Landscapes of Memory:
Heritage Place and Historic Sites in Prairie Canada

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Dedication

To my late brothers-in-law Christopher and Jeffrey Dunn, two men of gentleness and courage,

and to my wife Catherine who can see from a great distance what I cannot see close.

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Abstract:

In *Landscapes of Memory: Heritage Place and Historic Sites in Prairie Canada* I explore concepts of heritage, place, and memory in the prairie west, examining how heritage value is established, how commemoration reflects social and cultural perspectives and how and why interpretation can change over time. I illustrate the process by which the social construction of heritage value can be part of an "authorized" identity that conforms to acceptable, authoritative, and official perceptions of historical significance.

My major argument is that "official" historic sites in prairie Canada – and most importantly their interpretation – are examples of authorized spaces that relate to national and nation-building goals. They are frequently examples of an imagined past, or a heritage defined by modern perceptions often with landscapes that become fashioned as aestheticized space or pleasing landscapes that have become idealized to fit with visitor expectations. I also argue that local political and cultural forces – part of the vernacular – have come to influence the way historic place is understood. I suggest that is the tension between federal goals and the aims of the local that have resulted in changing and evolving interpretations.

This study looks at how our view of the past constructs the heritage of place and community that relate the past to the present. I focus upon how the significance of place is often contested and how, for instance, Indigenous perceptions often challenge conventional views of the past. A selection of historic themes and places in Western Canada that encompass Indigenous, fur trade, and settlement commemorations, as well as the roles of gender and sexuality are studied from the perspective of historical significance and meaning, authenticity, community memory, and commemorative policy. I examine at a variety of heritage places in

Western Canada over multiple scales of time including their original designation (often in the early 20th century), their development over time, their evolving role in the community particularly in the post-war period, and their current interpretive focus.

I discuss the process of commemoration of some critical twentieth century themes in prairie history while referencing examples of recognized heritage places in Western Canada, including cultural topographies, Indigenous landscapes, community-recognized built heritage, and national historic sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. More broadly, I look at questions such as who decides what is heritage, who claims authority and why, and how are perceptions of place memory effectively reproduced.

Acknowledgements

I owe a debt of gratitude to a number of people who have helped me to realize this dissertation. As a public historian with Parks Canada for 32 years I came to the University of Manitoba and academic life in 2013 with some apprehension, although the immediate and warm reception given me by the staff and Fellows of St. John's College, especially Dr. Christopher Trott the College Warden, and by the History Department quickly dispelled those misgivings.

First, I want to thank my advisor Dr. Adele Perry. Adele is the kind of advisor that every graduate student would like; she is kind, patient, understanding, and above all intuitive and intelligent. She genuinely wants to help her students and I have benefited enormously from her wise counsel. Being considerably older than my doctoral student contemporaries, I know that such qualities are not easily found in one person. I benefited as well from conversations with fellow students and faculty both in the History Department and at St. John's College. I would like to also thank Dr. Sarah Elvins of the History Department who first suggested that I write about public history as it had been my career for over three decades. Thanks are owed as well to my committee: Dr. Jonathan Peyton from the Geography Department, Dr. Len Kuffert and Dr. David Churchill from History, and Dr. James Opp my outside examiner from Carleton University. Their suggestions and revisions have been invaluable. A number of friends provided encouragement throughout this process and in particular I want to thank Graham MacDonald for his supportive and always stimulating conversations. The breadth and depth of his work has been truly inspiring. A University of Manitoba doctoral fellowship, an award from the University of Manitoba Research Grants Program, and the J.W. Dafoe writing prize assisted my research travels.

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Chapter I: Introduction: Landscapes of Memory in Prairie Canada

Landscapes are culture before they are nature; constructs of the imagination projected onto wood and water and rock.

Simon Schama, Landscape and Memory

In her 2006 book *Uses of Heritage*, the Australian writer and archaeologist Laurajane Smith described her meeting with a group of Indigenous women from the Waanyi community on the banks of the Gregory River in Boodjamulla National Park in northern Queensland. The women, according to Smith, had come from some distance away to meet and fish at this traditional Indigenous site. In attempting to, as she writes, "pester people with maps, site recording forms and tape measures" Smith soon realized that for these Waanyi women the act of fishing was more than simply catching dinner but an opportunity to savour simply being in a place that was important to them. It was, as she comments, 'heritage work' being in place, renewing memories and sharing experiences with friends and family members to strengthen

present and future social and family relations.[1] Smith describes how the elders related stories of the Gregory River location to younger Waanyi women and the traditional events that were associated with that place. Their conversations, she comments, reminded her of her own heritage, of the family stories that she had inherited, and how she would transmit them to her own children. In such a process of receiving and passing on and memories, a certain fluidity of meaning is understood, becoming characteristic of both personal and community heritage in much the same way that it informs our perceptions of place. The significance that Smith drew from her own stories, the uses she made of them, and the places that resonated with her would, she wrote, "be different to the meanings and uses the generation both before and after me had and would construct."[2]

My own experience with community memory and the meaning and significance of place was somewhat similar to Smith's. As a historian with Parks Canada, while conducting ethnohistorical research on York Factory in northern Manitoba, I visited the abandoned site in 2002 where I met with a number of Muskego Cree elders who had flown there for a reunion and with whom I had arranged informal interviews. The conversation was relaxed as we talked about the history of the place and the elders' experiences growing up at York. In these conversations I noticed that their memories often began with some reference to place, to a geographical entity or location that became the reference point for a story, a memory, a cultural observation, or even a joke. I realized that for these York Factory people their history, their heritage, was more than just about the past. Nor was it just about physical things, but was an act of engagement and a process of finding meaning that resonated in the present. And it was about place and the layers of

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[1] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage* (Abingdon: Routledge Publishing, 2006), 1.

[2] Ibid.

memory and meaning we attribute to it. It was at such site visits that I first began to think about landscape, place, and memory, how history plays out on the ground, how the social construction of heritage is established and commemorated, and how the meaning of place is often contested. To quote the historian Simon Schama, I have drawn upon the "archive of the feet" and how it has informed much of the way I view the concept of heritage.[3]

At York Factory the history of the old post and its people continues to resonate with a sense of the past in the present, a feeling that its inhabitants had only left the place shortly before you arrived. For almost three centuries the most important fur trade post in Western Canada, York remains a space of meaning and a landscape of memory, its significance captured in a sense of place that resonates particularly with the Indigenous people of western Hudson Bay. Yet, the site retains a foot in two worlds; a Muskego Cree world of community and kinship (if at times also one of cross cultural dissonance) and a Euro-Canadian tradition of commerce and colonialism once woven into the experience of the local and the national. For the Muskego, York, although not a place of origin, is nonetheless a homeland with a legacy of identity that continues to be a space of social and cultural belonging. From the massive and still standing depot building, largely constructed with Indigenous labour in the 1830s, and the storehouse for much of Rupert's Land's furs and trade goods, to the silence of the nearby cemetery where tilting and deteriorated wooden crosses mark the graves of those once associated with the old post – names like Beardy, Spence, Saunders, and Wastasecoot -- York embodies a sense of place that brings value, memory and meaning to the landscape.

The critical questions that are posed in this dissertation are how and why certain heritage places were selected over others as significant and if these perceptions of importance by

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[3] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory* (New York: A. A. Knopf, 1995), 24.

governments, communities, and individuals change over time and if so, how. Each of these questions is explored within the thematic framework outlined in the various chapters and in the portrayal of different types of historic sites within a larger heritage context.

It is my contention that most historic sites chosen by government relate to an authorized heritage discourse usually based on those conventional messages that are part of national narratives and colonialist views of the past. However, I also argue that while an authorized heritage influences those places we consider to be important, their significance is also affected by community perceptions and the emergence and persistence of social memory.

The sorts of historic sites chosen for this work range from the local to the national and, I believe, represent effective illustrations of important themes in prairie history. While the bulk of the research for this dissertation has come from government records, along with archival and published sources, the overarching themes that inform my writing are influenced by my personal experience at historic places throughout Western Canada and abroad. And it is here where I might talk about what I believe to be the originality of this work, that is linking my many personal experiences at places in Western Canada with the enormous documentation that records the establishment, the values, the physical settings, and the interpretation of historic sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, and then contextualizing these realities and perspectives within the growing national and international literature on place, heritage, and memory. While I provide brief histories of the historic places selected for this work within the broad themes of each chapter, I have included them only to help set the context for their later designation and their modern-day roles as historic sites.

Apart from directly experiencing historic places and the meanings they convey, to some degree the inspiration for this work has come from the writings of Laurajane Smith whose *Uses*

of Heritage got me to think about the concept she labels "authorized heritage" and the "authorized heritage discourse". Of course these are not new ideas, though they are new labels. They have been discussed over the years in a variety of forms by a variety of writers. I suppose, like my Parks Canada colleagues, I was aware that the history I was writing was a sanctioned undertaking -- like a good civil servant I followed the directions of my managers -- although also like my colleagues I often attempted new interpretations and innovative perspectives. Although in truth we might not have thought a great deal about the differences between the two, we generally believed we were writing "history" while leaving "heritage" for park managers, site interpreters, and park planners. Of course, that separation was often hazy as the hoped for goal of historical writing in an agency such as Parks Canada was to have it applied to the practicalities of programming and the realities of on the ground interpretation. That was frequently not the case.

But it is Smith's work that effectively situates these concepts within the larger discussions around heritage: heritage as a cultural (and bureaucratic) process, the authenticating institutions of heritage, and the culture and discourse of the heritage narrative. "Heritage", although variously understood, is seemingly ubiquitous. At one time the concern of only a minority of devotees, broadly speaking heritage is now widely valued in western culture. How this process occurred, how factors such as style, age, monumentality, aesthetics, tourism, and political imperative came to naturalize selected narratives about place, privilege expert knowledge, and indeed confer historic significance, provide the theoretical basis for the following discussions about particular themes and places that form part of the history of Western Canada. In recent decades federal, provincial, and municipal strategies have filled thousands of pages of policy direction in the selection, designation, definition, quantification, and management of heritage. The impact of these policies on the development, and interpretation of

historic places, and on heritage in general, in Western Canada will be discussed in the following chapters, as will the impact of the more distinct and vernacular narratives of community-based heritage.

The following chapters will then examine how heritage functions as both a process of engagement with place and as an act of communication that helps to create worth in and for the present. Cultural memory and the idea of a collective past can advance and endorse consensus versions of history (usually by the cultural institutions of the state and its elites) to control and standardize modern social and cultural life, or what might be called the dominant heritage discourse. My argument in this study is that perceptions of place and memory are related directly to those places in prairie Canada that we consider heritage. How does our view of the past influence the way we perceive authorized historic places and, conversely, how do these places affect our broad view of the past and the present, if in fact they do at all?

Understanding and decoding the significance of a particular place is more easily done if one is actually there and I have visited, usually multiple times, each of the sites discussed. To this last point Schama has written that "Historians are supposed to reach the past always through texts, occasionally through images, things that are safely caught up in the bell jar of academic convention; look but don't touch."[4] The places that we call heritage suggest a nuanced and often complex view of the past, but they do require a sense of touch that allows us to see history, not just as a thing but rather as a cultural and social process. They suggest acts of remembering that are sometimes personal and sometimes authorized, the authoritative and official views of the past that are often created outside of the cultural identities shaped by personal attachment to place.

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[4] Ibid.

Landscapes can have an aesthetic attraction for some and/or a cultural meaning for others, becoming vistas of memory where an absence has become a presence.

Fittingly for this dissertation, my first project for Parks Canada involved the writing of a landscape history of Batoche National Historic Site in Saskatchewan, an attempt to research how the site landscape of the 1885 battlefield had changed over the roughly one hundred years since the end of the Northwest Resistance. It was somewhat of a naïve undertaking as I earnestly went about analyzing early descriptions of the battlefield, studied period photographs, and walked the area with the idea that Parks Canada would then alter the twentieth century landscape to recreate for visitors what the battlefield looked like in May of 1885. It was a time, after all, of large heritage expectations and even larger budgets. In the end, we discovered, unintentionally, that the history of that place included its evolution as a community and cultural landscape; that indeed change was part of its heritage. Suffice to say that the hoped for manipulation of the battlefield landscape –- clearing acres of brush and planting new trees elsewhere at a place that had witnessed a century of farming -- did not occur except in the artistic renderings contained in site brochures. Nevertheless, it allowed me to employ, to some extent, the "archive of the feet".

Yet my Batoche experience was an introduction for me to the significance of place as a social construct and the understanding of how history has played out or materialized upon the land. When one looked beyond the cultivated fields at Batoche, it was the shallow depressions of long ago rifle pits, and the vaguely discernable cart tracks of the old Carlton Trail, that allowed the landscape to speak to another time and another reality.

Later, in my role as the historian for fur trade and Indigenous sites I travelled to national historic sites in northern Manitoba, in Saskatchewan and Alberta and eventually to the western Arctic. I was also very much involved in the interpretation programs at Lower Fort Garry, the

Forks, Churchill, York Factory, Rocky Mountain House, and places such as the River Road

Heritage Parkway just north of Winnipeg. While the work involved considerable research in

various archives, just as importantly it entailed walking the length and breadth of these places,

sometimes with site interpreters and visitors, often with archaeologists, and occasionally alone.

Although I, like my Parks Canada colleagues, certainly subscribed to the western idea that

heritage can be studied, mapped, protected, conserved and managed through government policy

and legislation, we also realized that the places we thought important were also social

constructions that at one level reflected official versions of history. The long list of national and

international agreements, from the Athens Charter to the Venice Charter, heritage organizations

such as ICOMOS and UNESCO, as well as a variety of supranational cultural resource

management strategies, all speak to this "scientific" view of heritage.[5] At the same time, heritage

is a concept that can challenge received beliefs where the significance and meaning of place can

be contested. The work of my former colleague Diane Payment on the Metis people of Batoche

certainly speaks to this latter interpretation.[6]

Of course, historic sites differ widely. Some, like Lower Fort Garry embody a heavily

manipulated landscape, its buildings, lawns and gardens in many ways contrived to meet visitor

anticipations and comforts. If at its most superficial level the past at the Lower Fort is presented

as different from the present, at a deeper level it reproduces, not the past in the present, but the

present in the past, more a manufactured attraction and movie set of fur trade entertainments than

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[5] ICOMOS (International Council on Monuments and Sites).UNESCO (United Nations
Education, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

[6] See Diane Payment, *The Free People – Li Gens Libres: A History of the Metis Community of
Batoche, Saskatchewan* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press), 2009. Payment's work was
the culmination of decades of oral and archival research and of spending considerable time
in the Metis communities of the South Saskatchewan district.

a place of meaning. As a "living history" site it displays little of what heritage professionals might call "authenticity", a vague and imprecise concept that can be understood at different levels. There is the physical or restoration/curatorial authenticity of buildings, rooms, landscapes, costumes, and the other choreographed material trappings and artifice of living history. At another, there is the accuracy of voice: who is speaking and for whom. What meanings are conveyed? Are they contrived for visitor recognition or do they communicate different voices and different narratives? Do they challenge perceptions or do they simply reinforce them? It is most often at living history sites that the constitutive performance experience of heritage place engages with contemporary identities, revealing how heritage can legitimize national narratives and hierarchies.[7] They are what the American historian Lisbeth Haas has called "aestheticized spaces" or the imagined pasts of heritage construction.[8]

Writing about the concept of "authenticity" Laurajane Smith argues that the search for cultural authenticity can paradoxically drive the heritage tourism experience at the same time as constructing cultural experiences that in effect undermine it. She describes how tourists may comprehend authenticity quite differently than the way that it has traditionally been described with its emphasis upon essentially material qualities. Tourism literature, she argues, invariably frames the complex issue of authenticity in marketing and consumption language, a language generally viewed as simplistic within those humanities that deal with ideas of heritage.[9]

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[7] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 6-7.

[8] Lisbeth Haas, Review of Elizabeth Kryder-Reid, *California Mission Landscapes: Race, Memory, and the Politics of Heritage* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press) 2016.

[9] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 40-41.

However, other places such as York Factory National Historic Site and the historic sites in the vicinity of Churchill in northern Manitoba represent a different dynamic.[10] They do not signify performance and they do not attempt to freeze a moment or manipulate the sensory experience. They are just there. While protected, and to some degree conserved, these places present landscapes that have evolved over time and continue to evolve.[11] They have different meanings, and although to some degree they are part of the hegemonic discourse, they present storyscapes that feel real. And it is just these multilayered meanings that support what Foucault has called "counter-memory" or the individual's ability to resist official versions of historical continuity.[12]

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With collective memory so vital to pre-modern and modern western culture, society has long articulated a version of the past, often referred to as 'heritage', that is enshrined at historic sites, in museums, in protected buildings and landscapes, in objects, and even in roadside plaques. Commemoration of such objects and spaces is a process that links societal views of history with

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[10] These national historic sites near Churchill include Seahorse Gully and Eskimo Point, a 4000-year old Pre-Dorset, Dorset and Inuit site of almost continuous occupation, and the early European sites of Prince of Wales Fort, Sloop Cove, and Cape Merry.

[11] At York Factory, for example, bank erosion has been a feature of the post since its founding in 1684 and has contributed to its re-location on two occasions. That problem persists to this day and has impacted a good deal of the historic place and its resources. See Kevin Lunn, "York Factory National Historic Site of Canada: Planning the Future for a Place with a Momentous Past, *Manitoba History*, no. 48, Autumn/Winter 2004-2005.

[12] Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews.* Edited by Donald Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

memory and identity, promoting perceptions that are often authorized and accepted as unchanging or fixed in time. Memory and identity are frequently characterized as material things; memory is "kept alive" and identity, either in the collective or personal sense, can be lost and found.[13]

The memories and identities that shape concepts of heritage are socially constructed representations of reality and mould the cultivated pasts that help define contemporary notions of identity and belonging. Heritage can be defined as a range of associations with the past. These associations are usually marked by an attachment to places, objects and practices that as a culture we believe connect with the past in some way. As the American historian Rodney Harrison has noted, the word heritage is used to describe everything from the solid – buildings to bone fragments, to the intangible – songs, festivals, and language.[14]

Exploring the dynamics of what is considered heritage and what is not, particularly in regard to place, reveals stories of hegemony and challenge, struggles over contested space, and even the eclipse of memory. The chapters in this work examine these crucial questions. By examining the commemorative and interpretive history of some representative sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, I address such questions as how as a culture we determine which memories survive and become the authorized discourse, which are ignored or forgotten, which underpin traditional perspectives, and which challenge these perspectives. And specifically, how and why is the meaning of place often disputed. The dissonance between history and heritage – historic places are not inherently valuable but are the product of modern processes of meaning -- can

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[13] See John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.

[14] Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 5, 14.

contest the authorized, challenge accepted notions of progress, and undermine traditional western perceptions of history and history making. At the same time, regional, national and even international heritage narratives can fuel official views that are heteronormative, or can often exclude or marginalize women, the working class, particular ethnic groups, and Indigenous peoples. The historic sites discussed in this work – from pre-contact Indigenous landscapes, to settler sites and places of resistance – illustrate how at one level some heritage places reinforce the authorized discourse while at others they can be interpreted as a challenge to that discourse.

Place provides an important touchstone for culturally constructed heritage and those spaces that a society considers historically significant. Designation, according to this model, is often an act of faith and that places we consider to be heritage can give physicality to the values that reaffirm a community's view of itself. It is where places are given meaning and where we often speak of the "cultural landscapes" that can resonate with individuals, with communities, with nations, and even at an international level. I tend to use the word "place" more so than "site" because in my experience working in the federal historic sites program site can be a restrictive term that invokes a sense of mapped boundaries, tightly defined and circumscribed landscapes, and a built heritage that often stands disconnected from its surroundings. Place has a broader connotation and suggests socially formed and culturally relevant and meaningful spaces of memory that are often steeped in local and multiple constructions. Yet, "place" can be an unwieldy term employed to express a variety of positions ranging from the humanist tradition to a more broadly relational understanding. In the humanist tradition geographer Yi-Fu Tuan has argued that "place" can be created from "space" and are in fact the localities that mark the historically and culturally defined pauses in a wider expanse. "Place is security, space is freedom"

he writes, "where we are attached to one and long for the other".[15] Space is an open arena of action and movement, Tuan suggests, while place is about stopping and resting and becoming involved. For Tuan place is also a type of object and embodies the lived experience where whole landscapes and cityscapes can be seen as sculpted meaningful spaces.[16] He believes that our sense of place has emerged from such concepts as rootedness, memory, veneration of the past, and nostalgia. Place is constructed from space when an event or larger value is attached to a space that historically has little or no significance. It can be defined by the spiritual, cultural, or ecological significance of a landscape, or by direct human intervention through architecture and other examples of human engineering. Continuing in the humanist tradition, Canadian geographer Edward Relph views place as integral to human "being", with space and place a measure that links abstraction (space) with experience (place). Employing phenomenology, an approach that focuses upon the study of consciousness and the objects of direct experience, Relph suggests that understanding the self only comes with understanding the self in place; to be human is to exist "in place".[17] In a more broadly relational vein, Tim Cresswell, on the other hand, in studying the concept of place in western thought, links common understandings of place and identity, mobility, memory and belonging with the more speculative discussions that have arisen, particularly in the field of Geography, around place (and space) as ways of comprehending the world in almost epistemological ways.[18] Cresswell highlights what he calls

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[15] Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977), 3.

