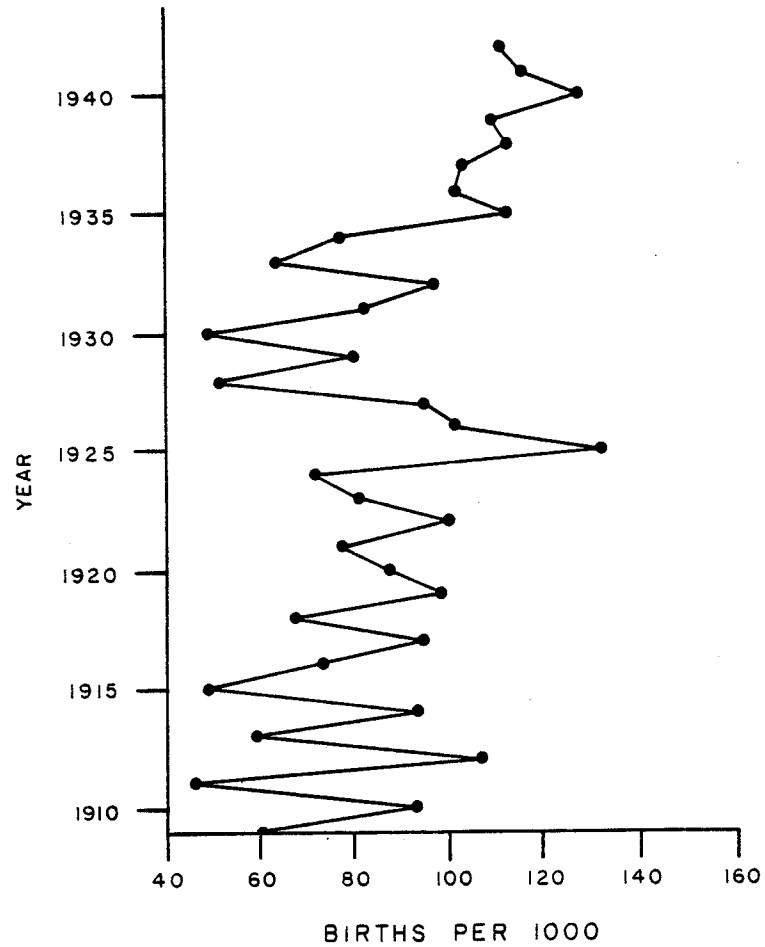
Table 13

Nelson House Band - Crude Death Rate for Females, Males,
Girls and Boys

Year	Females	Males	Girls	Boys
1909	11 per 1000	0 per 1000	0 per 1000	43 per 1000
1910	11	40	0	24
1911	12	15	0	9
1912	0	0	7	0
1913	12	0	22	31
1914	32	13	26	54
1915	10	51	29	16
1916	20	27	21	16
1917	0	26	7	7
1918	0	12	33	22
1919	17	71	27	21
1920	9	48	32	34
1921	26	23	31	26
1922	24	22	37	12
1923	41	21	32	55
1924	0	44	46	12
1925	90	77	220	217
1926	33	0	51	45
1927	40	10	51	34
1928	8	0	26	33
1929	26	20	24	83
1930	9	0	34	34
1931	33	27	58	32
1932	16	18	15	41
1933	16	34	59	34
1934	4	8	40	40
1935	38	16	46	26
1936	22	8	51	31

FIGURE 7.