[16] Ibid, 17-18.

[17] Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, (London: Pion Ltd., 1976), 43-45.

[18]   See Tim Cresswell, *Place An Introduction*. Second Edition (Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 1-21.

the "genealogy of place" where significance is defined according to a variety of disciplines such as history, anthropology, geography, literature, and urban planning. For Cresswell, "place memory" describes the ability of a specific place to make the past come to life and thus contribute to the production and reproduction of social memory.[19]

Between the polarities represented by geographers Tuan, Relph and Cresswell is a vast and multifaceted articulation of place that has moved into other disciplines such as History. For instance, Ian McKay's and Robin Bates' *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* looks at how place is manipulated by a tourism industry to create a mythology that effectively misrepresents regional history to create an antimodernist past where "all the world was safe and happy" and where racial identities and class conflicts are discounted.[20] Building upon McKay's earlier work *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia*, their analysis looks at how governments and cultural figures cooperated to create "tourism history".[21] McKay's work on the creation of the oftentimes mythical pasts of public presentation and consumption (to an extent related to Hobsbawm's *The Invention of Tradition*) resonates with this study of landscapes of memory, especially in my analysis of heritage presentation and the tourism of place at fur trade and pioneer historic sites. However, McKay's study of antimodernism in 20th-century Nova Scotia casts a wider net, going beyond my focus on how heritage is created and maintained and how it comes to support founding father narratives and national mythologies. The various historical

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[19] Ibid, 121.

[20] Ian McKay and Robin Bates, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), 2010.

[21] Ian McKay, *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth- Century Nova Scotia,* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press), 1994.

contributions to James Opp and John Walsh's *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada* underscore how "place memories and memory places" must "accommodate differences, acknowledge injustice and … share authority over 'the past.'"[22]

"Place" and "site" have a familial relationship. Arguably, "site" is a further refinement of "place" in which significance—real or imagined--is further detailed and defined, whether by perceptions of history and heritage or by current uses and more contemporary applications of meaning. Like Simon Schama's ideas around landscape and memory, "place memory" evokes a sense of the past in the present and thus adds to the production and reproduction of social or collective memory.[23] With place we see the establishment of meaning that reflects the significance of human intervention on the landscape in all its forms, from the less visually evident spiritual and cultural landscape to the more obvious intrusion of the built environment. The various chapters in this study look at the way that place is understood within different forms of landscape, from pre-contact Indigenous places to the heavily manipulated topographies of settler colonialism, and how they have come to impact our collective memory and the broad narratives that we use to define the past.

The significance of place as it relates to heritage is cultural and is a process that applies not just to historic places, but to ecological ones as well, the significance of a particular geographical feature or natural landscape also being a public construct.[24] The American historian David Glassberg comments that "a sense of history and a sense of place are inextricably

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[22] James Opp and John Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 16.

[23] Simon Schama, *Landscape and Memory*, 3-19. See also Cresswell, 17-18.

[24] David Lowenthal, "Natural and Cultural Heritage", *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2005.

intertwined; we attach histories to places, and the environmental value we attach to place comes largely through the historical association we have with it."[25] Following Glassberg's lead, I use the phrase "a sense of place" often in this study. For me, it represents how and why an individual or a community instils a particular location with meaning and resonance. It is conceptually bordered and perceived as different from the space that surrounds it. Of course, a sense of place does not always relate to heritage – natural landscapes can invoke the same sensations although they become cultural by virtue of their distinctiveness and identity. Yet finding meaning in a "sense of place" can be at times ephemeral; places can have meaning(s) for some that little resonate with others.

Landscapes are cultural because they evoke both meaning and memory. Heritage places in prairie Canada are not inherently valuable, nor do they carry meaning that is natural, but are the product of traditional and present-day processes, activities, and perceptions. Such a view is not of course uniform around the world as different cultures and traditions look upon the concept of heritage, whether in relation to places, objects, or the less tangible examples of cultural significance, in different ways.

With modern western concepts of heritage, a prevailing physicality makes it in effect quantifiable; heritage can be designated, mapped, studied, collected, preserved, and managed while being subject to national and international legislation. The long history of international conventions, from the Society of Ancient Buildings Manifesto in the late nineteenth century, to the Athens, Venice, and Burra Charters (among others) of the twentieth century, to the founding of the United Nations Educational and Scientific Organization (UNESCO) in 1947 and the

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[25] David Glassberg, *Sense of History: The Place of the Past in American Life* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2001), 8.

establishment of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in 1965, speaks

to the long history of heritage management over the last few centuries. It has led to the

establishment of a heritage industry as community and cultural groups, as well as governments at

all levels, have embarked upon what David Lowenthal has famously called "the heritage

crusade".[26] Canada has held its own in this crusade: the heritage industry has thrived in this

country (at least until recent years) as it has in most western jurisdictions, creating sizeable

bureaucracies to research, designate, develop, and manage all that is deemed to be the critical

components of its history.

All of this designation and quantifying has helped to establish a hegemonic discourse

about heritage, a more or less official approach that influences the way societies think about

history and heritage, about what is important and what is not, about what should be preserved

and what should be ignored, and about the stories that form the national narrative. Which

historical discourses do we commemorate at a national, provincial, or community level and

which do we relegate to antiquarian obscurity? And when we talk about "the past" are we talking

about one past (the use of the definite article might suppose so), or do we see various pasts;

different voices that contest what Laurajane Smith describes as the "authorized heritage

discourse".[27] For Smith, such a discourse determines who speaks for the past, at least in the

places that are commemorated, and "continually creates and recreates a range of social relations,

values, and meanings about both the past and the present".[28] Yet such things as community

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[26] David Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade and the Spoils of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) 1998.

[27] See Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 29-34, 42.

[28] Ibid, 42.

memory also shape our perception of place and our views of the past. How they might come to influence the heritage discourse remains at issue.

A product of the mid-to late 19th century period, this dominant heritage narrative relates to what might be defined as the pastoral care of the material past, a past that includes place. As I discuss in chapter 5 of this study, how does official heritage—if such a term can be used—deal with contested views of the past, especially as they relate to the significance of place? An authorized heritage discourse most often focuses upon the aesthetically pleasing places, landscapes, and material objects that the present generation *must* preserve so that they may be passed to future generations so as to create a common identity with the past.[29] Contested places, however, frequently challenge such common identities and the ways we confront cultural hegemony can present alternative interpretations that sometimes push aside the dominant narrative. Similarly, a community-based sense of heritage, again largely related to place, can present different views of the past, or at least pasts that do not fit tidily with an authorized discourse. Contested and community-based interpretations are explored in more detail in the chapters of this work.

Despite my earlier caveat regarding the use of terms such as "site" and "place", heritage as broadly understood in western societies tends to focus on site; in Canada for instance we have official historic sites, not historic places, even if international charters tend toward the broader use of the latter term. That being said, in more recent years in Canada public heritage agencies have gone some little way in broadening the traditional narrow configurations of site to be more inclusive of ideas around place. To a large degree this change has moved away from earlier

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[29] Ibid, 29.

proscriptions around site and commemorative intent.[30] However, the traditional dominance of

site in relation to heritage was arguably the result of the physicality of heritage and the authority

of such disciplines as archaeology and architecture in defining and managing the material culture

of heritage. Historically, it is architecture that has played the principal role in the designation of

heritage in western culture as protection of the built environment, from forts to stately homes,

was most often the focus of the modernist perspective and a conservation ethic.[31] The heritage

value of historic architecture, however, is often reduced to a specific footprint rather than a

broader landscape of meaning and representation. In Western Canada it can also distort our

understanding of settlement history and settler culture as it is the more substantial architecture of

the well off that tends to survive rather than the modest typicality of the built environment of the

past. In Manitoba, for instance, the nineteenth-century Red River parish of St. Andrew's has

often been interpreted as the home of wealthy landowners as it is the handful of their large stone

houses that remain. However, it is the modest Red River frame homes of the vast majority of the

parish's inhabitants--the poor hunters and farmers--that have long ago disappeared.[32] Through a

physical absence their stories become less defined, less understood, and less a part of the heritage

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[30] For instance see the writings of Christina Cameron which include: "The Spirit of Place: The Physical Memory of Canada". *Journal of Canadian Studies*. 35 (1), July 2000: 77–94, and a later work, "Finding the Spirit of Place: A World Heritage Perspective" in *Spirit of Place: Between Tangible and Intangible Heritage*. (Québec: Laval University Press, 2009), 15–22. At one time the Director General of National Historic Sites for Parks Canada, Cameron's later work depicts a broader understanding of historic place as opposed to the earlier confines of site and commemorative intent.

[31] The modern view of architecture and heritage can be traced to the writings of John Ruskin whose 1849 book *The Seven Lamps of Architecture* argued against the practice of restoration as then practiced in favour of a 'conserve as found' approach to the preservation of important buildings.

[32]   Robert Coutts, "Stone Symbols of Dominance: The River Road Heritage Parkway and the Bias of Architectural Commemoration", *NeWest Review*, March, 1988.

of that place. Canadian historian Cecilia Morgan also notes that it is often the buildings and material culture of the elites that benefits from historic preservation, partly because they are the structures to have survived, and often because influential individuals or organizations have lobbied for their preservation.[33]

On a larger scale, one can claim that the forces of globalization have diminished the local. That in fact it is the very processes of heritage commemoration that can weaken the language of place, comprehending its significance only within a broader narrative of historic themes and topics often organized with bureaucratic efficiency fulfilling bureaucratic goals. Yet, are these approaches necessarily discordant? Can we consider both concepts simultaneously; has the reality of globalization changed the way we think of place or can we acknowledge it and take measure of its impact at the same time that we retain the value of the vernacular in our memory, in our history, and in our consciousness? Is there dissonance or do we reflexively understand the language of place as something to be laboured over, re-interpreted and re-imagined on an ongoing basis? Do larger forces—globalization being only one—alter our perceptions of heritage place or can we fit cultural changes and new perceptions of gender, class, race, sexuality, and modernity into the traditional stories and interpretations that often accompany the heritage of place? As James Opp and John Walsh have argued, "… we must accept that places and memories are always in a state of becoming, of being worked on, struggled over, celebrated, mourned, and even, it bears repeating, ignored."[34]

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[33] Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage and Memory, 1850s-1990s* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2016), 131.

[34] James Opp and John C. Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 16.

Not surprisingly, social change also brings new places of significance, some meaningful

at a local or community level, others at a national and even international level, some at all three.

The Tenement Museum in New York City's Lower East Side is one example. Home to

thousands of working class immigrants for over more than a century, the apartment tells the story

of urban immigrant home life in the early twentieth century, in the process re-imagining the role

of the house museum in how stories can be told. Another might be The Barracks, a gay

bathhouse in Toronto, the site (along with other area bathhouses) of a 1981 massive police raid

known as "Operation Soap" that resulted in the arrest of more than three hundred men. While

lives were ruined, the raids galvanized Toronto's gay community and ultimately led to a strong,

well-organized and ongoing fight for rights and arguably the beginning of the gay rights

movement in Canada.[35] A third could include Gadsden's Wharf, now a city park adjacent to the

harbour in Charleston, South Carolina where approximately 100,000 slaves were brought to the

Thirteen Colonies between 1783 and 1808. Facetiously called "the Ellis Island for African

Americans", the wharf and the nearby park space, where once stood the warehouses that held the

captives sometimes for months at a time, is a historic space that can bring home the terrible

legacy of slavery more than any book or movie.[36] Likewise, for those perhaps of a certain

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[35] See "The Barracks" http://www.queerstory.ca/2013/10/11/the-barracks/, October 11, 2013. Accessed 12 December, 2017. Other examples of alternative heritage and place memory can be found in Patrizia Gentile's essay "Capital Queers: Social Memory and Queer Place(s) in Cold War Ottawa" in James Opp and John C. Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*,187-214. Gentile looks at queer spaces of surveillance, cultural formation, and how these spaces functioned beside and within Ottawa's sites of political power.

[36] According to the *New York Times* of 15 November, 2016 monies are being raised to construct the "International African American Museum" at Gadsten's Wharf which is scheduled to open sometime in 2019. See: https://www.nytimes.com/2016/11/20/travel/charleston-south-carolina-past-slave-trade-history.html. Accessed 18 April, 2018.

generation, standing in front of the Lincoln memorial in Washington on the spot where Martin Luther King Jr. delivered his "I have a Dream" speech, the immediacy of place becomes poignant.

Such examples demonstrate a heritage and language of place that resonate at local and national levels and represent new places of cultural and social significance. Not all of course agree with such an approach. Lowenthal, for instance, speculates that, while history is still written mostly by the winners, heritage increasingly belongs to the "losers" in what he calls, "the cult of the victim".[37] But if some might dismiss heritage as the enemy of truth, it is alternative narratives that can highlight the many voices of history. In these examples the history of class, race, and sexuality are interpreted through place memory, a heritage that can challenge the conservatism of commemoration by recognizing injustice and displaying a willingness to share authority over the past.

These and many other examples reveal heritage place as potentially more than a static concept or what Steven High calls "an empty container where things happen." More accurately, the concept of heritage place should be recognized as a social and spatial process experiencing constant change. Place is contingent, fluid and multiple.[38] Although many are receptive to the idea that history is open to revision, the same might not be said for heritage, especially at a number of Western Canadian historic sites where interpretation often remains static, single voiced, and less than fluid. It is not just visitors to heritage places who remain conventional in their thinking but also the agencies that present the past as product and an interpretation that is

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[37] Lowenthal, 1998, 78.

[38] Steven High "Placing the Displaced Worker: Narrating Place in De-industrializing Sturgeon Falls, Ontario" in James Opp and John C. Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 181.

commodified and rigid. Heritage providers can engage in what sociologist John Urry calls "the

tourist gaze", reflecting back to visitors' expectations of place and people and authenticating

what they feel the visitor wants to see in the sometimes imagined past of heritage.[39] The

fabrication of an artificial environment can appear in many forms. In Manitoba, the Forks as a

heritage place and shopping area enhances its commercial prospects by promoting the tourist

potential of the site with a multi-millennium and spiritually significant Indigenous past, much of

it exaggerated under the brand of "meeting place", while at Lower Fort Garry reconstruction

work is passed off as original. In these examples—ones that are not necessarily typical---heritage

place displays a constructed approximation of the past, or what Rodney Harrison labels the

"polished patina of the past".[40]

　　　Attempting to construct "authenticity" and a "polished patina" are constituent parts of the

history/heritage dichotomy, presuming one exists. As noted earlier, I use the term "authenticity"

in two ways: at a basic physical level to describe buildings, artefacts and material things in

general, and in a more esoteric, arcane, self-conscious, and non-physical way of describing how

historic sites attempt to communicate the past to a modern audience. Lowenthal tells us that

history and heritage transmit different things to different audiences. History, he writes, is about

what happened and how things came to be as they are (an artless definition perhaps, but useful

for his distinction). Heritage, on the other hand, passes on exclusive myths of origin and

continuance (and one might add myths of power, control and influence), imparting prestige and

common purpose to select groups. He adds that history is for all, while heritage is for ourselves

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[39] John Urry and Jonas Larsen, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies.* Third edition (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications) 2011.

[40] Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 1.

alone; we treat the past as our own age.[41] This view gives rise to his well-known aphorism:

"Viewed as history, the past is a foreign country; viewed as heritage it is highly familiar".[42] In

sum, he writes,

> [W]e use heritage to improve the past, making it better (or worse) by modern lights. We do so by hyping its glories … by divesting its examples of current anathemas (slaveholders, smokers), by banning demeaning clichés (watermelons), by fig-leafing (everywhere) and by improvising former splendour or squalor.[43]

Lowenthal's conclusions about heritage and history can be insightful, if somewhat cynical.

While we often construct heritage in pleasing and entertaining ways, such a view only describes

those heritage places that are contrived and arbitrary, where a cultural and custodial intervention

has conflated the past with the present. Many historic sites—including sites in prairie Canada---

fit this category. (See, for instance, my discussion of Mennonite Heritage Village in chapter 4)

At the same time, the true heritage and language of place does not try to simulate or replicate a

version of the past, it does not always strive for contrived 'authenticity', but remains rather a part

of it, not an imagined replication of the past in the present, but a persistence of the past (or at

least some elements of it) in the present.

Determining what is historic place and what is heritage is not a passive process of

preservation. It is a conscious and purposeful act of assembling places, objects, and practices that

represent a set of values that we want to carry with us into the future. It is, or can be, an

authorized heritage that shapes the way we think of the past, the way we think of ourselves in the

present, and how we project forward. Here, the term 'authorized' refers to the processes involved

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[41] Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, 128.

[42] Ibid, 137.

[43] Ibid, 156.

in researching, categorizing, and managing the past, and what Harrison refers to as the "rapid and all pervasive piling up of the past in our quotidian worlds."[44] In Canada, this description speaks to the bureaucratic approaches of the heritage establishment where over the last three or four decades, designation, regulation, definition, cataloguing, and management have become complex and idiosyncratic. We analyze, we parse, we categorize the definition of what is heritage and what is not using an almost scientific terminology of proof and evidence in the establishment of a largely artificial view of "good" heritage and "bad" heritage.

Critical to understanding heritage and place, especially as it relates to historic sites in Western Canada, is to identify time frames. The twentieth century, especially the latter half of the century, witnessed the growth of a state control of heritage, the establishment of regulatory processes, modernist bureaucratic planning, and an increased and centralized administration of the local. As the state increasingly exercised control over heritage commemoration and preservation it also redefined it, enlarging its influence over a growing range of objects, buildings, and landscapes.[45] One example is Canada's Historic Places Initiative (HPI), a 1999 partnership program between the federal government and each of the provinces and territories, providing users with information about the Canadian Register of Historic Places (CRHP), as well as the standards and guidelines for their conservation. The initiative is intended to provide the lead in building an enhanced culture of conservation across the country—primarily focused upon historic architecture---with the federal government assuming the principal role. The conservation of heritage place is presented as imperative, as according to the program guide, "Historic places capture the soul and spirit of our country. From the covered bridges in rural New Brunswick," it

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[44] Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 3.

[45] Ibid, 47.

reads, "to the cobblestone streets of Quebec City, from the industrial heritage in Ontario to the

warehouse district in downtown Winnipeg, and from the trading posts in Western Canada to

Victoria's Fan Tan Alley—historic places make our communities more interesting places to

live."[46] The initiative describes the growth of expertise and identifies the expansion in heritage

conservation across the country. The guide goes on to lament the loss of pre-1920 heritage places

to demolition, "a threat to the distinctiveness of our communities and to our understanding of our

history."[47] Conservation guidelines developed by the federal government outline the approaches

to the conservation of historic places in Canada. In keeping with international standards, these

strategies are generally proscriptive. According to the guidelines, preservation is always the first

treatment recommended, although its use depends on the condition of the historic place.

Rehabilitation is a more permissive treatment involving modifications or additions related to a

new use. It allows for contemporary interventions, as long as they are compatible with and

respectful of the place. Rehabilitation is the most common treatment, especially in programs for

the revitalization of historic districts such as the Exchange District in downtown Winnipeg and to

a lesser extent at the Forks located at the confluence of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. Less

utilised is restoration as a treatment and according to the federal conservation guidelines "is

[only] appropriate when the representation of a particular period of the building can be justified,

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[46] Parks Canada, *Canada's Historic Places Initiative: Overview of the Conservation Tools* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 2004), 1.

[47] Ibid, 2.

although it may lead to the disappearance of certain existing elements. It must be based on adequate and accurate documentation."[48]

Although the Historic Places Initiative is seemingly a worthwhile program, it, like similar programs in other western countries (for example, the 'Heritage Action Zone' program in England), can begin to fetishize place and object, or at least their bureaucratization.[49] There is "designated place" (strictly determined), while historic objects are "cultural resources". With archaeological investigation, for instance, the found object is given significance on a scale that is related to a predetermined theme or set of themes. Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy defines "level one" and "level two" resources with firmly determined criteria for each as well as strict guidelines regarding planning, research, conservation, and presentation. Ultimately, there is little attempt to work this found heritage into a historical narrative or a broader story. Through the increasing bureaucratization of heritage, the assembly of objects—the collection---is considered the final goal of the work. Its mere existence, often devoid of context, is its value.

Heritage, Memory, and Place

Writers have described memory and place as playing key roles in our understanding of heritage. As noted above, heritage is a word with diverse meanings but perhaps most commonly

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[48]   See *Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada,* https://www.canadianarchitect.com/features/guidelines-for-the-conservation-of-historic-places-in-canada/. Accessed 14 December, 2017.

[49] In England, 'The Heritage List' includes nearly 400,000 of the most important historic places in the country. The List includes buildings, battlefields, monuments, parks, gardens, shipwrecks and more. See *Historic England*, https://historicengland.org.uk/. Accessed 14 December, 2017.

comprehended as a set of relationships with, or attitudes toward, the past. These relationships are usually characterized by a collection of meanings or attachments to the objects, ideas, and places that are associated with history and history making. Yet, today heritage can be understood more broadly. These attachments to the past are articulated in the present, or represent a production of the past in the present.[50] Although history often explores a past grown opaque over time, heritage is the profession of faith in a past tailored to present purpose.[51] Heritage is often a form of historical representation that creates a history that both sustains, and even invents, the present.

As noted previously, heritage values are not self-evident and historic places are not documented, commemorated, and preserved because they are seen to have intrinsic significance. Heritage value is not inherently part of specific physical places. However, by being socially constructed heritage place can create an identity that conforms to acceptable, authoritative, and official perceptions of historical significance.

The cultural construction of place often evolves from collective memory, or the shared knowledge and information in the memories of a social or community group, for many a lived history rather than a learned history. Much of the early work on collective memory was carried out by the philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, whose book *La Mémoire Collective*[52] examined a form of social memory that is passed from generation to generation; a memory that can be shared, preserved, modified, and transformed. Collective memory is a communal representation, a language of the past that is collectively comprehended, revealing identity, a

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[50] Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 5.

[51] Lowenthal, *The Heritage Crusade*, x.

[52] Maurice Halbwachs, *La Memorie Collective.* Second Edition (Paris: Les Presses Univesitaires de France), 1950. Translated as *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1992.

view of the past and present, and a vision for the future. Specific landscapes, streetscapes,

monuments, ruins, and architecture can evoke symbolic associations with past events, with

people, and with one's own personal past. And they can evoke connections to much wider stories

and events that can be generational.

Employing the concept of collective memory, Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger's

The Invention of Tradition examines the way the state and governing classes 'invent' traditions

in order to socialize and situate populations into an established order. For Hobsbawm, symbolic

rules and rituals are repeated to reinforce the behavioural norms that support continuity with the

past (including an imagined past), the authority of tradition, and a conforming and adaptable

public.[53] The past, according to Hobsbawm, is shaped to suit the dominant interests of the

present. Rituals are invented in part to create new political and cultural realities in what we refer

to as "heritage".[54] It can be argued, however, that if modern societies are witnessing the

expansion of individual choice, it becomes difficult to construct a cohesive and common public

memory. Conversely, a decline in knowledge of the past through the diminished role of history

in modern education, or the decline of folk memory, might in fact make it easier for whole

populations to accept one view of history–'our heritage' so to speak---with little questioning.

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[53] Eric Hobsbawm, "Introduction: Inventing Traditions" in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 1.

[54] Heritage now includes "intangible cultural practices"; there are now almost 500 listed on UNESCO's register of Intangible Cultural Practices from 117 countries. These generally describe such things as traditional folk dances and music, art forms, and traditional craftsmanship. Cuisine has also become part of the list, as recently the art of Neapolitan pizza making was added to UNESCO's inventory of recognized cultural practices. See: https://ich.unesco.org/en/lists. Accessed 10 May, 2018.

If collective memory is one portal to the past it is also subjective, for instance the way we think of complex class and gender relations that influence what is remembered or forgotten, who remembers or forgets, and for what end. Michel Foucault's ideas around what he called "counter-memory" describe the resistance against official versions of historical continuity. He views history as an incomplete story of the past, a discipline that comes into conflict with memory which in turn creates a system of signs, symbols and practices to help identify and recognize what has come before. As with other authors, Foucault notes how some of our past is forgotten, some is given importance, while some only emerges after long periods of concealment or suppression.[55]

What then is the relationship between collective memory and the heritage value of place? Heritage value is a cultural instrument that nations, communities and individuals use to construct a sense of identity and meaning and where the power of memory associated with place—both personal and collective memory---provides the reality to expression and experience.[56] As Newfoundland artist Marlene Creates has suggested, when we recall events associated with place the landscape becomes a centre of meaning, not an abstract physical location but a geography charged with personal significance that shapes the image we have of ourselves.[57] This construction of identity through place, of social and cultural belonging, is usually produced through the perception of some shared past, and one that can be manipulated to promote a

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[55] Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Edited by Donald Bouchard (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p ?

[56] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 75.

[57] Marlene Creates, *Places of Presence: Newfoundland Kin and Ancestral Land, Newfoundland, 1989-1991*. St. John's: Killick Press, 1997, as cited in James Opp and John Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 3.

national and overarching heritage narrative. Our awareness of historic place, or what French

historian Pierre Nora has described as *lieu de mémoire*, also builds upon Halbwachs' ideas

around collective memory.[58] Nora defines *lieu de mémoire* as any significant entity, either

material or non-material in nature, which through human will has become a symbolic element in

the commemorated heritage of a community. For Nora, sites of memory are where cultural

recollection is shaped and can broadly be defined to include, not just places such as historic sites,

museums and archives, but also the intangible heritage of cultural practice and ritual. All in fact

cache memory in ideas, places, and landscapes that can resonate in the human psyche. He

contends that memory and history are not synonymous. Memory, he says, is in permanent

evolution, open to the dialectic of remembering and forgetting, and a bond that ties us to the

present. History, on the other hand, is a universalizing representation of the past as distinct from

the present, an intellectual analysis that he claims attempts to suppress and destroy memory.[59]

Nora is firm on this last point when he writes that urbanization, industrialization, the rise of both

secularism and the nation-state (and one can add the professionalization of history), has put

history in fundamental opposition to memory. Nora even argues that in the last half of the 20th

century we have witnessed the "eradication of memory by history".[60] Where memory, especially

collective memory, might best describe how small community populations conceptualize the past,

history belongs to a modernist urban era of written linear texts, evidence, analysis, and

abstraction.

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[58] Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire", *Representations,* 26, Spring, 1989.

[59] Ibid, 12.

[60] Ibid. 8. Nora claims that "… memory is by nature multiple and yet specific; collective plural, and yet individual. History, on the other hand, belongs to everyone and to no one, whence its claim to universal authority." Ibid. 9.

But as Opp and Walsh contend, Nora's *lieux de memoire* has little resonance with the spaces and places it represents, appearing "inert" in the face of the "assault of history in the modern era."[61] Although memory is not always defined by physical place, it is often shaped by landscapes and topographies.[62] Yet, Nora's oppositional categories are overly simplistic. Memory can still inform perceptions of history and heritage, especially at the local and community level where a national narrative often fails to gain traction.[63] At the same time that Canadians are influenced by central narratives, they might also remain loyal to their neighbourhood and community heritage, or to oral traditions that have survived generations. Published local histories, once pervasive throughout Western Canada, rely upon such traditional vehicles as genealogy, family memory, kinship networks, and the shared experiences of homogeneous populations. A growing confidence in oral history—its evolution in recent decades has become significant and institutional and oral history centres have been widely established— suggests that memory still informs our view of history as well as our view of heritage. As increasingly the courts in Canada incorporate concepts such as traditional knowledge (both cultural and ecological) into Indigenous land claim settlements indicates that oral history is not simply equal to history but is history itself.

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[61] James Opp and John Walsh (eds.), *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 5.

[62] Ibid.

[63] American historian Susan Crane discusses how much of Nora's thinking is based upon the work of Maurice Halbwachs and his concept of collective memory. She suggests however that Halbwachs, unlike Nora, saw the implicit possibility of the recombination of historical and collective memory. Crane proposes relocating the collective back in the individual, "the individual who disappeared in the occlusion of personal historical consciousness by the culture of preservation". See Susan A. Crane, "Writing the Individual Back into Collective Memory," *American Historical Review Forum*, vol. 102, no.5, December, 1997, 1375.

A Shared Past?

Unpacking how the concept of a shared past has come to influence "professional" heritage practices in Canada, there is at one level an official, if sometimes nuanced, articulation of the way we engage with history. Yet at another, heritage is often a process of contestation where our views of the past and its meaning are often contradictory or at least ambiguous. The very significance of place, broadly defined and cross-disciplinary in nature, can often be challenged, as for example the way Indigenous perspectives can dispute conventional views of the past, or how re-focusing through the lenses of gender and class can yield new places of commemoration and new perceptions of existing places that help to expand the broader heritage narrative. Modernity, or more particularly late modernity, has been critical to the invention of heritage and the way our society views itself, not just in relation to the past but to the present as well, and indeed to the future. The view that heritage reflects a linear view of time with an emphasis on progress has helped to create the traditional view of the past as a passage from shadow to light, and the present as separate from the past. Like Hobsbawm, some maintain that what we refer to as "tradition" is little more than the elite and powerful using cultural production to normalize and consolidate their authority.

In shaping our official narratives of heritage and place we tend to emphasize material authenticity and a preservationist desire to freeze the moment as heritage and to conserve it as an unchanging monument to the past. Some have even facetiously referred to this as "freeze-dried history". And in this sense, monuments themselves are meant to last unchanged, becoming the most conservative of commemorations, a phenomenon that Friedrich Nietzsche referred to as 'monumentalism' (or a "monumental view of the past") and a protest against the change of generations. In his essay "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life" Nietzsche

characterizes the permanence of the monument as a dissention from transition, an attempt, he argues, to almost stop time.[64] While one could claim that the erection of monuments, at least in Canada, no longer enjoys the popularity it once did, it has been in contemporary times that the former government of Stephen Harper initiated its controversial plans to build a "Memorial to the Victims of Communism" adjacent to the Supreme Court in Ottawa. More recently, the Liberal minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly announced that a scaled-down victims memorial would be moved to the Garden of the Provinces and Territories. A winning design was approved in May of 2017 and will be completed in 2018. Evidently, "monumentalism" still exists, as according to Joly, monuments "play a key role in reflecting the character, identity, history and values of Canadians. They should be places of reflection, inspiration and learning", she added, "not shrouded in controversy."[65] In fact, monuments, at least traditional monuments, rarely evoke inspiration and learning, and arguably represent the victor and occasionally the victim, most without inspiration or reflection. On occasion, however, "controversial" monuments like the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington do inspire contemplation.[66] A German example that evokes Foucault's ideas around counter-memory might be called the "counter-monument". In 1995 a competition for a national memorial to the Holocaust in Berlin drew one entry that proposed that the city's Brandenburg Gate be blown up, ground into dust, and then sprinkled

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[64] Friedrich Nietzsche, "On the Utility and Liability of History for Life" in Keith Ansell Pearson and Duncan Large (eds.), *The Nietzsche Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell Press, 2006), 131-135.

[65] Don Butler, "Victims of communism memorial to be moved, Joly announces, "*Ottawa Citizen*, 17 December, 2015.

[66] Completed in 1982, the design of the memorial by 21-year old undergraduate student Maya Lin was criticized by many. Today, however, it is seen as almost a shrine. U.S National Parks Service, "The Wall that Heals", https://www.nps.gov/vive/index.htm. Accessed 18 December, 2017.

over the memorial area and covered with granite plates. The artist, Horst Hoheisel, argued that a destroyed people should be remembered and commemorated by a destroyed monument; a newly opened space in the heart of Berlin would memorialize the void left by a murdered people.[67] Memorials, whether three-dimensional or "negative-form", as Hoheisel's work was described, remain examples of how governments can use history to reflect particular ideologies.

Arguably, our view of the past is continually evolving, although the discourse of official heritage can often act as a brake upon re-imagining the narrative of place to incorporate new interpretations and new associations. The idea of historic place suggests not just a physical act of preservation but also an emotional and/or spiritual comprehension of meaning and significance. In this way heritage and place can function at different levels, at times co-existing and at others competing for space in the consciousness of the visitor. And it is these competing narratives that can act as subversive ideologies that by their nature challenge accepted wisdom.[68]

In Manitoba and Saskatchewan a contested history can be explored within the broad themes and places that commemorate Indigenous life, fur trade economies, and settler colonialism. It can also be used to examine how class, gender, and sexuality often remain apart from the heritage discourse. Within this paradigm, government-designated heritage, or authorized heritage, can also be compared to widespread perceptions of community, region, and nation. We can explore how heritage, as broadly understood throughout Western Canada, is part of the authorized heritage discourse that emerged in a modernist time of historical

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[67] See James E. Young, "Memory and Counter-Memory", Harvard Design magazine, no. 9, Fall, 1999. http://partizaning.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Memory-and-Counter-Memory.pdf. Accessed 18 December, 2017.

[68] Smith, *Uses of Heritage*, 83.

commemoration of space in the west and how and why certain narratives were left untold. And we can learn how official agencies such as the Dominion Parks Branch (later Parks Canada) and various provincial agencies such as the Manitoba Heritage Council or Saskatchewan Heritage became the mediators of what was heritage and, just as notably, what was not.

In Canada, as with a number of other western countries, the first half of the twentieth century saw the growth of the heritage movement. Architectural historian Shannon Ricketts has described how it was the years between the two world wars that shaped not only the direction of the federal commemorative program in Canada, but also the public's image of the country's past. As heritage activity increased, especially in regard to site commemoration, alternative scholarly approaches appeared as historians continued to rely on textual records while the emerging field of architectural history focused on the country's built heritage, and archaeologists searched for cultural resources below ground.[69] It was the beginning of a critical component of the heritage process in Canada that by the 1960s governments began to assume control over heritage and we began to see research on historic sites begin to migrate from the academy to the largely government-based heritage professional–-the public historian, archaeologist, curator, and conservator who helped shape the public's view of what places, events and individuals were significant in their country's history and why. These professionals would eventually introduce new voices and new narratives, a development not always well received by politicians and the newly minted officialdom of heritage managers.

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[69] Shannon Ricketts, "Cultural Selection and National Identity: Establishing Historic Sites in a National Framework, 1920-1939". *The Public Historian*, vol. 18, no. 3 (Summer, 1996), 23-24. Ricketts also noted that while academic approaches diversified in the interwar years, national historic sites continued to present a particular vision of Canadian history, one that was intimately associated with colonial expansion and a military legacy increasingly "leavened" by the architectural interests of an Anglo-Canadian elite. Ibid, 24.

Places of commemoration in Manitoba and Saskatchewan that focus upon settler colonialism, the contested spaces of Indigenous resistance, and the heritage of class, sexuality, and gender are examples of heritage narratives that can be considered from the perspectives of historical significance and meaning, authenticity, community memory, and commemorative policy. Across the west these heritage narratives are multi-layered, some represented unevenly, if at all, while others are often contested within the changing perspectives of historical interpretation. Though, as Frances Swyripa has argued, these narratives have also created a heritage that is "constantly invented and reinvented, always subjective and selective", especially at the community and ethno-cultural level where individuals and groups left their mark on the landscape.[70] In her book *Storied Landscapes* Swyripa examines how early prairie immigrants formed a connection with place through the "Christianization of the landscape" by building churches and cemeteries or by erecting crosses and shrines. In turn, their descendants erected monuments and settler shrines and created the forefather narratives of not only physical places, but the places of the mind that focus on what she calls an "imagined past".[71]

A Note on the Literature

The foregoing discussion cites a number of general works on heritage, place and memory, as well as more specific studies of Canadian and western Canadian heritage places. Their perspectives and analysis are important to this current work. Many more texts other than those mentioned were also consulted, including a number of American works.

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[70] Frances Swyripa. *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies.* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2010), 9.

[71] Ibid, 5.

A number of Canadian texts, though not all specifically about prairie Canada, are relevant to the topic and some by authors such as Frances Swyripa, Cecilia Morgan, Ian McKay, C.J. Taylor, and James Opp and John Walsh have been cited above and are discussed in more detail within the various chapters of this work. Some of the more important works on heritage, memory, and place include Opp and Walsh's *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, an edited collection of articles that focus on regional and local commemorations and the recovery of places of memory, including (among others) the significance of place and the displaced worker in a deindustrializing community, the memoryscapes of Japanese internment camps, and the social memory of queer places in Cold War Ottawa. Other Canadian works worth noting are Cecilia Morgan's *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage and Memory, 1850s-1990s* which takes a broad approach to public history in Canada, looking at early commemorations, heritage and education, as well as museums, monuments and tourism. Morgan's introductory text builds upon her earlier work *Creating Colonial Pasts: History, Memory, and Commemoration in Southern Ontario, 1860-1980.* Ian McKay and Robin Bates' *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (along with McKay's earlier work *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth- Century Nova Scotia*), provides an in-depth analysis of that province's tourism industry and how the marketing of history has helped to fashion modern perceptions of culture and the "public past" in a maritime province. Alan Gordon's recent book *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-Twentieth Century Canada* focuses on living history and relates in part to my subject area. *Nature, Place and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada*, published in 2017 by Claire Elizabeth Campbell takes an environmental history approach to the interpretation of national historic sites in Canada, only one of which (The Forks) is relevant to this study and then

only marginally. Campbell's goal of rewriting the public history of heritage place as environmental history is not my intent although my study of the role of place within a broader historical context does suggest some overlap. Along with Gordon's focus on living history sites is Laura Peers' book *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions*, a useful work not only because it relates to two themes of my study (fur trade and Indigenous sites), but because it also provides a through analysis of how the complexities of living history representations can at times expand cultural awareness while at others can reinforce traditional cultural stereotypes. Other Canadian works of note include Henry Vivian Nelles', *The Art of Nation-Building. Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary*, and Chris Anderson's article "More Than the Sum of Our Rebellions: Metis Histories Beyond Batoche".

The preceding is only an overview of some of the major Canadian works in the field, or at the periphery of the field. Earlier I cited some international studies, especially those related to place, memory, and heritage, as important to my work. Some historians like Lowenthal, Harrison, Hobsbawm. Rosenzweig[72], and Hayden[73] are well known in these areas, while others like the Australian scholar Laurajane Smith are not (although her work, especially her analysis of the "authorized heritage discourse", has increasingly influenced the way many now think about heritage and commemoration.) Although the library of geographic texts on place is immense, the works of a handful of these scholars, especially Tuan, Cresswell, and Relph, have been useful in

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[72] Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life,* (New York: Columbia University Press) 1998.

[73] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History*, (Cambridge: The MIT Press), 1997.

helping me to understand this vast literature and how I might begin to relate those geographical

perspectives to historic places in Western Canada.[74]

However, I began this chapter with a quote from Simon Schama about landscapes as

culture. While the specific topics of his seminal work *Landscape and Memory* are not directly

related to this study, his writing on such themes as the topography of cultural place and the

western myths and traditions that surround any landscape demonstrate that good historical

writing can rise to the level of art.

[74] Some of the major Canadian sources that have influenced this work include: Frances Swyripa. *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies,* James Opp and John Walsh (eds.) *Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada,* Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage and Memory, 1850s-1990s*, C.J.Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites.* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), Ian McKay and Robin Bates, *In the Province of History: The Making of the Public Past in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia*, Ian McKay, *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth- Century Nova Scotia,* Alan Gordon, *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-Twentieth Century Canada* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 2016), Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions,* Henry Vivian Nelles, *The Art of Nation-Building. Pageantry and Spectacle at Quebec's Tercentenary*, and Chris Anderson, "More Than the Sum of Our Rebellions: Metis Histories Beyond Batoche", *Ethnohistory,* 61:4, autumn, 2014, 619-633. Some of the international works that have influenced my approach include Laurajane Smith's, *Uses of Heritage*, Rodney Harrison's, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, Dolores Heyden's *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History,* Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen's, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life,* as well as the many works of Eric Hobsbawm, David Lowenthal and Pierre Nora cited throughout this study. On the complex topic of "Place", the works of Yi-Fu Tuan and Tim Creswell were particularly helpful, as was Ajun Appadurai's work *Modernity at Large* in helping to relate the topics of modernity and heritage.

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A Note on Primary Sources

Looking beyond the published literature, the most critical component of my research has involved the archival and government sources that trace the development of commemoration and interpretation in Western Canada. Also important, though perhaps to a lesser degree, are current government and community websites that communicate the most up-to-date information about specific historic sites. All these primary sources are integral to an analysis of the language of heritage place and its commemoration and interpretation over time. And of course, my own experience in visiting and working with a number of the historic places discussed in this dissertation have been key to my analysis of heritage and memory.

In particular with national historic sites in Western Canada, the records of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), along with the Parks Canada records contained at Library and Archives Canada, were critical to documenting not only the history of commemoration and designation, but for tracing the community and government-based correspondence and documentation around the discussion of various site selections. In many cases the submission of a particular site involved a long and winding road toward commemoration, the product of much private lobbying, bureaucratic wrangling, and political influence. These documents, from the minutes of Board meetings over decades to the development of commemorative intent statements and the impact of resource management policies, provide a fascinating history of heritage narratives and the construction of memory. In Winnipeg, materials at LAC's Government Records Office were useful, especially for the more recent history of heritage place in the West. The Archives of Manitoba and the Legislative Library of Manitoba contain a wealth of information pertaining to historic sites such as Mennonite Heritage Village, River Road Provincial Park, and the ancient petroforms of

Whiteshell Provincial Park. The Parks Canada office in Winnipeg holds decades of files and notes that were critical to my research. Known as the "Parks Canada Historical Collection", this informal and considerable collection of files, research notes, and government publications provided me with a great deal of information on the research, development, and interpretation of national historic sites across the west. The collection is not open to the public and I would like to thank Parks Canada for permission to spend weeks ensconced in their file room reviewing the detailed shape and process of heritage development. Although it is a collection that contains much that is commonplace, often tracing the minutiae of government decision-making, it also includes some very useful materials – important internal reports, research files, and straightforward staff memos that sometimes challenge accepted policy. The Archives of Saskatchewan in Regina was useful for research on sites in that province including the Doukhobor settlement at Veregin, Wanuskewin National Historic Site, and the places associated with the Northwest Resistance of 1885.