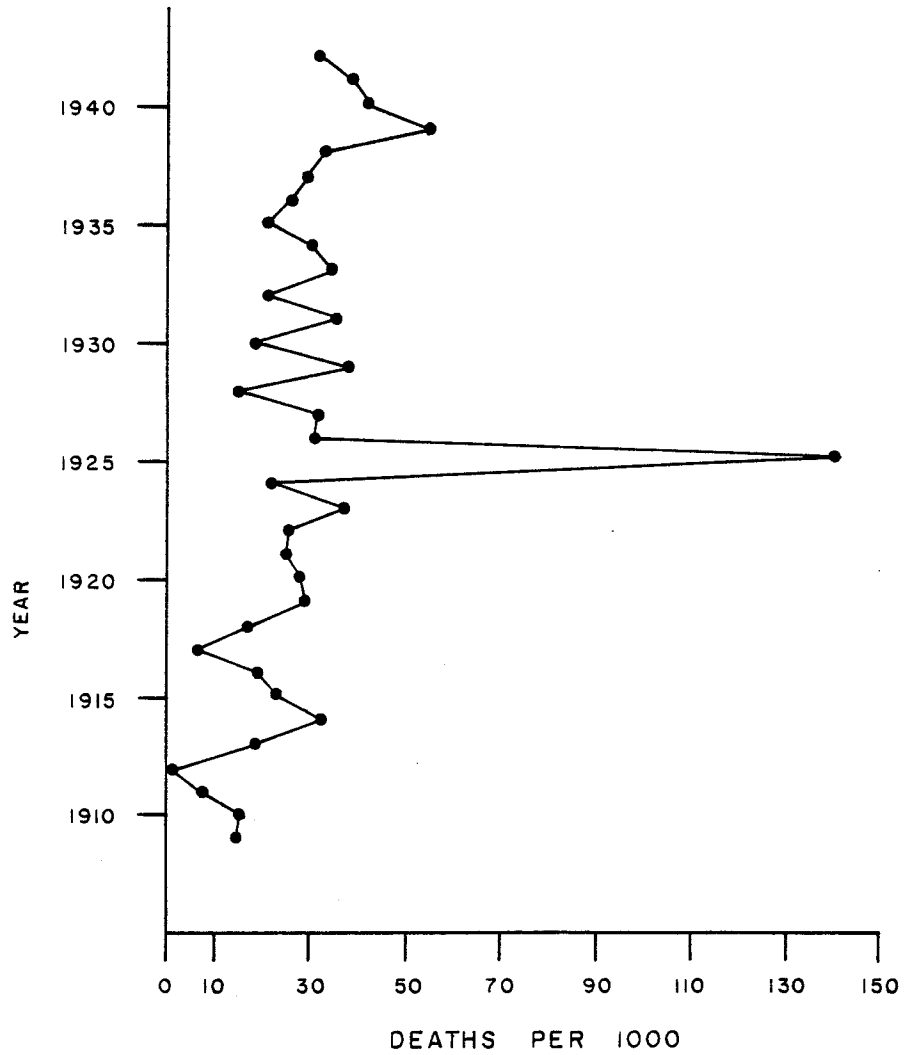
NELSON HOUSE BAND - CRUDE BIRTH RATE FOR YEARS 1908-1942



In comparison to the national population, the Nelson House birth rate was high for the period 1908 to 1942.

FIGURE 8.

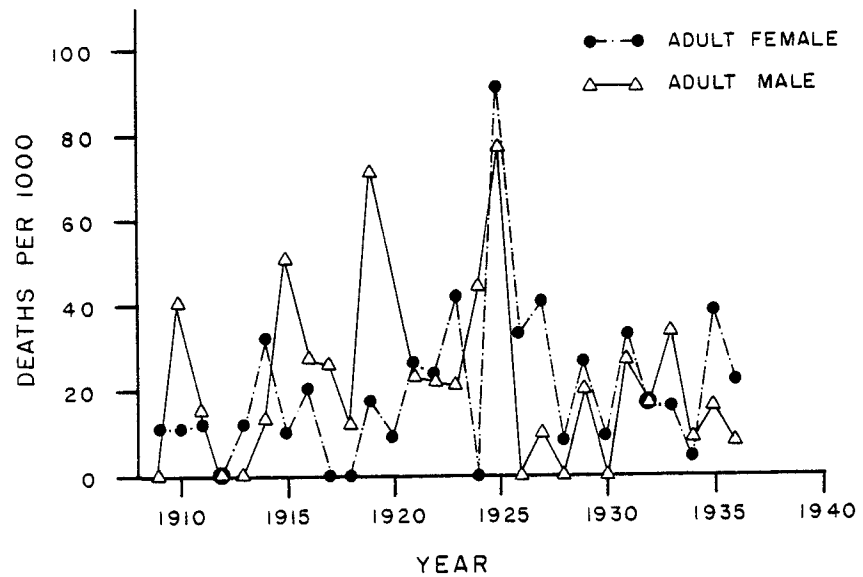
NELSON HOUSE BAND - CRUDE DEATH RATE FOR YEARS 1908-1942



Between 1908 and 1942, the death rate was much lower than the birth rate. This resulted in a growth in the population.

FIGURE 9.