This dissertation approaches the study of historic place in Manitoba and Saskatchewan by examining select heritage places through the lens of recent social and cultural history. This approach contributes in part to the originality of the study by exploring place within different and sometimes challenging historical contexts. These include Indigenous cultural landscapes, the landscapes of fur trade commemoration, the designation and interpretation of sites associated with Indigenous resistance, and the commemoration of settler colonial sites. How the meaning and interpretation of these sites fits into a larger heritage narrative in western Canada, and how our understanding of each might have evolved over the years, forms the core of my investigation. I also focus on a dialogue of heritage and place within the broad topics of gender, class, and sexuality.

Conclusion

Notions of a collective past can advance consensus versions of history that promote a dominant heritage discourse. Yet the existence of such traditional perceptions does not preclude challenge. In a postcolonial world classed, gendered, and racialized populations, usually operating outside the hegemonic power structure, can still provide the engine for changing views of the past. These narratives of collective memory frequently underscore the distinctions between government narratives and those of non-government actors found in heritage and community groups, academics, and Indigenous publics. For example, Indigenous perceptions of the past often challenge the conventions of settler colonial history, or that fluid cultural perspectives and historiographies can alter the shifting ground of heritage place.

Attempts to construct authenticity in Western Canada are not based upon meanings that are intrinsic or elemental. Rather, it is modern cultural processes and contemporary views that often define or redefine history and heritage at many historic sites. My argument is that such places are often examples of an imagined past, a heritage defined by modern perceptions, and a landscape fashioned as aestheticized space. I contend that the mapping of the changing interpretations of selected heritage places in the West, how views of the past are challenged and defended, how narratives are broadened (or narrowed), and how memory and history connect or disconnect are the factors that have come to define the way we think about historic place in the prairie west.

Chapter 2. Memory Hooks: Commemorating Indigenous Cultural Landscapes

> *"… any landscape is composed not only of what lies before our eyes*
> *but what lies within our heads."*
>
> D.W. Meinig
> *The Beholding Eye: Ten Versions of the Same Scene*

Writing about Dene oral traditions in Canada's north archaeologists Thomas Andrews and John Zoe suggest that traditional places for Indigenous peoples serve as "memory hooks" upon which they hang the cultural fabric of a narrative tradition.[75] Through an almost mnemonic approach, the places of physical geography become a social and cultural landscape where traditional meanings and topography are symbolically fused. Rather than traditional western notions of history as a (usually written) record, narrative, and interpretation, Indigenous histories often tell stories that are rooted in terrestrial meaning and contextualized in a terminology that is spatial-

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[75] Thomas D. Andrews and John B. Zoe, "The Idaa Trail: Archaeology and the Dogrib Cultural Landscape", in George P. Nicholas and Thomas D. Andrews, *At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada* (Burnaby, B.C., SFU Archaeology Press, 1997), 160-177.

temporal. These traditions become part of a loosely mapped cultural landscape where events are

entwined with place and memory and people use locations in space to speak about events in time.

Here, causality, as anthropologist Christopher Hanks has argued, does not necessarily follow a

linear time sequence, especially as understood by archaeology.[76] Traditional Indigenous

narratives record such spaces as the locations of sacred sites that carry cosmological significance,

the places of cultural and historical importance associated with customary economic and

resource use, and geographical locations where the story is in fact the guiding map. Unlike much

of non-Indigenous heritage where the significance of place is often separated from the

significance of events and people, Indigenous history sees unity in place, culture, customs,

events and traditions.

The use of traditional approaches to commemoration, where western linear (and written)

concepts of history often prevail, has historically constrained public heritage agencies from fully

comprehending Indigenous cultural landscapes. This tradition has been part of a larger ignorance

of oral culture. Literate people have often been dismissive of societies that are non-literate, and

as geographer Patrick Nunn has argued, literacy itself can be tyrannical "for it encourages us to

undervalue our pasts – the knowledge amassed by those countless ancestors of ours who could

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[76] Writing about the Dene peoples of the Mackenzie Basin Hanks comments that "the events that spawned Native creation myths may, from a Western perspective, be spread over thousands of years and are therefore not easily causally related. In the Mackenzie drainage, geomorphology provides some clues that have allowed events alluded to in traditional narratives to be tentatively ordered in a manner that Western educated minds can understand." For Hanks, such a link can be seen in the draining of the great postglacial lakes and volcanic eruptions of the region as they provide a chronological structure that links both archaeological and traditional Native interpretations. See Christopher C. Hanks, "Ancient Knowledge of Ancient Sites: Tracing Dene Identity from the Late Pleistocene and Holocene" in George P. Nicholas and Thomas D. Andrews, *At a Crossroads: Archaeology and First Peoples in Canada*. Burnaby. B.C.: SFU Archaeology Press, 1997, 178.

neither read nor write. Literacy", Nunn suggests, "spawns arrogance".[77] However, in recent

decades Canadian agencies such as the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada and

Parks Canada have begun to move away from conventional historical and anthropological

frameworks and the specified criteria used to assess the national historic significance of place.

To a degree, they have recognized that their predictable criteria and framework for evaluation do

not adequately respond to the values inherent in the history of Indigenous peoples. In response,

federal and provincial heritage agencies have increasingly used designation to provide a

framework that could encompass traditional Indigenous views, including spiritual perspectives

toward the natural world, associative values in the land, and the history of resource use over

millennia. At the same time, however, these agencies endeavoured to make such traditional

knowledge comprehensible to those predominantly non-Indigenous persons who decide

significance and whose world view is typically based in Western historical scholarship.[78]

For both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples cultural landscapes have been described

in generic terms as "geographical areas that have been modified, influenced, or given special

cultural meaning by people". More specifically, in the 1996 *Report on the Royal Commission on*

Aboriginal Peoples Indigenous cultural landscapes were defined as "land [that] is deeply

intertwined with identity … [where] concepts of territory, traditions, and customs are not

divisible".[79] To some degree the contemporary commemoration of Indigenous cultural

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[77] Patrick Nunn, *The Edge of Memory: Ancient Stories, Oral Tradition and the Post-Glacial World.* (London: Bloomsbury Sigma, 2018), 23-24.

[78] See Susan Buggey*, An Approach to Aboriginal Cultural Landscapes,* Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, March, 1999. http://www.pc.gc.ca/leg/docs/r/pca-acl/images/Aboriginal_Cultural_Landscapes_e.pdf. Accessed 5, September, 2017.

[79] Canada, Privy Council Office, *Report on the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*, vol. 4, 137, as quoted in Ibid, 11.

landscapes by heritage agencies emerged from the pioneering work of the *International Council on Monuments and Sites* (ICOMOS) and its 1971 *International Scientific Committee on Cultural Landscapes*. The aim of the committee was to develop approaches to conserving natural and cultural heritage while developing holistic conservation approaches to landscapes. Ultimately, ICOMOS Canada recognized the need to address Indigenous views on cultural heritage and the final report of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in 2015 outlined a number of paths to recognizing and preserving Indigenous cultural heritage.[80] These included the overarching goal of finding a way to articulating an Indigenous perspective on defining cultural heritage, and in regard to place, understanding the relationship between environmental conservation and cultural identity.[81]

Based upon the development of international standards regarding cultural landscapes, along with Canadian research in the late 1990s and consultation with Indigenous scholars and elders[82], the federal government in 2008 came up with the following definition of an Indigenous cultural landscape:

> An Aboriginal cultural landscape is a place valued by an Aboriginal group (or groups) because of their long and complex relationship with that land. It expresses their unity with the natural and spiritual environment. It embodies their traditional knowledge of spirits, places, land uses, and ecology. Material remains of the association may be prominent, but will often be minimal or absent.[83]

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[80] See https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/agence-agency/aa-ia/parcours-pathways. Accessed 12, September, 2017. International initiatives to recognize Indigenous cultural landscapes have been at the forefront of heritage protection programs in Australia and New Zealand.

[81] Ibid.

[82] See Parks Canada, http://www.pc.gc.ca/leg/docs/r/pca-acl/sec4/index_e.asp. Accessed 4 September, 2017.

This statement recognizes an intimate knowledge by Indigenous peoples of the natural resources and ecosystems of their areas, "developed through long and sustained contact and their respect for the spirits which inhabit these places, [and that] moulded their life on the land."[84] It is traditional knowledge, narrative, place naming, and ecological sagacity, passed via oral tradition from generation to generation, that embodies and preserves an Indigenous relationship to the land and Indigeneity in general. Association with Indigenous cosmology creates sacred sites. They are respected as places of power, approached through ritual and codes of conduct, becoming places of mystical and spiritual status. At the same time, Indigenous cultural landscapes can include important resource areas, age old localities for hunting, fishing, gathering, and settlement.

And they can have great consequence for modern discussions around land and sovereignty. As a result of formal and informal consultations held during 1990-91, it was apparent that any framework for addressing Aboriginal history had to conform to emerging prescriptions in successive northern land claims regarding heritage and cultural sites. The 1997 Delgamuukw decision in British Columbia reinforced the significance of oral history in the establishment of land claims, a turning point in Canadian law and Indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous worldviews are encapsulated in the enduring relationship between people and the

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[83] See Parks Canada, http://www.pc.gc.ca/leg/docs/r/pca-acl/sec1/index_e.asp. Accessed 4 September, 2017.

[84] Ellen Lee, "Aboriginal Heritage Issues in Canadian Land Claims Negotiations", paper presented at the Fulbright Symposium *Aboriginal Cultures in an Interconnected World*, Darwin Australia, 1997. Copy in possession of the author.

land. To achieve this objective in commemoration, heritage must recognize that what distinguishes Indigenous peoples' understanding is the extent to which the human relationship with place has ethical, cultural, medicinal and spiritual elements, which are interwoven with patterns of economic use.

Thus, the goal of commemoration is not simply the protection of these places as key to the long- term survival of their stories, but a greater understanding of Indigenous concepts of place within a wider non-Indigenous culture. Over recent decades federal and provincial heritage agencies have through a series of thematic and site specific studies, come to consider how effectively the values of Indigenous peoples can define national historic significance and identify places that represent that significance.

Historically, many traditional Indigenous cultural landscapes throughout the world have been identified and documented in scientific terms, largely through archaeology. In 1990 Australian archaeologist Isabel McBride observed that all Indigenous heritage sites in that country listed on the World Heritage List were commemorated in purely scientific terms rather than as cultural or spiritual landscapes, or as representative of Indigenous cultural continuity.[85] However, in more recent years in North America, in Australia, and in New Zealand these spaces have been increasingly recognized and documented because of the continuity of Indigenous culture where the land reflects a long-standing interaction that is symbolic and religious, or more overtly economic. In Canada, federal and provincial commemoration has moved from a focus on western scientific knowledge to a greater emphasis on home grown traditional knowledge where

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[85] Isabel McBryde, 'Those truly outstanding examples: Kakadu in the Context of Australia's World Heritage Properties", in J. Domicelji and S. Domicelj (eds.), *A Sense of Place: A Conversation in Three Cultures*, (Canberra: Australian Heritage Commission, 1990), 15-19.

places are designated for their spiritual and cultural significance as well as their historic and economic importance.

This chapter will look at the designation, protection, and interpretation of some traditional Indigenous cultural landscapes in Manitoba and Saskatchewan. These will include the sacred petroforms of Whiteshell Provincial Park, the ancient burial spaces of Linear Mounds National Historic Site in southern Manitoba, the pre- and post-contact Dorset and Inuit remains of Seahorse Gully National Historic Site located on the Churchill west peninsula, and Wanuskewin Heritage Park in Saskatchewan, the site of a multi-millennia meeting place for the Indigenous peoples of the northern plains. Each of these sites represent varied versions of traditional cultural landscapes; some are spiritual, others are cultural, and one relates to customary resource use and settlement activities usually carried out over an extended period of time.

Despite the fact that the sites mentioned above have been commemorated based upon their significance to Indigenous peoples in a pre-contact era, it is perhaps self-evident to state that the creation of Indigenous cultural landscapes did not end with the arrival of the fur trade and settler culture in the West. As is explored in detail in chapters 3 and 5, such landscapes and places are not historically static; they exist in the post-contact era and continue to exist as places of great significance. As localities associated with the fur trade, as reserves, as contested terrains, and as lands removed, such places retain a cultural significance that remain as much a part of the Indigenous story in the West as the ancient places of spirituality and settlement.

In the Land of the North Wind

In the summer of 1966 a fire burned through a two-mile long ridge on the Churchill west

peninsula, a treeless headland located across the river from the modern town of Churchill,

Manitoba. The summer-long fire denuded the thick tundra layer of heath and lichen that covered

the area, leaving bare the stratum of gravel and sand that had once supported the vegetation of

Figure 1. Inuit dwelling remains, Churchill West Peninsula, n.d. (Parks Canada)

the region. While out hunting not long after the fire burned out, Joe Bighead, a local Dene man,

discovered a treasure drove of ancient artefacts left exposed on the subsoil.[86]

The artefacts discovered by Bighead consisted primarily of stone tools, many the small

delicately fashioned implements associated with the circumpolar designation that archaeologists

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[86] David A. Meyer, *Pre-Dorset Settlements at the Seahorse Gully Site*, (Masters Thesis, University of Manitoba, 1970), 1.

refer to as the "Arctic Small Tool Tradition".[87] Pre-Dorset and Dorset cultures that made up this small tool tradition were called the "Tunit" by the later Inuit, and inhabited almost all of arctic Canada in a west to east paleo-Eskimo migration from Alaska that started over 4000 years ago. The Churchill River region represents their most southerly occupation, although minor Pre-Dorset sites can be found further inland in northern Manitoba.[88]The Tunit sites on the west peninsula date from approximately 2500 BCE to 700 CE (Pre-Dorset) to 700 CE to 1000 CE(Dorset). They were replaced by the Thule, the ancestors of the modern Inuit. The Thule and later Inuit, with their superior technology, were ultimately able to overwhelm the Tunit peoples. An ancient Inuit account comments:

> The Tunit were a strong people, and yet they were driven from their villages by others who were more numerous, by many people of great ancestors; but so greatly did they love their country that when they were leaving Uglit there was a man who, out of desperate love for his village, harpooned the rocks … and made the stone fly about like bits of ice.[89]

Pre-Dorset peoples lived in coastal areas like the Churchill West Peninsula, at the time a series of islands prior to post-glacial isostatic rebound, as well as on the interior tundra. Here they lived in snow houses in winter and skin-covered, semi-subterranean houses in summer and

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[87] These small chipped or polished stone tools were fashioned as cutting blades, hide scrapers, arrow points, and engraving tools known as burins. See N. Stoddard, *The Seahorse Gully Site*, (Ottawa: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada), 22 September, 1969. Vol. 61, 1.

[88] While the Seahorse Gully Site retains evidence of cultural settlement over 4000 years, evidence of smaller Pre-Dorset sites have been found inland near Shamattawa and South Indian Lake. Generally, Pre-Dorset and Dorset cultures extended from the high arctic down the west and east coasts of Hudson Bay, taking advantage of the marine resources found there.

[89] Province of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch, *The Arctic Small Tool Tradition in Manitoba*, Winnipeg, 1990, 8.

hunted caribou and birds. In coastal areas they used skin boats in a seasonal marine-based economy using harpoons to hunt ringed seal and fish. For much of the year, Pre-Dorset families lived in small groups although in spring and summer the West Peninsula would see larger communal gatherings. Fall and winter were spent inland. The later Dorset people also lived in snow houses in winter and skin tents in the

Figure 2. Kayak rest, Churchill West Peninsula, n.d. (Parks Canada)

summer months. Although they primarily pursued a marine-based economy even in winter when they hunted for seals, the Dorset peoples hunted caribou in summer.[90] Their culture was marked by a different technology and the presence of art pieces -- small carvings of bone, antler and ivory. The later Thule and Inuit hunted whales and used dog sleds.[91] A large number of Pre-Dorset, Dorset, Thule, and Inuit sites have been excavated at the Seahorse Gully and Ridge sites, as well as at adjacent locations on the peninsula.

The Seahorse Gully site was recognized of national significance by the HSMBC in October of 1969. The site is adjacent to the northernmost segment of the bedrock Seahorse Ridge and runs 1.8 kilometres along the length of the ridge, approximately thirty metres above sea level. The commemoration includes the Dorset Cove site on the western side of the peninsula near Button Bay. The "heritage value" of the site as listed by the federal government notes that it

[90] Ibid, 3-8.

[91] N. Stoddard, *The Seahorse Gully Site*, 3-5.

"contains one of the larger Dorset and Pre-Dorset assemblages in Canada".[92] Its character defining elements consist of its location overlooking Hudson Bay (including the surviving viewscapes), its setting below a ridge, the remains of twenty-four Pre-Dorset dwellings – rings of stone in their original placement -- and the integrity of the surviving archaeological resources including hunting tools and domestic artefacts.[93] Archaeological research in the 1960s uncovered the rough outline of the site and further research in the 1980s and 1990s has revealed the existence of more dwellings and more artefacts. Remains of harpoon heads and the bones of seals have been found at the site along with lithic materials such as chert that was used to fashion scrapers, adze blades, and chisels.

While the commemoration of Seahorse Gully identifies the earliest human use of the Churchill West Peninsula, the existence of a large number of sites in the immediate area related to post-1000 BCE Thule and Inuit use provide the region with a continuity of occupation almost unmatched in northern Canada. Numerous tent rings that date from ancient times to the early twentieth century, along with graves, cache sites, and kayak rests indicate Indigenous use over millennia and the west peninsula as an important resource and settlement area at the southern edge of the arctic. Having hiked this area myself a number of times, first with archaeologists and later with Indigenous people, including John Arnalukjuaq, a spry septuagenarian Inuit man from

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[92] See Canada's Historic Places, *Seahorse Gully Remains National Historic Site of Canada,* *http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=18791. Accessed 13 February, 2018.*

[93] Ibid.

Arviat, I could not help but feel impressed, not only by the breadth of human history of the area,

but by the ancient adaptability of northern peoples to a harsh climate and landscape.[94]

Unlike traditional Indigenous spaces discussed later in this chapter, the Seahorse Gully

site and nearby sites of Inuit occupation do not appear to be sacred places that carry

cosmological significance, at least we do not have evidence that they do. There appears no

surviving oral traditions or physical evidence at this site that relate to metaphysical views of the

natural world, or associative values related to the spiritual, mystical, or medicinal although their

existence cannot be precluded. The west peninsula is primarily an archaeological site, a cultural

landscape that reveals generations of settlement and resource use.

From a heritage perspective these sites, when partnered with the post-contact Euro-

Canadian historic sites in the immediate area, present an almost unrivalled cultural landscape.

Here one can read a language of place that spans thousands of years of history and use. The

eighteenth century stone fortress called Prince of Wales Fort (a national historic site) sits

imposingly only a few kilometres away on Eskimo Point, as does nearby Sloop Cove where the

Hudson's Bay Company moored its coastal vessels. The location of Fort Churchill, also a

national historic site is located a short distance upriver. Fort Churchill (1783-1930) was built by

the Hudson's Bay Company approximately five kilometres from the mouth of the Churchill

River and was originally the 1619-1620 wintering site of Danish explorer Jens Munk. It was also

the location of a short-lived HBC post and whale fishery in 1689, and the site of the Churchill

River Post between 1717 and 1740. "Colony Creek" a few kilometres farther upriver was the

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[94] See Robert Coutts, Darren Keith and Andrew Stewart, *Kuugjuaq: Memories of Inuit Life in Churchill* (Winnipeg: Parks Canada), 1996. The word "Kuugjuaq" meaning "Big River" is the Inuktitut term for the Churchill River.

1813 wintering site of the second group of Selkirk settlers, many of whom arrived infected with typhus. The following spring they walked overland to York Factory and then travelled by boat to Red River. Lastly, the west peninsula contains the remnants of the North West Mounted Police Post built in the late nineteenth century and closed in 1930 when the town of Churchill was established on the east side of the river.

The Churchill West Peninsula is such an area of rich cultural history that in the 1990s the Government of Manitoba considered nominating it as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. (That nomination never went forward as UNESCO felt more nominations were required from non-western countries). Yet, as is discussed in more detail in chapter four (see "Founding Father Narratives and New Voices"), there remained the opportunity to recognize nationally the whole area as primarily an Indigenous cultural landscape. Unfortunately, at the time Parks Canada had grown wary of the evolving and expanding cultural narratives around many national historic sites, including a changing focus from "site" to "place" and the broader interpretations that went

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Figure 3. Pre-Dorset house remains, Seahorse Gully, n.d. (Parks Canada

with it. By introducing the policy of "Commemorative Intent" across the country the agency

restricted its interpretive focus to original Board recommendations. At the west peninsula this

resulted in an emphasis almost entirely upon Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site and its

eighteenth century role in French-English colonial rivalry, the theme of the Board's 1920

commemoration.[95] The failure to take a wider, more inclusive view by locating places such as

Seahorse Gully and Prince of Wales Fort in a broader historical context (where the European

timeline would be but a small part of a comprehensive human history) squandered the chance to

interpret a broad sweep of history, and especially the heritage of place and memory. Cultural

landscapes such as Seahorse Gully, along with the other ancient Indigenous sites of the area,

communicate the integrity of heritage as place and not the contrived representations of heritage

as tourism. It is history on the ground, a cultural landscape, and not the tradition of invention

(with apologies to Eric Hobsbawm) that often passes for heritage in Canada.[96] More importantly,

they show how our history and our heritage can be more than affirmative depictions of settler

culture.

Spiritual Landscapes and Mortuary Sites

Linear Mounds National Historic Site is located on a plain above the Antler River in southwest

Manitoba not far from the Souris River and about 17 kilometers south of the town of Melita. The

mounds consist of two earthen embankments almost 200 metres in length, each terminating in

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[95] For more on Parks Canada's policy of "Commemorative Intent" and its inherent conservatism see Chapter 5 and the section entitled: "Decentering the Commemorative Narrative: The 1885 Resistance in Saskatchewan"

[96] Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition*, 1-14.

circular mounds.[97] One mound runs north south while the adjoining mound is an east-west configuration. These are burial mounds, one of the best preserved examples of the ancient mound building cultures associated with the Devils Lake Sourisford Burial Complex which extends from south eastern North Dakota, through south western Manitoba to south eastern Saskatchewan. Approximately 200 burial mounds exist in southern Manitoba with roughly a third of these located in the Sourisford region of south western Manitoba.[98] The linear mounds near Melita are mortuary mounds dating from 900 to 1400 CE and are complex constructions of soil, bone, and other materials.[99] As part of the Sourisford Complex, Linear Mounds was constructed by ancient Indigenous cultures that had developed extensive trading networks as far as the west coast of Canada, east as far as the Great Lakes, and as far south as the Gulf of Mexico. Beads, quarried copper, and decorated pendants and gorgets (throat and chest coverings) from these mortuary mounds had their origins in these far off places.

Figure 4. Linear Mounds National Historic Site, 2005 (Parks Canada)

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[97] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, *Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada, Management Plan*, 2007, 1.

[98] Ibid, 3-4.

[99] Canada's Historic Places, Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada, See http://historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=10475. Accessed 14 February, 2018.

Since their "discovery" by relic hunters in the middle of the nineteenth century and by

archaeologists in the early part of the twentieth century, the burial mounds have been partly

excavated, with a great many artefacts removed. Investigations by the Royal Ontario Museumin

1907, 1913, and 1914 resulted in human remains as well as a great many cultural artefacts being

carried off to this museum where they remain today.[100] No archaeology has taken place at the

site since then. Ongoing monitoring continues and in 2004 Parks Canada conducted a two-year

ground penetrating radar survey.[101]

Linear Mounds was declared of national significance in 1973 and has remained as a

sixteen hectare protected land reserve since the property was acquired in 1978. At the time of

commemoration and acquisition no consultation with local Indigenous groups was undertaken.

Today, there are no visitor facilities at the site nor is there promotion by Parks Canada. A later

statement of commemorative intent reads: "The site contains some of the best-preserved

examples of Aboriginal Mounds of the Devils lake-Sourisford Burial Complex that exist in

Canada. It was built and used between AD 900 and 1400."[102] Despite reluctance by Parks

Canada to expose the site to vandalism (there is only periodic monitoring) the local municipality

developed a road to the site and built a parking lot and an interpretive kiosk. Community

representatives have hoped to develop tourism opportunities at the site but its federal status as a

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[100] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, *Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada, Management Plan*, 4.

[101] Sharon Thomson, Parks Canada archaeologist, Winnipeg, personal communication, 15 February, 2018.

[102] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, *Linear Mounds National Historic Site of Canada, Management Plan*, 5.

land reserve has frustrated attempts at local marketing.[103] Parks Canada has, however, developed

an ongoing relationship with the nearby Canupawakpa Dakota First Nation to potentially develop

a sensitive interpretation plan, although the First Nation remains skeptical of tourism at a

spiritual site like Linear Mounds. The goals of the most recent 2007 federal management plan

remain modest and simply state "A meaningful and long-term relationship with a local First

Nation will contribute to management decisions for Linear Mounds. Interested partners,

stakeholders and Parks Canada will work together in safeguarding the values of the site while

presenting site messages to all Canadians."[104] In 2008 the Canupawakpa Dakota Nation asked for

the return of human remains and artefacts from the Royal Ontario Museum. In response, the

ROM asked the First Nation to gather support for this idea from all Indigenous communities that

could claim descent from early Siouan people who built the mounds. The repatriation efforts

involved contacting other Dakota First Nations in Manitoba as well as Indigenous communities

in North Dakota.[105]

As a cultural landscape Linear Mounds unites the spiritual and the terrestrial, at the same

time revealing the early involvement of the ancestors of the Dakota in a continent-wide trading

network. As mortuary mounds and as earthen mausoleums honouring the dead they signify the

prominence of the former, while their elevations, shapes, slopes, and geometry mark them as

distinctive features on the prairie landscape. Traditional narratives describe the locations of

sacred sites such as Linear Mounds with knowledge passed orally from generation to generation

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[103] Ibid, 6-7.

[104] Ibid, 9.

[105] Bartley Kives, "Linear Mounds one of Manitoba's best-kept archaeological secrets: many want to keep it that way", *Winnipeg Free Press*, 21 September, 2013.

through instructional travel, descriptive images, and metaphorical tales of place. Located in a

prairie farmer's field, the mounds are not a site of rustic Arcadian simplicity but a place of power

and respect where the heritage of locality is treated as a whole, where place, events and people

are considered as one. It is a view of place that goes beyond a material focus and imbues that site

with spiritual and transcendent significance. The spirit world unites with the material as beings

traverse from the physical to the spiritual and the landscape communicates meaning. Thus, the

continued protection and survival of the Mounds and their sacred significance is essential to

expressing how place can so critically represent the link between the distant past and present and

the union between two worlds.

Spirit Stones

Petroforms, sometimes referred to as Boulder Mosaics, describe the historic, perhaps ancient,

placement of stones on open ground creating the outline of a figure in usually an animal, human,

or geometric configuration.[106] Created by Indigenous groups throughout much of the northern

great plains, including Canada's prairie provinces, it is the animal, human, and geometric

outlines that characterize the western edge of the southern shield. Geometric shapes in the form

of medicine wheels can be found in the western grasslands.[107] Whiteshell Provincial Park,

located in south eastern Manitoba, contains a great number of these petroforms, approximately

200 sites scattered throughout the park that include rock images of snakes and turtles, humans

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[106] Petroforms differ from petroglyphs which are carvings on a rock face, and from pictographs in which red ochre is used to paint on stone surfaces.

[107] Leo Pettipas, "The Petroform Phenomenon of Southeastern Manitoba and Its Significance", originally published in 2004, revised in 2010. See: rockpiles.blogspot.ca/2012/03/petroform-phenomenon-of southeastern.html. Accessed 15 February, 2018. 1.

and geometric shapes. They are generally laid out on tablerock and vary in complexity and size from a few metres to hundreds of metres. Their age is unknown although they may represent the ritualistic actions of Algonkian speakers in the pre-contact period. The presumption (mostly among non-archaeologists) that the petroform builders were Algonkian speakers is based largely on the historical and current occupation of the area by the Anishinaabe Ojibwa peoples. However, there appears to be no regional oral history associated with the Whiteshell petroforms and if the Ojibwa were the petroform builders then their construction would have to post date the later 18th century when this group historically moved into the region on a western migration from the eastern Lake Superior region. Some literature has associated the Whiteshell petroforms with the *Midewiwin* and the traditional rituals of the Ojibwa Grand Medicine Society.[108]

Dating the Whiteshell petroforms has been problematic so hence the uncertainty regarding which Indigenous groups actually constructed the sites. Difficulties with traditional dating techniques such as radiocarbon dating, cross-dating, and lichenometry (all due to the nature of the sites) have left the petroform chronology less than certain. However, within the scholarly community, specifically the work of Dr. Jack Steinbring, it is felt that the petroform sites in the park are much older than Ojibwa occupation.[109] The largest site in the park, the 9-acre Tie Creek Site, or at least some of its elements, are thought to be upwards of 3000 years old, while other components are estimated to have been constructed around 1200 C.E.[110] The age of

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[108] Ibid, 6-10.

[109] J.H. Steinbring, "Dating Rock Art in the Northern Midcontinent", *American Indian Rock Art*, vol. 12, 1993, 15-29. Steinbring considers the petroform builders to be "pre-tribal", predating the Cree, Siouian speakers, and later Anishanaabe (including the Ojibwa) of the region.

the sites is also unknown to modern Indigenous informants which also suggests a pre-Ojibwa

origin, although their crucial role as spiritual sites is generally agreed upon by all parties. For

adherents of the *Midewewin* the petroforms represent *Manito Ahbee*, the place where God sits. It

is considerd the place of origin of the Anishinaabe, a people lowered from the sky to the ground

by the Creator. While archaeologists might consider the first people to use the petroforms as

unidentifiable, these stones are not just relics of past rituals of unknown people. Their

importance to the Anishinaabe continues to this day. However, what specific role these sites

might have played in particular religious ceremonies remains undetermined. Some have

speculated that the alignment of many of the petroforms might suggest an astronomical role as

well.

Like many forms of Indigenous spirituality, what western cultures might consider simply

as art can also have a ritual performance meaning. These rituals, like ceremonial song and dance,

can also include petroglyphs, pictographs, and petroforms. They are cultural, sacred, and

ritualistic, helping to define and reinforce the relationship between the physical world and the

spiritual. Today, these sites continue their ceremonial roles as Indigenous religious observances

are occasionally held at the various petroform locations.[111] Unfortunately, the Bannock Point

site, the most accessible petroform location in the Park, has witnessed vandalism over the years –

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[110] Anthony Buchner, "Archaeo-Astronomical Investigation of the Petroform Phenomenon of Southeastern Manitoba," *Directions in Manitoba Prehistory*, Leo Pettipas (ed.) (Winnipeg: Association of Manitoba Archaeologists and Manitoba Archaeological Association, 1980), 96.

[111] According to a *Winnipeg Free Press* interview with Sagkeeng First Nation member Dave Courchene, an annual "Ignite the Fire" gathering is held each September at Bannock Point, the most accessible petroform site in the park. See "Whiteshell's Sacred Stones", *Winnipeg Free Press,* 30 July, 2011.

stones moved or removed completely and figures re-orientated by visitors and campers.[112] In 1959 Bannock Point was commemorated by the Province of Manitoba's Heritage Council and an interpretive kiosk and provincial plaque were erected nearby. Bannock Point has become increasingly well known and guided tours are now offered. Other sites in the park such as those at Tie Creek and Malloy Lake are not designated by the province, except for the implicit exemptions from development specified under the heritage land use restrictions of the Manitoba Provincial Parks Act and the general protections offered by the 1986 Manitoba Heritage Resources Act.[113] Neither are they national historic sites; their greatest protection comes from their isolation and anonymity. It is unfortunate that a more robust legislative protection for these irreplaceable sites is not in place as it would not only enhance protection, but promote the Whiteshell petroforms as significant heritage places in the province, placing them at the same level as the exhaustive list of public buildings, churches, and settler homesteads that dominate designated sites in the province.

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[112] See "Ancient petroform in Manitoba's Whiteshellpark destroyed", CBC News 30 June, 2017.

[113] Under the Manitoba Provincial Parks Act, restrictions on park use include prohibitions on mining or the development of oil, petroleum, natural gas or hydro-electric power, as well as activities that compromise wilderness, backcountry or heritage land use categories. The petroform sites in the park fall under this latter category. See: The Manitoba Provincial Parks Act, http://web2.gov.mb.ca/laws/statutes/ccsm/p020e.php. Accessed 1 March, 2018.

Figure 5. Turtle petroform at Bannock Point, Whiteshell Provincial Park (Government of Manitoba)

Such boulder mosaic locations outside the park should also be extended the same level of protection although Manitoba's track record on putting comprehensive conservation measures in place has been less than effective. For instance, the province's Heritage Resources Act while being comprehensive, with significant prohibitions against the damage or destruction of resources, is rarely invoked against those who impair Manitoba's cultural heritage.[114] As one longtime heritage advocate in Manitoba who has done extensive research and writing on a wide variety of provincial resources commented to me: "I would characterize the provincial government as toothless with respect to enforcement of heritage-related transgressions. However strident the legislation may be, they have committed no resources to it, with the result that the [Heritage Resources] Act is essentially a sad joke."[115] Strong words but most likely true.

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[114] One example, with which the author was involved, was a late 1990s case where a longtime resident of the York Factory area and a former custodian of the national historic site removed remains of the historic Anglican church located on provincial land adjacent to the site. Rather than being prosecuted for destroying these resources under the Act, he was in fact thanked by the provincial Historic Resources Branch for his interest in heritage.

[115] *Anonymous,* email to author dated October 17, 2018. Used with permission.

Interwoven with the sacred significance of the petroforms of south eastern Manitoba is a culturally constructed heritage where the language of place communicates a setting of power. Such boulder mosaics, as Nicholas Saunders suggests, are "sacred landscapes [that represent] the manifestation of world-views which populate a geographical area with a distinctive array of mythical, religious, or spiritual beings or essences."[116] While we might know little of the original intent of petroform construction, just as the original meaning(s) of neolithic stone monuments elsewhere might remain unknown, we do realize that they are places of power. Nevertheless, they are cultural landscapes that are to be respected through customs, rituals, ceremonies and rules of conduct. They can resonate with individuals and with cultural communities. And to return to an earlier discussion, the Whiteshell petroforms conform to the meaningful space of memory and the multiple constructions of historic "place" and not the occasionally contrived restrictions of heritage "site".

"Seeking Peace of Mind": The Topography of Cultural Identity.

Indigenous cultural landscapes in North America are often ancillary, they "fly under the radar", at least for non-Indigenous people who might view a cultural landscape as a form of nature that has been human engineered, often in a significant way. As spiritual places, as topographies of cultural identity, or natural landscapes possessed of cultural meaning, they can remain unseen to settler culture due to the particular nature of the site itself or to its isolation, to social and historical marginalization, or perhaps to all of these factors.

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[116] N.J. Saunders, "At the Mouth of the Obsidian Cave: Deity and Place in Aztec Religion" in David Carmichael (ed.), *Sacred Sites, Sacred Places* (London: Routledge, 1994), 172.

The use of the land, either in a physical or spiritual sense is critical, sometimes hidden from obvious view and sometimes overtly recognizable. An example of the latter might be the spectacular cliff dwellings of the Anasazi, the ancestors of the present day Pueblo peoples, who lived in the American southwest from about 900 CE to 1450 CE. These complex masonry-walled communal habitations found in the box canyons of present-day New Mexico, Arizona, and Colorado are built into high cliffs most likely as protection against the elements as well as enemies.[117] Some of the best examples of this ancient architecture can be found at Mesa Verde National Park (declared a World Heritage Site in 1978) and Yucca House National Monument in Colorado, as well as at the Canyon de Chelly National Monument in Arizona. An ancient cultural site closer to home is Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump. Located near present-day Fort Macleod in Alberta, the site is almost 6000 years old and was designated a national historic site in 1968 and a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1981.

In Saskatchewan a cultural landscape not immediately identifiable, at least prior to its development as a historic place, is Wanuskewin NHS in located fifteen kilometres north of Saskatoon. Wanuskewin, a modern Cree term meaning "Peace of Mind" is located in the broad Opimihaw Creek valley near the South Saskatchewan River. The 140-acre site contains archaeological and physical evidence of some of the most significant pre-contact Indigenous habitation and resource use sites on the northern plains. Nineteen archaeological sites have been identified to date and include a medicine wheel, multi component habitation sites, buffalo kill sites, and ceremonial locations. Over many centuries the Opimihaw Creek valley drew Indigenous plains peoples to this sheltered and relatively confined place and archaeological work

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[117] See Marcia Keegan, *Pueblo People: Ancient Traditions, Modern Lives* (Santa Fe: Clear Light Publishing), 1998. Keegan studies and photographs not only the ancient cliff dwellings of Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico but also the more contemporary Pueblo villages and people of that region.

since 1982 by the University of Saskatchewan has uncovered evidence of a large number of

cultural levels indicating continuous occupation over 6,000 years.[118] Cultural levels at

Wanuskewin describe various occupations of the area over hundreds of generations, their

distinctiveness determined through the analysis of lithic deposits, faunal remains, as well as

arrowheads and projectile points. Some of the historic locations in the 140 acre park include the

Tipperary Creek Site and its fourteen levels of occupation, the late pre-contact Tipperary Creek

Medicine Wheel, the four thousand year-old Mosquito habitation site, the nine 2000 year-old tipi

rings of the Sunburn Site, the Meewasin Creek Site, a buffalo jump, pound, and bison processing

centre, and the multi-level, multi-millennia habitation sites at Red Tail, Amisk, Juniper Flats

Figure 6. Wanuskewin NHS and Heritage Park (Province of Saskatchewan)

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[118] Provincial Archives of Saskatchewan (hereafter PAS), Regina. Wanuskewin Heritage Park, file HB 89.04.03.01.

Cathedral Park, Buena Vista, Cut Arm, Dog Child, Thundercloud, and Wolf Willow.

Archaeology in the park has also uncovered the remains of a few early homesteader sites.[119] Although developed initially as a provincial site under the auspices of the Meewasin Valley Development Authority, Wanuskewin was declared a national historic site in June of 1986. The Canadian Register of Historic Places lists the 'Statement of Significance' for the site in its description of historic place as:

> Wanuskewin National Historic Site of Canada is located in the Tipperary [now Opimihaw] Creek Wanuskewin Conservation Area on the South Saskatchewan River, in Saskatchewan. The archaeological sites contained within the 57-hectare (140 acre) conservation area represents nearly 6000 years of cultural history relating to the Northern Plains First Nations people. There are several kinds of remains in the deep coulees along the riverbanks of the site including a medicine wheel, camps, tipi rings, and stone cairns. Official recognition refers to the present limits of Wanuskewin Heritage Park.[120]

Based upon the Minutes of the HSMBC in June of 1986, Wanuskewin was designated a national historic site because "its archaeological features represent all the major time periods in Northern Plains pre-contact history … its archaeological sites representing 6000 years of cultural history."[121] Here the statement is amplified to mention the clarity of land use at Wanuskewin, the functional relationship between many of the sites including surface features such as tipi sites and medicine wheels along with a number of major bison kill and processing sites.[122] All are located within a relatively small area of pre-contact settlement and use.

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[119] Ibid.

[120] See "Wanuskewin" Canadian Register of Historic Places, http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=15685&pid=0

[121] Library and Archives Canada, RG 37, *Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*, June, 1986.

[122] Ibid.

The recognition, commemoration, planning, and development of Wanuskewin as a place of Indigenous pre-contact heritage, is an interesting story. While oral evidence had long suggested the importance of the Opimihaw Creek valley, ethnographic and archaeological interest in the site began only in the 1920s.[123] But despite the significance of the oral history of the region, as late as the 1980s park planners continued to look upon traditional oral history at Wanuskewin with some suspicion. A November, 1986 study of the development of visitor services at the site by Kanata Heritage Research recommended that ongoing archaeological, ethnographic, and natural science research should continue to play a major part in telling the Wanuskewin story. This type of information, the study concluded, "provide[s] the first knowledge not dependent on the hazards of oral transmission."[123]

The Saskatoon Archaeological Society directed the first limited archaeological excavations in the area between 1930 and 1932.[124] However, it was not until 1982 that a systematic archaeological program under the direction of Dr. Earnest Walker at the University of Saskatchewan began to uncover the rich history of the area. The land along the South Saskatchewan was originally owned by the Vitkowski family who left the property uncultivated. In 1982 they sold the land to the City of Saskatoon who sold it the following year to the Meewasin Valley Authority, a conservation agency created in 1979 to protect the cultural and natural resources of the South Saskatchewan River valley. Meewasin began preliminary planning for the park in 1979 and launched a five-year development plan in 1982. The archaeological program was initiated that same year. In 1983 Saskatchewan declared the then named Tipperary

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[123] See PAS, Kanata Heritage Research, *Wanuskewin Heritage Park: Visitor Services Program, Final Report*, November, 1986, 21, Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, file 401.8.4.1.

[124] PAS, Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, file 401.8.4.

Creek site a provincial heritage site. In 1985 an Elders Advisory Committee (later changed to the

Wanuskewin Indian Planning and Development Committee) was created and in 1986 they passed

a resolution on 'Spiritual Values'. That same year the HSMBC declared the site to be of national

historic significance.