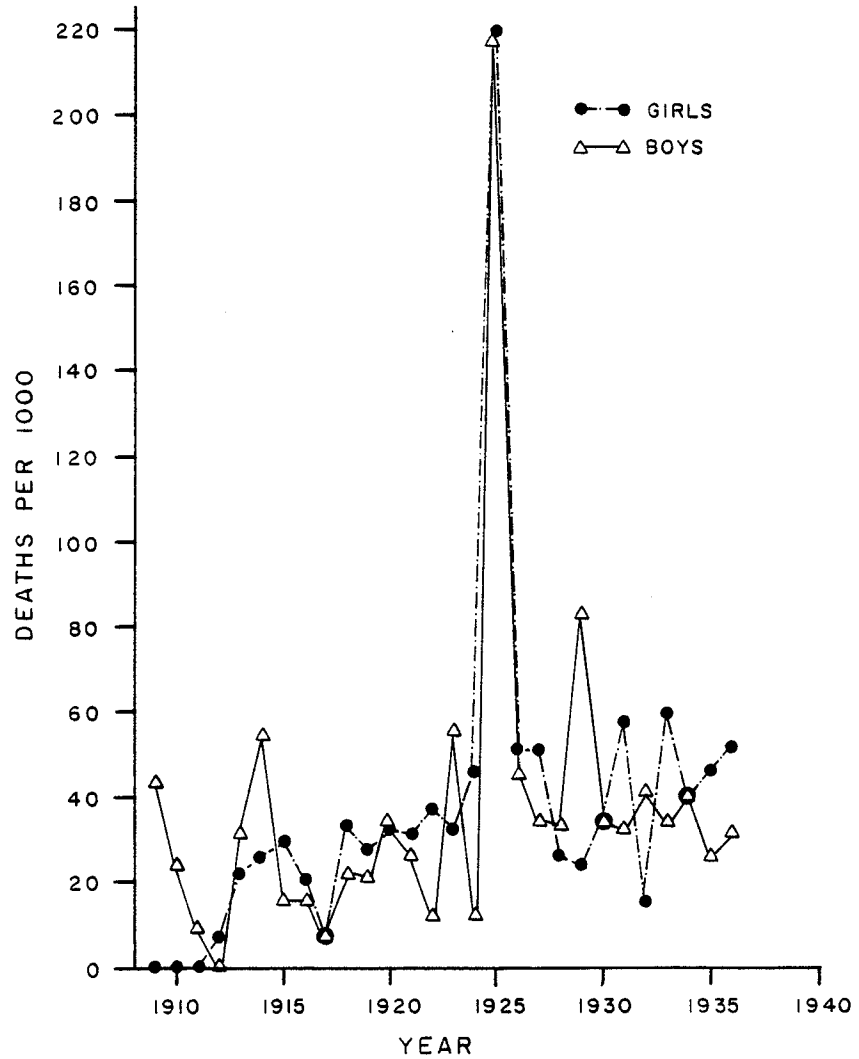
NELSON HOUSE BAND - CRUDE DEATH RATE 1908-1942



Prior to 1925, the adult males had a higher death rate than females while the reverse was true of the post-1925 period. This trend would help to explain the greater number of males in the post-1925 population.

FIGURE 10.