In 1987 the Cree word Wanuskewin ("Seeking Peace of Mind") was chosen for the park

development and the HSMBC, recognizing the importance of the site beyond simple

commemoration via a plaque, recommended to the federal minister that "enhanced" involvement

from the federal government be considered. According to then HSMBC chair Thomas Symons,

"The site contains the richest known concentration of resources associated with the whole

spectrum of pre-historic activity on the northern plains." Symons added that "if Parks Canada is

convinced that the long-term preservation of the in-situ cultural resources at Wanuskewin is

assured and that its *special sense of place* [italics mine] will be protected from unsympathetic

intrusions, the Program should enter into discussions with the Meewasin Valley Authority and

other interested parties with a view to determining an appropriate role for itself to play in the co-

operative development of the site."[125] Not surprisingly, Symons was cautious regarding the

nature of development at Wanuskewin. Although federal policies such as Cultural Resource

Management were in the future, the program was concerned about inauthentic development at

the site. Initially, federal investment in the project centered on research; in 1984 Ottawa

committed $260,000 for a five-year program.[126] In 1988, after federal involvement was

confirmed, Ottawa provided three million dollars for site development to be overseen by the

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[125] PAS, Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, Federal Funding file
401.8.2, Thomas Symons to W.G. Bolstad, Executive Director, Meewasin Valley Authority, 2
December, 1987.

[126] PAS, *Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park*, file 401.8.4.1.

Saskatchewan Department of Economic Development and Tourism, the Department of Parks, the

Saskatoon Archaeological Society, Recreation and Culture, and the Meewasin Valley

Authority.[127] The City of Saskatoon provided $300,000 in operational funding.[128]

Evidently Wanuskewin had been on the cultural and development radar for some time,

both from an archaeological perspective and with various levels of government including the

Meewasin Valley Authority that had originally purchased the site in the early 1980s. Aside from

designation, a variety of master development plans, site development plans, cost benefit studies,

marketing plans, tourism research reports, and interpretive plans were carried out over roughly a

decade so clearly there was considerable "buy-in" from government, Indigenous organizations,

and non-governmental agencies. If the 1960s and 1970s had witnessed the development of major

fur trade and settler colonial heritage sites in Canada, the 1980s and 1990s would see a greater

focus on Indigenous heritage with the development of Metis sites like Batoche at the same time

that Wanuskewin was becoming the poster site for pre-contact heritage. Both sites are in

Saskatchewan.

Wanuskewin would soon take the lead in other ways as well. On 1 September, 1989 the

Wanuskewin Heritage Park Act (WHPA) was proclaimed making the site, not a federal,

provincial, or municipal park, but an independent entity under the administration of a Board of

Directors appointed from the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, the University of

Saskatchewan, the Meewasin Valley Authority, the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations,

as well as Wanuskewin Indian Heritage Inc. An earlier draft of the Act was called "The

Wanuskewin Provincial Heritage Park Act" and did not mention the Indigenous community, the

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[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

City of Saskatoon, and the Meewasin Valley Authority. In March of 1989 Fred Heal of the

Meewasin Valley Authority, in a letter to Tom Young of the Provincial Department of Economic

Development and Tourism, protested the absence of these critical entities from this early draft.[129]

The Province then amended the text of the Act to include these stakeholders prior to its official

launch the following September.

The first board chair of the WHPA was Grand Chief Cyrus Standing of the Dakota First

Nations of Canada. The goal of the Act was to establish Wanuskewin as a world recognized

heritage park and tourist attraction that would increase awareness and understanding of the

cultural legacy of the Indigenous peoples of the Northern Plains. By protecting the site's

artefacts and spiritual character Wanuskewin would provide a focus for this cultural heritage as

well as afford opportunities for spiritual ceremonies and other cultural celebrations.[130]

Wanuskewin Indian Heritage Inc. (WIHI) is a corporation "established to review all planning for

development and operations at Wanuskewin Heritage Park. WIHI ensures that the needs of the

Indian people are met and an authentic and unique experience is provided for all visitors to the

park."[131] The goals of this Indigenous organization included their "active partnership in the

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[129] Fred Heal, Meewasin Valley Authority to Tom Young, Provincial Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 9 March, 1989. PAS, *Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park*, Legislation, file 401.8.4.

The word "Provincial" was also dropped from the title of the Act so as not to confuse Wanuskewin with provincial park status. See Colin Maxwell, Provincial Minister of Parks, Recreation and Culture to Joan Duncan, Provincial Minister of Economic Development and Tourism, 31 January, 1989. Ibid. The 1989 act creating the WHPA was amended in 1997. See: http://www.publications.gov.sk.ca/freelaw/documents/English/Statutes/Statutes/W1-3.pdf. Accessed March 5, 2018.

[130] Ibid, 1997.

planning and development of Wanuskewin Heritage Park … that Indian culture is reflected accurately and sensitively, … to hold traditional Indian ceremonies in private areas of the park [and] to develop business opportunities at the park for Indian people especially in the operation of the restaurant and gift shop". Economic spinoffs, it was argued, should include employment for Indigenous people, job training, career planning, and the development of managerial skills.[132] In line with this thinking, the Meewasin Valley Authority stated its hope that the project would reflect "Indian values and traditions" and that the park development would benefit Indigenous people through the ownership and leasing of facilities for the operation of commercial enterprises on the site.[133]

Phase 1 of design and construction began in 1989 commencing with a one million dollar grant from Western Economic Diversification and another one million dollars from a tourism agreement between the province and the federal department of Industry, Science and Technology Canada. The construction design included a visitor reception centre, and a system of trails and outdoor interpretive stations, as well as an outdoor activity area. Projected costs in 1980s dollars amounted to over $6 million, $2.5 million of which was earmarked for the visitor centre and its functional infrastructure including meeting areas, a restaurant, and gift shop, Scenic walks and trails leading to the many outdoor sites listed above was budgeted at $1.5 million. The balance of the project costs would go towards planning, architectural, and interpretive consultants,

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131 PAS, *Wanuskewin Heritage Park*, file HB 91.04.02.01, June, 1989. WIFI claims to represent all five Indigenous language groups in Saskatchewan including the Dene, Cree, Dakota, Nakota, and Saulteaux.

132 Ibid.

133 Fred Heal, Meewasin Valley Authority to Tom Young, Saskatchewan Department of Economic Development and Tourism, 15 March, 1989. PAS, *Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Par*k, Legislation, 401.8.4.1.

interpretive displays, a slide show, and signage.[134] Phase 1 completion was scheduled for 1992 with the site projected to attract between 110,000 and 150,000 people per year.[135]

Today, the park's trail system is over 6 kilometres and takes visitors past bison kill sites, tipi rings, medicine wheels, and ancient settlement areas. Called the "Path of the People", the main trail descends into the valley where interpretive signage tells the broad story of the valley, the prairies and the first peoples to visit and use the area. Other trails branch off from the main pathway, including the "Trail of Discovery" that leads north and emphasizes how archaeology reveals the past lives of Indigenous peoples. Archaeologists from the University of Saskatchewan continue their excavations in this area. The "Trail of the Buffalo" leads up onto the east prairie and offers visitors a view of the valley and the South Saskatchewan River. Lastly, the "Circle of Harmony" trail leads onto the south prairie and past tipi rings and the medicine wheel site.

Figure 7. Path of the People trail at Wanuskewin Heritage Park (Province of Saskatchewan)

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[134] PAS, *Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park*, Legislation, file 401.8.4.1.

[135] PAS, *Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin: The Beginnings of a World Class Heritage Attraction*, Saskatchewan Report, November, 1989, file 401.8.4.

My own visits to the park in the early to mid-2000s (twice in summer and once for a winter meeting) were enjoyable and rewarding; the trails are not difficult to negotiate, the information provided is useful, and the views are remarkable. Guided tours are offered by Indigenous staff, thankfully not in any kind of period costume, a refreshing change from the experience one finds at "living history" sites. Corporate sponsorship signage at rests stops can be off putting but no doubt a reality of funding for modern heritage sites. The current exhibits in the visitor centre are excellent although a bit dated, and art exhibitions are staged on a regular basis. The theatre slide show entitled "What Does Wanuskewin Mean to You", dates to the early 1990s and while entertaining is outmoded in its technology. Special programming around Indigenous themes is a regular part of site offerings all year round, including productions of visual and performance art by contemporary and traditional artists, along with theme related lectures and talks. In this way, the site hopes to keep its programming fresh rather than relying solely on the more static offerings of traditional exhibitry. Wanuskewin's proximity to Saskatoon allows its meeting rooms to be used regularly for conferences, talks, and seminars.

While the visitor centre is stimulating, it is on the trails that visitors can gain the greatest insight into the ancient life of the valley. The site's original *Visitor Services Plan* underscored the importance of the "sensory experiences of the landscape … the experience of separateness [and] … stepping outside the visitor centre away from the modern world into a 'time warp'".[136] Although this is no doubt "consultant talk", visitors do, I believe, want to experience and interact with the heritage of the natural environment, and less so with the pedagogical yet varied

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[136] PAS, *Wanuskewin Heritage Park: Visitor Services Program Final Report*, Kanata Heritage Research, November, 1986, section 7.5.4. Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, file 401.8.4.1.

programming of the visitor centre. As a historian who worked on multiple exhibits at historic sites and national parks throughout western and northern Canada over many years, this is somewhat difficult for me to admit. However, allowing the visitor to see the site as "place" is crucial to understanding the relationship between heritage and history. It is what separates good historic sites from contrived heritage theme parks, and historic sites from museums.

The current interpretation program at Wanuskewin was developed with the assistance of various consultants and Indigenous elders and board members. The results of the extensive archaeological program carried out at the site over many years, a programme still undertaken by students from the University of Saskatchewan, has formed much of the historical basis for the permanent programming at Wanuskewin. To that has been added the contributions of Indigenous oral history, spiritual teachings, as well as cultural programming and education.

In 1989 the design company Aldrich Pears led a series of Indigenous focus groups to aid Wanuskewin planners in the development of interpretive media and messages. The media favoured by these groups – audio-visual presentations, exhibits, guided and self-guided tours, storytelling, trail signage, archaeological interpretation, and activity nodes – followed the usual pattern of historic site interpretation (although they also stressed the importance of protecting the land). It was in their discussion of storyline messages, however, where the groups struck off in new directions. According to the Aldrich Pears summary, Indigenous respondents "described their current accomplishments and their outlook on the future." The report goes on to note that respondents wanted to see "References … made to problems originating at the time of contact, but only to provide context for the actions and achievements of Indians today in the arts,

education, the economy, the political realm and the revival of culture."[137] Despite the fact that

these focus group comments moved away from the messages inherent in the ancient story of

Wanuskewin, they do underscore Indigenous desires to portray, not just the stories of their

distant past, but an exploration of their culture in contemporary ways and in contemporary

contexts. However, in the margin of the above summary of the focus group comments, a

handwritten note observes the "absence of reference to treaties, depopulation due to disease,

enforced farming, residential schools, banning of ceremonies, reserve system, discrimination."

The note then goes on to comment: "May wish to minimize to 1500 years B.P".[138]

Wanuskewin Heritage Park officially opened in June of 1992. Today, the trails and site

exhibits deal principally with the ancient history of Wanuskewin. It is with the site's ongoing

programming, however, that many of these contemporary themes are introduced. For instance,

one recent exhibition was entitled "The Next 150: Visions of Canada's Future" where

Indigenous artists explored what the relationship might be in the future between Canada and

Indigenous peoples. Another recent exhibition featured a talk and display entitled "An Eloquence

of Women" by Indigenous and well-known historian and arts and curatorial expert Sherry

Farrell-Racette.[139] Clearly, at Wanuskewin, traditional concepts of historic place are merged with

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[137]   PAS, Meewasin Valley Authority, Wanuskewin Heritage Park, *Wanuskewin Pre-design Document,* Aldrich Pears, 10, November, 1989, 31. Throughout much of the documentation that relates to the development of Wanuskewin Heritage Park, the traditional term "Indians" is used rather than more contemporary terms. This no doubt relates to the Saskatchewan First Nations organization then known as the *Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations.* In 2016 the name was changed to the *Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations of Saskatchewan.*

[138] Ibid.

[139] See: https://wanuskewin.com/visit/exhibitions/. Accessed 12 March, 2018.

contemporary interpretations of Indigenous life in the modern world where unity in place, culture, customs, events, and traditions is reinforced.

Since 2012 a comprehensive renewal strategy for Wanuskewin has been underway involving a business and marketing analysis that resulted in a new *Visitor Experience Master Development Plan*. In the spring of 2018 the site management board initiated a capital campaign called "Thundering Ahead" for renewal at Wanuskewin and will encompass new construction at the visitor centre, including innovative exhibits and a large-scale immersive audio-video production. This renewal has been planned since 2005. Revitalization of the building infrastructure is also underway.[140] In December of 2017 Wanuskewin Heritage Park was added to Canada's list of submissions for UNESCO World Heritage status.[141]

Wanuskewin Heritage Park is a unique historic place in Western Canada. It successfully combines those elements and discoveries that make up a remarkable cultural landscape -- one that fuses the natural environment with the human -- at the same time providing visitors with a wide range of alternative and changing cultural and historic programming. It does not portray Indigenous heritage as existing only in the past, but considers the cultural, social and political influence of Indigeneity in a modern world. Yet at its core, one sees history at Wanuskewin on the ground, the realization of a narrative heritage.

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[140] See: https://wanuskewin.com/isl/uploads/2017/12/Campaign-Update-Dec-2017-Complete-sm.pdf. Accessed 12 March, 2018.

[141] https://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/canada-adds-eight-sites-to-list-of-candidates-for-unesco-world-heritage-status/article374. Accessed 13 March, 2018.

Conclusion

The commemoration of many Indigenous cultural landscapes have traditionally been identified and documented in scientific terms, largely through archaeology. Although this is largely true with the sites described in this chapter, their interpretation in more recent decades has been increasingly understood in multidimensional terms where the landscape can reflect meanings that are at once symbolic, religious, and economic. Today, these spaces are not relics but living landscapes that focus upon complex relationships with the land. These relationships can be spiritual and mythological, functional and cultural, or an amalgam of all four. They can reveal religious ritual or the day-to-day activities of living on the land. Traditional Indigenous knowledge connects these associations to the land through narratives, place names, sacred sites, rituals, and long-established resource use. Commemorating and interpreting Indigenous cultural landscapes must recognize the extent to which place is deeply bound up with identity, and where territory, traditions, and customs are not viewed in isolation but are "memory hooks" upon which hang the cultural foundation of a narrative tradition.

While Indigenous cultural landscapes can to some degree be examples of an imagined past or a heritage defined by modern perceptions, they largely remain cultural landscapes less manipulated by the artifice of the aestheticized spaces that often accompany colonialist views of the past. And they are expansive narratives defined by long stretches of time and ancient views of the past.

Chapter 3: National Dreams: Commemorating the Fur Trade in Manitoba

> *"Now if the young are not receiving lessons about the fur trade, just how long*
> *will it take a Communist fifth column to overcome us without the use of missiles."*

> Barbara Johnstone, Superintendent, Lower Fort Garry, 1959

In the conclusion to her book *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* historian Laura Peers writes about how at historic sites we give meaning to the past in the present and how we select from the past those narratives that make sense to modern visitors.[142] At the historic places that commemorate the fur trade, visitors are asked to engage with the past--engagements that commonly focus on material culture--while their encounters with Indigenous interpreters take place in the present (both physically and metaphorically) and can address cultural topics around Indigeneity. At times these conversations can go beyond the commonplace ("What kind of fur is that?", "Were these tipis cold in the winter?", "What do you

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[142] Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (Plymouth, UK: AltaMira Press, 2007), 169-180.

eat?") and address things like cultural stereotyping and traditional racist perspectives regarding

Indigenous people in history as the savage "other". From time to time interpreters may use their

interactions with visitors to address contemporary issues such as land claims, self-government,

and the continuing significance of treaties, although these types of exchanges are usually rare

and are of course dependent upon the interest and knowledge of the visitor and the interpreter.

Yet such interactions, when they do occur, are interesting on a number of levels. At one level,

there is a communication by the interpreter of postcolonial Indigenous cultural sensibilities at the

same time that as a people they are placed in historical context amidst the search for some form

of authenticity, however that is defined. At another, it is difficult, especially at historic sites that

commemorate the fur trade, to portray postcolonial histories at places that were built on the

assumptions of colonialism.

Regardless, in Western Canada it was the commemoration of fur trade places that

provided the cornerstone for a growing interest in heritage and the founding myths of

assimilation and nation building. Recognition of the history of the fur trade, and more

importantly recognition of the actual places associated with this resource economy, played a vital

role in the creation of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) in 1919.[143]

As key parts in the colonialist iconography of progress, fur trade forts in the west (in conjunction

with the "drum and bugle" military sites of central and eastern Canada) used the commemoration

of heritage place to establish a nation-building narrative that provided the necessary link in a

modernist era between the 'savage' wilderness of Indigenous histories and the 'civilization' of

later agricultural and urban settlement. In considering the commemoration of the fur trade in

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[143] Michael Payne and C. J. Taylor, "Western Canadian Fur Trade Sites and the Iconography of Public Memory", *Manitoba History*, no. 46, Autumn-Winter, 2003-04, 2. While I frequently use the acronym HSMBC for the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, I also employ the shortened phrase "the Board" as well.

Manitoba, one begins to see how the politics of heritage – and more particularly the politics of

fur trade heritage – contributed to contemporary perceptions of Canadian territorial expansion

and colonialism, the production of staples, and the perceived decline of Indigenous cultures.

Many of the commemorated forts in Manitoba reveal the kinds of iconic characteristics

that are the mark of a larger colonial history in Western Canada. Log palisades (and sometimes

stone walls), Red River carts, York boats, metal traps and all of the other paraphernalia of fur

trade interpretation provide a backdrop for the larger issues of social and cultural change,

ethnogenesis, and the racialization of Indigenous peoples that have been instrumental in

understanding the trade and its commemoration. Of course the most important legacy of the trade,

and a critical part of its post colonial heritage, is not its material culture, but the establishment of

a new mode of production that incorporated the Indigenous economies of Western Canada into

an international market of trade and production, making Indigenous cultures part of a global

economy based upon a trans-imperial exploitation of resources.

Beginning in the early decades of the twentieth century the commemoration of fur trade

sites demonstrated how as a culture we attach layers of meaning to authoritative views of the past.

Early assessments of the role of the trade generally followed the lead of historian Harold Innis

whose well-known statement that Canada "emerged not in spite of geography, but because of it"

was followed by his lesser-known remark that "the significance of the fur trade consisted in its

determination of this geographic framework".[144] This early awareness of fur trade history in

Western Canada is most evident in the selection of heritage sites by the HSMBC throughout the

1920s. Most of the Board's earliest commemorations, at least in the West, involved the fur trade.

Two very early sites were Fort Langley in British Columbia, and Prince of Wales Fort at

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[144] Harold Innis, *The Fur Trade in Canada: An Introduction to Canadian Economic History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970), 393.

Churchill.[145] A host of other commemorations soon followed, including Upper Fort Garry, York

Factory, Rocky Mountain House, Fort Edmonton and various others.[146] Although many of these

designations were marked by simple plaques and cairns, others saw additional investments in

infrastructure, restoration, and even reconstruction. The designation of these early sites by the

Board marked more than simply the recognition of the history of the fur trade. The expansion of

outsider, non-Indigenous settlement, the political extension of the Canadian nation-state, and the

growth of a resource-based economy in the West to facilitate the development of manufacturing

in central Canada, were also key themes in the recognition of the fur trade as a prelude to the

implementation of a national policy.

In Manitoba, places like Lower Fort Garry (also known historically as the "stone fort" or

the "lower fort"), once a Hudson's Bay Company trading post and transshipment centre, along

with York Factory, the Company's major depot in Rupert's Land, and Prince of Wales' Fort, the

eighteenth century stone fortress on Hudson Bay, were chosen by the Board to help define fur

trade geography and place. Somewhat of an outlier to this list, Lower Fort Garry was initially

designated as nationally significance in 1925, not for its role in the fur trade, but as the location

for the signing of Treaty One in 1871.[147] It was not until the 1950s and the passing of the

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[145] Prince of Wales Fort was one of the earliest national historic sites to be designated in Western Canada, being commemorated in 1920, not long after the founding of the HSMBC. Fort Langley was designated in 1923. See LAC, RG 37, *Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.*

[146] Upper Fort Garry (along with forts Rouge and Gibraltar) were designated by the HSMBC in 1924, Rocky Mountain House in 1926, York Factory in 1936, and Fort Edmonton in 1959, See LAC, RG 37, *Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*.

[147] Lower Fort Garry was cited, along with Fort Qu'Appelle in Saskatchewan and Blackfoot Crossing in Alberta, as being the places where Treaties 1, 4, and 7 were made. See Library

ownership of the fort and the surrounding grounds to the federal government that the fur trade history of the site became the focus of commemoration and interpretation.[148]

Today all are important places in the federal system of national historic sites. While the Board since its inception in 1919 has designated a number of fur trade sites in Manitoba, it is these three that garnered the most investment in terms of research, conservation, reconstruction, and interpretive development.

Figure 8. Big House, Lower Fort Garry NHS, 1993 (Parks Canada)

Tourism and the Heritage Narrative at the Stone Fort[149]

A 1931 article in the Winnipeg Evening Tribune described how at Lower Fort Garry in the winter of 1911 "a northern dog team driver cracked his whip and with a loud 'marche', swung his huskies for the last time round the crescent inside the fort to the saleshop. There, meeting a company trader, he re-enacted a scene which had taken place inside the fort for eighty years and so trading ended at Lower Fort

and Archives Canada (LAC), RG 37, *Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada,* 19 May 1925.

[148] The Hudson's Bay Company gifted the fort to the Federal Government in 1950. By federal Order-in-Council Lower Fort Garry was declared a "National Historic Park" on 17 January 1951.

[149] The designation, restoration and development of Lower Fort Garry NHS , will be the major focus of this chapter as for decades it has been the foremost heritage development in Western Canada,.

Garry."[150] The fort, constructed under the guidance of George Simpson in the 1830s, had long

supplied the lower Red River parishes with goods, had participated in the transshipment of furs

via York boat to York Factory, and for a brief period served as the district administrative

headquarters of the HBC until supplanted by the establishment in the late 1830s of Upper Fort

Garry at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers. It was also the site of the signing of Treaty

One in August of 1871 between the Crown and the Anishinaabe and Cree peoples of southern

Manitoba. Shortly after the fort's closing, the Company approached the federal government---the

Dominion Parks Branch---to purchase the fort and the surrounding acreage for a price of

$60,000.[151] The government rejected the offer to create a "national reserve", as the federal

initiative to commemorate historic sites had yet to be formalized. In 1911, recognizing the

historical significance of the fur trade and taking ownership of the accompanying physical

resources, was not high on the list of government priorities. At the time it was central Canadian

sites associated with the Loyalist tradition and the battlefields from the War of 1812 that

occupied the attention of heritage groups such as the Historic Landmarks Association, a

precursor to the HSMBC and for the most part Anglo-British in their composition. Interest in

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[150] University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections, *Winnipeg Evening Tribune*, 16 May, 1931.

[151] Founded in 1911, the Dominion Parks Branch under the Department of the Interior was the first national parks service in the world. It was renamed in 1930 as the "National Parks Branch", and renamed in 1973 as "Parks Canada", in 1984 as the "Canadian Parks Service", and in 1998 as the "Parks Canada Agency". See Claire E. Campbell (ed.) *A Century of Parks Canada, 1911-2011* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2011), 2. After the Department of the Interior was disbanded in 1936, the Parks Branch came under a variety of departments including Mines and Resources, Indian and Northern Affairs, Canadian Heritage, and Environment Canada. See Ibid, 7. The National Historic Sites Division (NHSD) was part of the Branch. See also: http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=12876. Accessed 19 December, 2017.

such central Canadian sites was largely based upon their role in extending British-Canadian

colonialism, including their culture and institutions.[152]

After failing to interest the federal government in acquiring the fort and its extant stone

buildings, the HBC in 1913 leased the site to the Motor Country Club (MCC) for an annual rent

of $1. The MCC, one of the earliest automobile clubs in Canada (and founded by the Winnipeg

Automobile Club), was established by well off Winnipeg gentry "to hold, organize and establish

from time to time, automobile tours or endurance contests …" In fact, that facet of the club's

purpose would take a minor role as the MCC soon evolved into a more traditional private

country club with a golf course, tennis courts, and a members lounge located in the Big House,

the large central stone building constructed for George Simpson in 1838. Over the next fifty

years (the MCC occupied the fort until the end of 1962) the club made a number of changes at

the site, including the "modernizing" of various buildings (although the work was done with

some regard to historical character), planting trees, and the development of a number of gardens

inside the walls.[153] In 1951 the HBC deeded the fort to the federal government, although the

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[152] See C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 3-31. Taylor describes how the disparate groups and organizations that made up early heritage advocacy tended to focus on local contexts and regional biases, although they shared similar cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Ibid, 3. Despite that cultural cohesion, Taylor contends, there existed numerous conflicting views and early on the Historic Landmarks Association had to steer away from nationalist ideologies in order to avoid conflict. Ibid, 24. This tension between the local and the national would characterize historic site commemoration and interpretation for decades to come, and arguably continues to this day.

[153] In 1942 Lower Fort Garry hosted "If Day" a mock invasion of "German troops" designed to boost the sale of war bonds. The premier, Lieutenant-Governor, mayor and various city officials were "imprisoned" at the fort. See Michael Newman, "February 19, 1942: If Day", *Manitoba History* (Spring 1987), 27-30.

MCC lease continued for another twelve years.[154] During that time those interested in visiting the old fort could tour the grounds, although they were not allowed inside the club's buildings. As visitation swelled throughout the 1950s some conflicts occurred between club members and visitors and complaints about lack of access appeared in Winnipeg newspapers.[155] Noting the growing popularity of the site, the federal government ended the MCC lease and took over the fort as a historic site at the beginning of 1963.[156]

As mentioned above, the lower fort was the location for the signing of Treaty One in 1871 and was the reason for its commemoration by the HSMBC in 1925. Designated among other treaty sites across the west, Lower Fort Garry was cited "as being [one of] the places where treaties were made whereby the Indians renounced their possessory rights in these provinces."[157] A plaque was unveiled at the site in 1929 yet no Indigenous leaders were asked to speak at the ceremony. C.H. French of the HBC, however, did give a talk on "the Indian and his habits of life".[158] The text of this original 1920s plaque read:

> Here on 3rd August, 1871 this treaty was made between Wemyss M.
> Simpson, representing the Crown and the Chippewa [the traditional
> American designation for the Anishinaabe] and Swampy Cree Indians
> whereby those tribes surrendered their rights to the lands comprised

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[154]   LAC, RG 84, Parks Canada Records, vol. 1071, FG 2, "Lease Between His Majesty the King and the Motor Country Club", 1 January, 1951.

[155] See Winnipeg Tribune, 14 July 1956 as cited in Ibid, RG 84, vol. 7, 1956.

[156] LAC, RG 84, Parks Canada Records, Vol. 1072, FG 28, 1962. Properties north and south of the fort walls were purchased by the provincial government in the hope of developing a "sympathetic heritage development". See Ibid, Vol. 1077, FG 56, 1962.

[157] LAC, RG 37, Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 19 May, 1925.

[158] LAC, RG 84, Parks Canada Records, Vol. 1070, FG2. F.W. Howay to J. B. Harkin, 17 June 1929.

within the boundaries of Manitoba as then existing. The agreement
ended the restlessness of the Natives and left the way open for peaceful
settlement.[159]

This original text, especially the references to "ending the restlessness of the Natives" and

leaving "the way open for peaceful settlement" leaves bare the attitudes of the time toward

Canadian expansionism in the West and the fate of Indigenous peoples within its boundaries.

Viewed as a threat to white settlement in 1871, their dispossession was considered worthy of

historical commemoration almost six decades later. In the 1970s the plaque was replaced. The

new wording reads:

To promote peaceful settlement of the newly acquired western territories
after 1870, Canada negotiated a series of treaties with the native peoples.
Here on 3August, 1871 the first of these treaties was signed by Mis-kee-
ke-new, Ka-ke-ka-penais, Na-sha-ka-penais, Na-na-wa-nanan, Ke-we-tay-
ask, Wa-ko-wush, Oo-za-we-kwun representing the Ojibwa and Swampy
Cree people of Manitoba and Wemyss Simpson on behalf of the crown.
In return for services and the promise of annuity payments, livestock and
farming implements, the Indians ceded the land comprising the original
portion of Manitoba.[160]

Although this more recent text does mention the names of the Indigenous leaders who

signed the treaty it still leaves out a number of critical issues. These include the outside verbal

promises (some of which were added to the treaty in 1875), the failure of the federal government

to live up to many of the guarantees such as the provision of agricultural implements, the later

removal of hunting and fishing rights through conservation measures introduced by the Manitoba

Government, and most importantly the question as to whether the treaty entailed land "surrender"

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[159] Ibid.

[160] HSMBC, Plaque Text, "Indian Treaty Number One", Lower Fort Garry National Historic
Site.

or "shared use".[161] In the early 2000s the Board and Parks Canada attempted to work with southern Manitoba Indigenous groups through the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Southern Chiefs Organization to come up with a new plaque text that would incorporate the differing views of the treaty. At the time, Parks Canada's attempted to develop an oral history about the meaning of the treaty with a number of Indigenous communities in southern Manitoba. The study was poorly coordinated by the Manitoba Field Unit office of Parks and resulted in little in the way of useful information on contemporary Indigenous views of historical treaty making. The report was left incomplete and thus never made public. Meanwhile, federal Department of Justice lawyers advised strongly that Parks Canada and the HSMBC not accept the shared use argument. As a result both sides rejected a proposed plaque text that incorporated the two differing perspectives. To this day no revised plaque has been approved although according to Parks Canada sources these efforts continue.[162]

In 1950, shortly before acquiring Lower Fort Garry, the Board added the fort's role in the fur trade to its national significance, noting over a century of Hudson's Bay Company administrative and supply activities.[163] Four months earlier Board minutes had noted the fort's location, setting, orientation and composite elements, commenting that the extant buildings of the site were of particular importance for their assemblage, design, use of materials, construction

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[161] See Aimee Craft, *Breathing Life into the Stone Fort Treaty: An Anishinaabe Understanding of Treaty One* (Saskatoon: Purich Publishing, 2013), 102-106. For a discussion of how provincial conservation measures abrogated treaty rights in Manitoba after 1880 see Jean Friesen, "Grant Me Wherewith to Make My Living" in Kerry Abel and Jean Friesen, *Aboriginal Resource Use in Canada: Historical and Legal Aspects* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1991), 141-155.

[162] Personal correspondence. E-mail from Parks Canada historian Frieda Klippenstein, 22 December, 2017.

[163] LAC, RG 37, Minutes of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, 1 June, 1950.

technology, as well as their functional and spatial disposition.[164] The federal acquisition of the

lower fort and its later development as a major heritage attraction were in large part driven by the

growth of tourism in the country, itself the product of expanding time for leisure and recreation.

The affordability of the automobile for an increasingly affluent post-war middle class became a

major factor in the expansion of the tourism industry and the accessibility of places like Lower

Fort Garry. The fort had much to offer as a heritage site and tourism destination, even if its actual

role in the historic fur trade was largely peripheral for much of the nineteenth century. Relatively

close to a major urban centre, the fort boasted original and largely intact stone structures from

the fur trade era in a setting that was both bucolic and easily accessible. At a time when heritage

often focused on the intrinsic value of extant historic structures – a kind of no building, no

history perspective on significance – the lower fort represented the ideal historic site. In the years

before cultural landscapes drew commemorative attention, including a focus on Indigenous

spiritual sites and traditional hunting areas, the presence of period architecture -- sometimes in its

original setting or often represented by relocated period buildings -- remained at the heart of

most heritage initiatives in Canada.[165] Everything from fur trade forts to stately mansions came

to represent the triumph of settler culture and reaffirmed the "no building, no history" theme.

As the post-war tourism industry in Western Canada grew alongside the development of

nation-building subjects like the fur trade, the significance of the stone fort as the site of the

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164 Ibid, February 1950. See also Lower Fort Garry Commemorative Integrity Statement, 1999 at http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=4224. Accessed 22 December, 2017.

165 In Chapter 4 I discuss Mennonite Heritage Village near Steinbach, Manitoba. Comprised of relocated heritage structures and reconstructions set in a contrived village setting, MHV portrays the traditional perspective that a built environment is crucial to the heritage 'experience'.

making of Treaty One, an event increasingly seen by non-Indigenous people as having little

historical relevance, was swiftly pushed to the background. Downplaying the significance of

Treaty at Lower Fort Garry can be traced to two factors: the growing realization in the 1950s and

1960s that the site presented a tourism opportunity that favoured the perception of fur-trade

history as colourful and inspiring, not to mention nation-building; and the emerging non-

Indigenous view that treaties were largely irrelevant in the settler colonial society of the

twentieth century. Of course car culture was central to this shift in the visitor experience.

"Automobility" as historian Ben Bradley calls it in his recent book *British Columbia by the

Road: Car Culture and the Making of a Modern Landscape,* had much to do, not with just simple

access to the interior, but with changing perspectives on tourism promotion, park development,

and historic sites.[166]

  With a new and growing source of site visitors and heritage "customers" Lower Fort

Garry was primed for development as a major national historic site (or "park" as it was initially

called). Historians Michael Payne and C.J. Taylor have written that "[a] single event such as the

signing of a treaty, while almost certainly more significant than [Lower Fort Garry's] limited

role as a fur trade site, had limited basis for site programming."[167] Writing in 2003, Payne and

Taylor supported the development of Indigenous encampments at fur trade sites, but also argued

that, "heritage agencies will not put the kind of effort into identifying, protecting, and

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[166] Ben Bradley, *British Columbia by the Road: Car Culture and the Making of a Modern Landscape,* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2017), 230-232.

[167] Michael Payne and C.J. Taylor, "Western Canadian Fur trade Sites and the Iconography of Public Memory", *Manitoba History*, 46, Autumn/Winter, 2003-04, np.

interpreting Aboriginal sites other than those associated with the fur trade that they probably should."[168]

During the 1950s a few fort buildings, now under the ownership of the federal government (but prior to the end of the MCC lease), underwent some repairs, especially to the Big House. Unfortunately, much of this work was heavy-handed and involved poured concrete flooring in the cellar, the replacing of a number of original wood beams and supports as well as new door and window frames, and the stuccoing of some original limestone walls.[169] Writing in 1956 federal engineer J.E. Wilkins recommended that no attempt be made to restore the fort buildings, including the Big House, commenting that he "cannot see how any attempt to restore it to its original appearance would in any way improve it."[170] Dominion Parks Branch plans in 1956 to create a "fur trade museum" on the main floor of the Saleshop building resulted in the design of the space as a "typical" HBC post of the period. It was only later that research revealed that the LFG trading area was not typical of mid-nineteenth century posts. Other work included the construction of a paved parking lot outside the fort's north wall, the erection of outdoor directional and interpretive signage, and resurfacing the asphalt driveways inside the walls. Despite the fact that no attempt was made to restore the fort buildings to the fur trade era, repair work was carried out over the rest of the decade, work that compromised some of the fort's original fabric. However, the lack of funding to carry out comprehensive "improvements" probably ended up saving a good deal of the original materials. Between 1951 and 1965 there

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[168] Ibid.

[169] LAC, Parks Canada Records, RG84, Vol. 1076, FG2, vol. 8, J.E. Wilkins to G.L. Scott, 19 December, 1956, 1-30.

[170] Ibid, 28.

was little in the way of attempts to gather historical documentation on the original fort buildings and grounds. No archaeology was carried out at the site prior to 1962 and what historical research had been pursued was imprecise, quixotic, and often inaccurate.[171] Yet interest in developing the site remained high especially among local historians, even if justifications for investment in the property were sometimes eccentric. In 1959 Barbara Johnstone, the Curator of the Hudson's Bay Company Museum in Winnipeg (and later the first superintendent of Lower Fort Garry), wrote to Jack Herbert, the Director of the National Historic Sites Division in Ottawa, that preserving the lower fort was key in instructing young people about social values and principles. "There is one good selling point to politicians and the public alike," she wrote. "That is missiles come and go, and aircraft, and Dew Lines, treaties and the like are made and broken daily … the strength of democratic life lies in the end with individuals of these countries that hold democratic opinions. Now if the young are not receiving lessons about the fur trade, just how long will it take a Communist fifth column to overcome us without the use of missiles."[172] Ultimately, a growing public interest in the history of the site would soon result in a comprehensive heritage makeover, a makeover that would ultimately compromise much of the fort's heritage character. "Reconstruction" would soon masquerade as "restoration".

In 1961 the federal and provincial government entered into an informal agreement for a joint development of the fort and the surrounding properties. While the federal government would restore the historic buildings within the fort walls, the Government of Manitoba would

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[171] See for instance Robert Watson, *Lower Fort Garry: A History of the Stone Fort* (Winnipeg: Hudson's Bay Company), 1928, and Elsie McKay, *The Stone Fort* (Selkirk: Enterprise Publishers), 1960.

[172] LAC, Parks Canada Records, RG84, Vol. 1076, FG28, vol. 2, Barbara Johnstone to Jack Herbert, 15 October, 1959.

build a "sympathetic historical development" on provincial land south of the fort. A loosely defined concept, this development was to be a "Red River Colony restoration" and include the relocation to the site of local Winnipeg heritage buildings including Riel House, the construction of other period buildings as well as the development of an "Indian Village, Hudson's Bay Trading Post, Red River Ox Cart Rides, Red River Steamer, Early Brewery, [and] York Boat Rides." A few years later the Manitoba government backed out of the proposed scheme, suggesting that the federal government take on these projects. In addition, provincial properties located immediately north and south of the fort were sold to the federal government.[173]

Ottawa considered these plans to be overly costly and the NHSD began its own developments, most notably a proposal to build a museum within the fort walls to house the Hudson's Bay Company Museum Collection. This impressive collection of Indigenous artefacts, artwork, clothing, weaponry, and HBC material culture, what the HBC in 1920 referred to as "historical relics, lore, and souvenirs of the early history of the Company", was created in the early 1920s to mark the 250 anniversary of the founding of the Company.[174] Displayed at the Hudson's Bay Company store on Portage Avenue for many years, it was moved to the new museum at Lower Fort Garry in 1964. In 1994 the Company gifted the collection to the Manitoba Museum where it is now on display.[175]

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[173] LAC, RG84, Vol. 1076, FG 28, vol. 2, 1965.

[174] As cited in Robert Coutts and Katherine Pettipas, "'Mere Curiosities are not Required': The Story of the HBC Museum Collection", *The Beaver*, vol. 74, no. 3, June/July 1994, 14.

[175] For a history of the HBC Collection see Ibid, 13-19. While the HBC continued to own the collection, Parks Canada conserved, curated, and displayed the materials for thirty years at the lower fort. The Manitoba Museum does not mention these years of federal stewardship in its current literature. See https://manitobamuseum.ca/main/visit/museum-galleries/hbc-gallery/. Accessed 3 January, 2018.

With the departure of the MCC at the end of 1962 the Dominion Parks Branch and the NHSD began an intensive restoration and redevelopment of the site, all centered around the history of the fur trade in the West. As interest in local heritage increased in the 1960s, planning began for the construction at Lower Fort Garry of a fur trade museum containing the "relics" of the past. Later the fort site would evolve into a sort of pioneer village of the fur trade, an imagined tourism destination of restored and reconstructed buildings, costumed interpreters, and a pan-fur trade interpretation**.** The path to the modern national historic site such as the lower fort was a long and complex one as resources became available and the development of an "official" or "authorized" heritage was realized. As historian C. J. Taylor has written, in the 1960s the national historic sites program focused on a number of large-scale projects, in large part driven by ministerial commitments. The reconstruction and restoration of sites like the Fortress of Louisbourg, the Halifax Citadel, and Dawson City quickly became government priorities, as did Lower Fort Garry.[176] The museum to house the Hudson's Bay Company Collection was built, extant stone buildings like the Big House and the sales shop and fur loft were restored to their mid-nineteenth century appearance, and other early buildings were reconstructed or moved to the site. Although the eventual development of Lower Fort Garry was impressive in scope, a 1962 plan for the "restoration and reconstruction of the historic buildings at the lower fort" by the Department of Northern Affairs and National Resources called for a much more ambitious plan.

Besides the restoration of the existing buildings both inside the fort walls (Big House, Saleshop/Furloft, Warehouse, South West Bastion, Men's House, Bakehouse, Powder Magazine, and Doctor's Office) and outside (the Engineer's Cottage), the report recommended the

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[176] C. J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites,* 170.

reconstruction of a number of original buildings including the barns and stables once associated with the Company farm immediately north of the fort, the buildings of the "industrial complex" south of the fort (including the grain barn, storehouse, brewery, distillery, grist mill, sawmill and lathe room, malt barn, lime kiln, miller's house, and the "old wood store"), as well as the reconstruction of the Blacksmith Shop, and Farm Manager's cottage, also located south of the fort.[177] Grand as it was, the plan was ultimately unsustainable and it was soon decided to restore and reconstruct those buildings associated with the 1850s. The original 1953 plan to outfit the Saleshop as a museum for the HBC Collection was never realized and it was not until 1962 that the federal government decided began construction of the museum inside the fort walls. The exterior of the museum would replicate the appearance of the historic Retail Store, a wood frame building within the fort walls that had been built in 1873 and dismantled in 1924. The museum was completed in September of 1965 at a cost of $136,000.[178]

The first large restoration project at the fort concerned the Big House. Built in the 1830s, the house had undergone a fair number of structural and cosmetic changes over the years and looked little like the limestone two-storey, hipped roof building that appeared in the H.L. Hime photo of 1858. Restoration work on the house commenced in the Spring of 1966 as did archaeological investigations around the building's perimeter walls. The verandas that had been built in the 20th century were removed, the structurally unsound north and west walls were demolished, part of the annex was demolished, and all of the more modern interior partitions were removed. As well, the original stone fireplaces and bake ovens were torn down and rebuilt, a new basement floor and drainage system was added, and "as found" evidence (floor marking

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[177] LAC, Parks Canada Records, RG84, Vol. 1076, FG 2, 1962.