NELSON HOUSE BAND - CRUDE DEATH RATE FOR CHILDREN 1908-1942



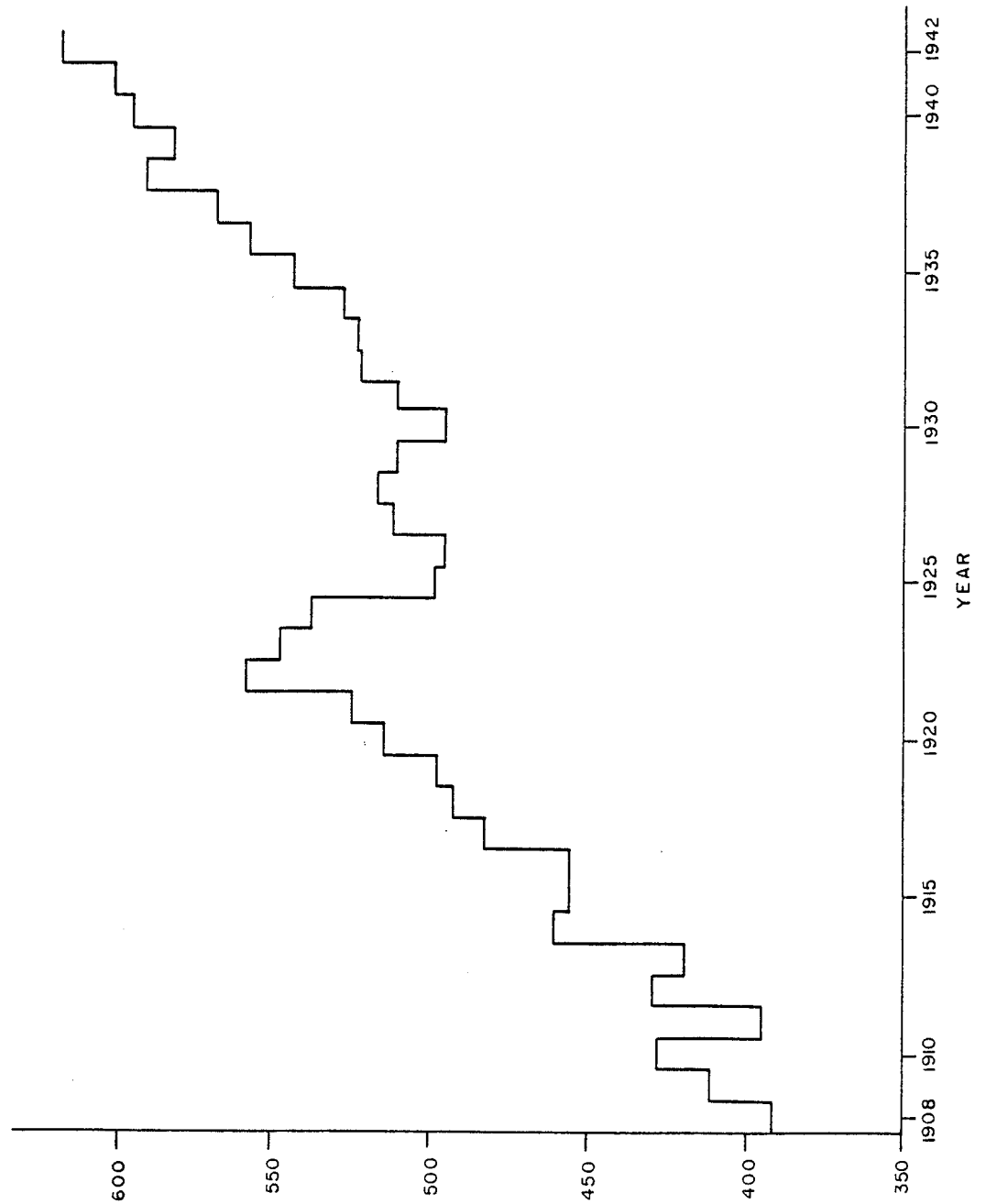
In comparison to the adult male and female death rate, the child death rate is high. This is not unexpected nor atypical of small populations.

Table 14

Annual Rate of Population Increase for Nelson House 1908-1942

Year	Intercensal Percentage Change
1908-09	5.1%
1909-10	3.9
1910-11	7.7
1911-12	8.9
1912-13	-2.3
1913-14	9.8
1914-15	1.1
1915-16	0.0
1916-17	5.9
1917-18	2.1
1918-19	1.0
1919-20	3.4
1920-21	1.9
1921-22	6.5
1922-23	-2.0
1923-24	-1.8
1924-25	-7.3
1925-26	-0.6
1926-27	3.2
1927-28	1.0
1928-29	-1.2
1929-30	-2.9
1930-31	3.0
1931-32	2.4
1932-33	0.4
1933-34	1.0
1934-35	3.0
1935-36	2.6
1936-37	2.0
1937-38	4.0
1938-39	-1.5
1939-40	2.2
1940-41	1.2
1941-42	2.8

FIGURE 11. NELSON HOUSE - BAND SIZE 1908-1942



During the first half of the twentieth century, the band rapidly grew in size.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

European contact did not necessarily lead to the depopulation of native North American societies. Many reports of native depopulation are not properly documented. Prior to simply associating depopulation with the presence of Europeans, demographic events, related in historic reports should be interpreted in terms of the population involved, their subsistence strategy, social organization, settlement pattern, and a demographic profile drawn for the period in question. Moreover, the specific relationship between the Europeans and native populations must be understood. Furthermore, descriptions of demographic events in European accounts of native societies should be assessed in terms of the author, his/her intentions, and the context in which the events are described. Controlling for these factors, an ethno-demographic study of a Cree population was undertaken. The members of the band presently reside in two communities located on the shores of Footprint Lake and Southern Indian Lake in northern Manitoba. In this paper, the ethno-demographic history of the band was presented in terms of three periods: Prehistoric (prior to 1630), Protohistoric (1630-1730), and Historic (Early Fur Trade and Competitive Fur Trade Era 1730-1821, Trading Post Dependency Era 1821-1870, Era of Early Government Influence 1870-1945).

Prehistoric native society was defined in terms of a model generated from ethnographic studies of Algonkian

and Athapaskan populations. The model formed the base from which the ethno-demographic history of the population could be presented. It was established that in the Prehistoric Period, the Cree were organized in hunting groups which consisted of 10-35 individuals. The unit spent the greater part of the winter together in what has been called a hunting territory. In early spring, hunting groups of contiguous territories would meet at favourable sites where they fished and hunted communally.

In the Protohistoric Period, the Cree were middlemen in the European fur trade. With firearms they procured from the Europeans, they were able to expand at the expense of their northern and southwestern neighbours. It would appear that no major or long term demographic declines occurred during this period.

During the early Historic Period (Early Fur Trade and Competitive Fur Trade Era), the Cree role in the fur trade changed from middlemen to producer/supplier. Between 1778 and 1784, thirty-three to fifty percent of the Cree population died as a result of a smallpox epidemic. These events led to the Cree abandonment of the Southern Indian Lake region. In response, the Chipewyans migrated into the area. In the latter part of the era, the residents of the Churchill-Nelson River region were involved in a trade war which developed between the HBC and the NWC. As a result, numerous posts were established in the region. The trade war ended with the amalgamation of the NWC and

the HBC in 1821. This marks the beginning of the Trading Post Dependency Era.

In 1833, a HBC trading post was established on the shores of the Footprint River. It was later named Nelson House. The post was in the geographic centre of the HBC New Churchill District. According to the district factor, in 1823 there were 19 hunting groups inhabiting the region. Four of these groups (63 individuals) were Chipewyans residing in the Southern Indian Lake region. Fifteen (312 individuals) were Cree who occupied the region to the east, south and west of Footprint Lake.

These groups maintained camps at varying distances from the post. At different times of the year, they would venture to the post to trade their furs or meat for supplies or the HBC employees would travel out to their camps with necessary supplies. By the 1850's, the Cree had migrated into the Southern Indian Lake region. This movement was undoubtedly facilitated by the establishment of Nelson House as the only major post in the region after 1833.

At the turn of the century, the beginning of the Era of Early Government Influence, the Methodists and the Roman Catholics established missions in Nelson House. In 1908, the Canadian government extended Treaty 5 to include the Indians of the region. At the time, there were 392 Cree listed as members of the band. Many of these individuals were recorded in a Nelson House Debt List for 1892. The band was made up of a number of hunting groups who had

previously been associated with the trading post. In spite of these occurrences, the settlement pattern of the Indians remained the same. It was not until the 1930's that members of the band settled in Nelson House and South Indian Lake on a permanent basis. By 1942, the band numbered 621 individuals, an increase of 38% from 1916. With the establishment of the towns of Lynn Lake, Thompson and Leaf Rapids as well as the initiation of the Churchill River Diversion Project, many band members became involved in work associated with the industrial complexes. By 1968, band membership had increased to 1,393. This represents a 124% increase from 1942.

Between 1823 and 1968, the population had increased in size by 1,081 individuals in spite of periodic epidemics and emigrations. The figures are more startling when the period between 1908 and 1968 is considered, for an increase of 1,001 people is registered. The relatively small increase between 1823 and 1908 may well be due to the establishment of the Peter Ballentyne band in northeastern Saskatchewan (1878), as well as the Cross Lake and Split Lake bands in the early 1900's. Between 1823 and 1968, births and immigration out-numbered deaths and emigration in the population under study.

Small populations are subject to fluctuations and respond dramatically to changes in their demographic condition (Kunstadter, 1972). Hence the increases and declines in size observed in this population are not unexpected. Under

certain circumstances these declines could have been devastating as Jenness has suggested.

The acquisition of firearms by surrounding tribes, and a terrible epidemic of smallpox that devastated them in 1784, checked their further expansion. The Cree then became demoralized through spirituous liquors, underwent constant attack from the Blackfoot confederacy, and were decimated by a second epidemic of smallpox about 1838. From these disasters they never recovered . . . (1932:284)

However, this was not the case. Moreover, as was demonstrated in demographic data from the 19th and 20th century, the population was capable of increasing in spite of periodic declines.

The importance of native societies to the European fur trade is well documented (Fisher, 1977; Nelson, 1973; Zlotkin and Colbourne, 1977). Their settlement pattern, social organization and resource strategy suited the trade. Consequently, European traders were concerned with maintaining native populations. The relative stability of the Cree population in northern Manitoba between 1630 and 1778 as well as the demographic expansion they experienced in the 19th and 20th centuries may well be attributed to this strategy.

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1808-09			2
1809-10			3
1810-11			4
1819-20			5
1820-21			6
1821-22			7
1822-23			8
1802-03	Nelson House (Nelson Lake).	141/a/1	
1808-09			2
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1810-11			4
1811-12			5
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