[178] Ibid, FG 56, 1965.

indicating original walls) was used to completely alter the layout of the first floor with new construction, including plaster walls with period paint colours, and wood floors manufactured to look as if they were from the 1850s period.[179] A new veranda was installed to mimic the original seen in the Hime photograph of 1858. In 1968 curators at the NHSD in Ottawa began the furnishing of the house with some original pieces, although most were simply period pieces that were repaired and refinished.[180] (The use of non-original but period friendly materials would characterize most of the furnishings of the lower's fort's restoration. Other pieces were new, manufactured in the style of the original.) In May of 1969 the restored (and partly reconstructed) Big House was officially opened by Jean Chretien, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

Similar work was carried out on the other stone buildings within the fort walls. At the Saleshop/Furloft a concrete retaining wall was installed below grade, the roof was replaced, a concrete floor was poured in the basement, the walls were repointed with cement mortar, the chimney, fireplace and interior walls were repaired or removed, and new joists, flooring, and window sills and frames were installed. In 1970 the building was furnished as a period saleshop on the main floor, the second floor as a storage area for merchandise such as tea, tools and rope, and the third floor loft was used as a fur storage room.[181] It opened to the public in June of 1971.

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[179] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Lower Fort Garry Files, "Summary of Restoration Work at the Big House", n.p, n.d.

[180] LAC, Parks Canada Records, RG84, FG 56, vol. 3, 1968.

[181] Much of the research on the Saleshop/Furloft was carried out by Parks Canada historian George Ingram whose 1967 report "The Saleshop: Structure and Function" provided the division with considerable information on the building's look and function in the 1850s. See Parks Canada, *Manuscript Report Series*, no. 148 (Ottawa, National Historic Parks and Sites), 1967.

Comparable actions were taken on the remaining stone buildings inside the fort in the late 1960s. Roofs were replaced, new concrete floors were poured, window and door frames were replaced, and original stonework was repointed with concrete instead of lime mortar. The Men's

House, an early 1850s barracks and kitchen for some of the Company's servants, was originally built as a rubble-filled timber framed structure (a French style known as *colombage pierrote*). Like the other restored buildings at the fort, a new foundation was installed as was a

Figure 9. Warehouse Building, Lower Fort Garry NHS, n.d. (Parks Canada)

new roof, interior joists, flooring, and supporting beams. Only one half of the lower floor was furnished and opened to the public. Interpretation focused on the daily lives and work of single HBC men at the fort; married servants lived away from the post.[182]

Plans for the large Warehouse building were more ambitious as the building dated to the earliest construction at the fort in the 1830s. Initial plans in the early 1970s to restore the building as Manitoba's first penitentiary--a role it served between 1871 and 1877--and then the province's first mental asylum from 1885 to 1886, were shelved in favour of planned exhibits around the theme of building technology at the lower fort.[183] That plan too was abandoned when it was decided in 1976 to interpret the building as a fur trade warehouse in keeping with the

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[182]   See Greg Thomas, *The Men's House, Lower Fort Garry: Its Furnishings and Place Within the Hudson's Bay Company Post Environment*, Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Series no. 246, Ottawa, 1978.

theme of the fort's other stone buildings.[184] The intent to use the building to interpret agricultural

storage and transhipment was only partially realized due to funding issues. For a time the

building's second floor was used for special presentations, and a period restaurant operated by

the Lower Fort Garry Volunteer Association occupied the main floor for a few years after 1986.

As part of its fur trade "makeover", the original walls were re-pointed, the roof was replaced as

were interior beams and support posts. New sleepers and flooring were installed throughout the

building. In the 1980s replacement of the foundation was carried out at the west end of the

building.

Figure 10. Historical interpretation at the Blacksmith Shop, Lower Fort Garry

NHS, n.d. (Parks Canada)

With property acquired from the provincial government immediately south of the fort the NHSD decided to go ahead with restoring the one remaining extant building – the Engineer's Cottage – while reconstructing two other

buildings that were once located nearby, the Farm Manager's Cottage and the Blacksmith Shop.

(No historic reconstruction would be complete without a 'smithy' to provide the predictable--and

expected--sounds and smells of pioneer life.) In 1970 the Engineer's Cottage was partly

reconstructed (one wall was rebuilt) and the roof and interior floor were replaced. An 1860s-era

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183   Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Lower Fort Garry Files, file 8441/L3-6, 11 April, 1975.

184   In keeping with the decision to restore the warehouse to the 1850s, a structural and use history of the building was carried out by Parks historian Greg Thomas in 1977.

annex was removed.[185] In the 1980s, as part of a revamped interpretation program at the fort, the Cottage was renamed the Ross Cottage to mark the brief time when retired HBC factor Donald Ross lived there in the early 1850s.

Archaeological investigations in the area in 1967 revealed the nearby location of what was once the Farm Manager's Cottage. Rather than reconstructing the building the park decided to purchase and relocate an extant 1835 Red River frame house located in the district of Kildonan that had once belonged to Scottish settler James Fraser. The Red River frame building was placed adjacent to the original house site at the fort. For years at the fort the house was known as the Fraser Cottage but was later renamed the Farm Manager's Cottage for the period when the post farm manager Alexander Lillie lived with his family in the no longer extant cottage once located on adjacent ground. Since it was moved to the site in 1970 approximately ninety percent of the log timbers of the Fraser house have been replaced as has much of the interior woodwork.[186]

The first forge at Lower fort Garry most likely dates from the 1840s. A second and larger blacksmith shop replaced it in the late 1850s but was destroyed by fire in 1877. Initially, the plan was to reconstruct the second shop based on archaeological excavations and period descriptions, and Parks files in the LAC contain engineering drawings for this work.[187] However, in 1971 a surviving Red River frame house located only a few miles south of the fort, but much smaller

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[185] In the 1860s the Engineer's Cottage was home to E.R. Abell and his family. Abell managed the "industrial complex" located along the creek south of the fort.

[186] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Lower Fort Garry Files, file 8559/L9, July, 1998.

[187] LAC, Parks Canada Records, RG84, FG 56, vol. 6, 1970.

than the proposed reconstruction, was purchased and moved to the site; it's door widened and windows moved in order to replicate a blacksmith shop.[188] No explanation for this change of plan was given in the government files, although the much-reduced cost involved in moving an existing period building must have factored into the decision. In the 1990s much of the original fabric of this re-located building was lost when major elements of the structure were replaced with new materials.

A principal heritage resource at Lower fort Garry, and one that helped mark its distinctiveness in the architecture of the fur trade, are its limestone walls. Begun in the early 1840s, more as a symbol of authority in the local settlement than for protection, construction of the walls at the fort was not completed by the Company and the visiting British Sixth Regiment of Foot until 1848. Almost a century and a half later the restoration of the walls became a major task and was not undertaken until the late 1980s, although some repointing, the installation of an asphalt cap, and landscaping to facilitate drainage had been carried out periodically between the early 1920s and the 1950s. With virtually no work on the walls between then and the 1970s, it was reported that by 1974 thirty to forty percent of the stones exhibited serious deterioration.[189] Recommendations for the protection and restoration of the walls stemming from the 1974 report – minor re-pointing, grade level water barriers, the repair of spalled stones, and the improvement of drainage -- were very much in keeping with the minimal intrusion principles of heritage restoration. Unfortunately, the report's recommendations were not followed and by the late 1980s the walls had further deteriorated. This led to a 1987 multi-million dollar program of restoration by Parks Canada that began with a careful dismantling of the east wall (individual

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188 Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Lower Fort Garry Files, May, 1971.

189 Ken Elder, *Survey Report and Maintenance Program, Perimeter Walls, Lower Fort Garry*, Ibid, 1974.

stones were numbered, taken down, repaired, replaced, and repointed), but soon degenerated into

a simple knock down of the north wall using a backhoe, the stones discarded, and replaced with

new limestone. Project delays and funding were cited as the reasons for the accelerated, if ham-

fisted, approach and what began as a sympathetic restoration program would become the

destruction of original fabric followed by new construction, a technique largely prohibited by

Parks policy.[190] Eventually, professional and fort staff with Parks Canada intervened and the

work was halted. The concept of minimal intervention was then adopted once again: a concrete

cap was installed atop the surviving west and south walls to stop drainage into the rubble core of

the walls and a repointing program was implemented. This earlier destruction of an original

heritage resource was the product of poor planning and the decision to not engage in regular,

sustainable, and ongoing maintenance, opting instead for a quick but expensive fix.[191] As many

in government will attest, it is often and paradoxically easier to gain access to large capital

expenditures than it is to run smaller year over year maintenance budgets. It is a funding

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[190] Parks Canada's Cultural Resource Management Policy, while technically allowing for the reconstruction of resources, does indicate that reconstruction can only be considered if "there are no significant preservable remains that would be threatened by reconstruction; and the action will not compromise the commemorative integrity of the site; and there is sufficient research information to support an accurate reconstruction." See "Cultural Resource Management Policy" in Parks Canada, *Guiding Principles and Operational Policies,* (Ottawa, Minister of Supply and Services, 1994), 114.

[191] It appears as if the approach of large capital investment over ongoing maintenance continues. Further wall restoration is planned at Lower Fort Garry as part of the 2017/18 federal government infrastructure program. A total of $4.6 million will be spent to "Repair the perimeter limestone walls surrounding Lower Fort Garry to ensure the stability of this structure over a long lifecycle and to sustain meaningful visitor experience." How this repair work will be carried out is not explained. The amount of the expenditure might suggest an approach similar to the "restoration" program of the 1980s and 1990s. See: http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhnnhs/mb/fortgarry/visit/infrastructure?=undefined&wbdisable=true. Accessed 12 January, 2018.

approach that works well with federal Treasury Board policies but does little to protect heritage resources on an ongoing basis.

The situation with the wall restoration project to some extent echoed much of the work that had gone on at the fort over the previous two decades, although admittedly the "restoration" of the lower fort walls was far more heavy-handed. That being said, building restoration during the 1960s and early 1970s was approached as less a sympathetic and respectful treatment of cultural resources than a plan to get the fort up and running as a significant tourist site, the largest in Western Canada. Although historical and architectural research was carried out on the various surviving buildings at the fort, the plan to develop a major heritage animation program carried the day and building interiors, for instance, were developed more for tourist satisfaction than for accuracy, though that always seemed to remain a vague and indefinable goal. Visitor expectations of what a fur trade fort should look like--Indigenous encampments, usually minimal in size, were integral to this "look"--often influenced such things as room layouts, traffic flow, and accessibility. Cleanliness, order, neatly mowed lawns, and well-maintained pathways were considered critical to the visitor "experience", avoiding the disorder and dirt of what these places historically looked like. Fur trade recreations and reconstructions in these environments become a sort of talisman, a prized object, rather than an idea or a place with meaning. While of course not charged with any magical force, the material culture of the fur trade is effectively employed to symbolize or represent a much larger and more complex phenomenon and the more exact the symbolism the easier it is to attract notice and acceptance. The heritage of the fur trade in Western Canada is for the most part the heritage of things, both genuine and manufactured. Meaning, insight, and even narrative is often sacrificed for the curatorial experience and the placement of objects in expected places – all part of the "visitor experience".

With its extant, restored and reconstructed buildings Lower Fort Garry was well suited for the development of a major interpretive program. The site's proximity to Winnipeg and Selkirk gave it a reservoir of visitors (not to mention summer travelling Canadians and Americans), especially at a time when heritage tourism was expanding. Costumed interpreters in restored and reconstructed buildings animated daily life as it was in the mid-nineteenth century, or at least as it was imagined to be by public historians, interpretive specialists, and site managers. "Living history", itself a form of reconstruction, was much in vogue by the early 1970s following the success of places such as Colonial Williamsburg in Virginia, Louisbourg in Nova Scotia, and Sturbridge Village in New England. At Lower Fort Garry, the limited interpretive efforts of the 1960s were expanded in the '70s to a full-scale animation program with costumed interpreters role-playing a variety of historical personalities who lived and worked at the fort in the 1850s and 1860s. As part of an intense commemoration and development of historic sites across the country during a period that saw the increased link between heritage and tourism, Lower Fort Garry became a major showpiece in Western Canada and approached the vast research and restoration/reconstruction programs carried out at Louisbourg and the Halifax Citadel. The nascent heritage tourism of the 1950s and 1960s that would expand in the 1970s resulted in increased visitation to the fort, making it one of the most heavily visited sites in the west. It very much illustrated what Board historian C.J. Taylor has called "the era of the big project."[192]

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[192] See C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past,* 169-190.

In the process of becoming the foremost national historic site in Western Canada, Lower

Fort Garry was the subject of considerable published and unpublished research carried out by

historians, archaeologists, and curators in the employ of Parks Canada. Building histories,

landscape histories, interpretive histories, as well as curatorial and archaeological

investigations—the standard fare of public history research—were completed over a period of

four decades. These investigations contributed much toward not just the physical look of the site

and its interpretation, but also to the construction of a particular heritage perspective, or how at

the lower fort the federal government recreated a version of the past in the present.[193] In the

1970s, in keeping with the fort's role as a fur trade tourist site (and downplaying its part in the

signing of Treaty One), a new federal plaque was erected at the site. It reads:

> One of the finest collections of early stone buildings in Western Canada,
> Lower Fort Garry was built for Governor George Simpson of the Hudson's
> Bay Company between 1831 and 1848. Schooners linked Norway House to
> the Fort which was a focus for industry and transport in the lower Red River
> Settlement. Its farm helped supply food for boat brigades and oxen for Red
> River carts. After 1870 the fort was used as a federal prison and the first training
> base for the North-West Mounted Police. It housed the Motor Country Club from
> 1913 to 1962 and was given to Canada by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1951.[194]

Years later, in 2007, these basic topics were front and centre in the development of the

site's Commemorative Intent (CI), although the significance of Treaty One was added. Its CI

states that:

> 1. Lower Fort Garry is one of the finest collections of early stone buildings in
> Western Canada; 2. Lower Fort Garry, as a Hudson's Bay Company post, was a focus

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[193] Among many reports, see for example, Canadian Historic Sites: *Occasional Papers in Archaeology and History, no. 4,Lower Fort Garry*, Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1972, and Carol Livermore, *Lower Fort Garry, the Fur Trade and the Settlement at Red River*, Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Series no. 202, 1976.

[194] Parks Canada, *Winnipeg Historical Collection*. Lower Fort Garry Files, Currently, both this plaque and the Treaty One plaque are located at the site.

for industry and transport, as well as a supply and distribution centre for the fur trade of the company's Northern Department; 3. Lower Fort Garry was the place where Treaty Number One was made between the Saulteaux (Ojibwa) and Swampy Cree First Nations people and the Crown; and 4. Lower Fort Garry was used by the federal government for public purposes in the 1870s, notably as the first training base of the North-West Mounted Police.[195]

In defining the commemorative intent of the fort, a number of "character defining elements" were listed in the statement, many of which speak to the significance of place in the heritage of the lower fort. These include its location and setting in relation to the Red River; the relative locations of the fort and the historic First Nations encampments related to Treaty Number One; the spatial distribution of individual structures within the fort walls; the integrity of natural and man-made landscape features related to the fur trade use of the fort; and surviving viewscapes from the fort towards the river and adjacent open spaces, to nearby Métis river lots, as well as views up and down the river.[196] In recent times, however, these last elements have been

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[195] As cited in *Lower Fort Garry National Historic Site, Management Plan*, Parks Canada, October, 2007. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/pc/R64-105-59-2007-eng.pdf. Accessed 7 January, 2018.

[196] See http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=4224. Accessed 8 January, 2018.

Figure 11. Interior of Saleshop/Furloft Building, Lower Fort Garry NHS, n.d. (Parks Canada)

compromised as considerable modern construction on both sides of the river now obscure many of the older landscape features of the area.[197] And of course Highway 9 passes through the area where Anishinaabe and Cree groups camped in the late summer of 1871 during negotiations for Treaty One.

It is important to note that Lower Fort Garry has traditionally been considered by heritage advocates as representative of fur-trade life in the west—a pan-fur trade interpretation---despite the fact that the fort played a relatively minor role in the Hudson's Bay Company's trade in Rupert's Land. The post's interpretation as archetypal of life in the fur trade, as nation-building and in effect a memorial to colonialism in a post-colonial age, reveals how socially constructed views of heritage help to construct an official memory, a "landscape of memory" that defines a collective meaning that is both current and utilitarian. As a national historic site Lower Fort Garry remains, at least in part, a socially constructed place of significance. Visitors learn

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[197] The lower fort once included a 500-acre farm located west of the fort. Much of that area is now occupied by *Lower Fort Garry Estates,* a modern subdivision.

more about a generic "life in the fur trade" as interpreted by public historians, site managers and

interpreters, and such activities as candle making, blacksmithing, and the leisure pursuits of the

officer class, than they do about the history of this

particular place. Or if interpretation does focus

upon the history of the lower fort it is often

exaggerated or misleading. For instance, site

interpreters frequently appropriate for the lower

fort the more important role of Upper Fort Garry

located in the heart of the Red River Settlement.

This includes the latter's role as an administrative

entrepot in Rupert's Land, a focus for the social

and political life of the settlement, and a link

between Indigenous economies, European

Figure 12. Interpreter at the Native Encampment, Lower Fort Garry NHS
2010 (Parks Canada)

markets, and a global trade in commodities.

If much research has gone into the representation of material authenticity at sites such as

Lower Fort Garry, less attention has been given to how history is portrayed or how visitors

engage with the past. At many historic sites, especially at fur trade sites like the lower fort, the

interpretation of Indigenous history has essentially been grafted on to site interpretation and site

spectacle, at best a clumsy diminution of the real roles of Indigenous peoples as social, cultural

and political players. Small encampments comprised of one or two (usually canvas) tipis, almost

always outside the fort walls, characterize

Indigenous life as an appendage to the fur trade, their economies and daily lives represented as

part of colonial culture and the fur trade mode of production. Although some encampment

interpreters are Indigenous, others are not, their conversations with visitors often revolving

around topics related to material culture—cradleboards, tipis, beadwork etc. This "outside the

palisades" interpretation of Native life during the fur trade is characteristic of many of these sites,

even if some have moved in recent years to address the one-dimensionality of cross-cultural

relations.[198] While Indigenous families might share place with white people they are physically

and symbolically relegated to the sidelines. But if that has been the broad trajectory of

management and interpretation at Lower Fort Garry since the 1960s, a recent *Draft Management*

Plan for the site dated May, 2017 suggests that Indigenous perspectives, in particular

perspectives around Treaty, might be gaining a greater foothold.[199] A number of ambitious

strategies have been proposed for the site, all centered upon expanding the Indigenous role at the

fort while foregrounding treaty making in the interpretive program. A goal of collaboration with

Indigenous communities and expanded the presentation of Indigenous culture will attempt to

incorporate their knowledge and perspectives into management planning and decision-making.

Treaty One First Nations and Métis peoples will be invited to engage in traditional and cultural

activities while sharing their perspectives at Lower Fort Garry. They will be asked to use the site

to perform ceremonies, conduct cultural celebrations, and actively share their stories and

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[198] For a much lengthier discussion of how Indigenous histories are interpreted at historic sites see Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (New York: Altamira Press), 2007. See also Laura Peers and Robert Coutts, "Aboriginal History and Historic Sites: The Shifting Ground" in Carolyn Prodruchny and Laura Peers, *Gathering Places: Aboriginal and Fur Trade Histories* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 274-294.

[199] See http://2017_LFG_mgt-plan-draft-EN.pdf. Accessed 8 January, 2018.

traditions related to the fort. It is anticipated that these activities will comprise a minimum of 25% of interpretive programming, the majority of this Indigenous programming to be created and presented by Indigenous people with a historical connection to the site. Parks Canada has declared that it will collaborate with the Treaty One First Nations to establish a land holding at Lower Fort Garry NHS, presumably an important step to recognizing treaty rights and traditional territories.[200] Outreach and education related to the site will take on greater scope, including the history and legacy of residential schools, treaties, Indigenous rights and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People.[201] The establishment of a land holding at the site, along with independent Indigenous programming, are small steps forward for Parks Canada and the federal government, a change at least in the way that historic sites deal with Indigenous peoples. Of course, whether these goals are actually achieved remains to be seen and as of January, 2018 the draft management plan for the site has yet to be approved.

But as mentioned earlier in this chapter, it is difficult to portray postcolonial histories at places that were built on the assumptions of colonialism. Decades of investment in the architectural and material culture history of the nineteenth century fur trade might not be easily jettisoned for alternative perspectives. Such a transition will necessitate a nuanced view of the past that might be beyond the competencies of a public organization not known for its sophisticated understanding of history. To date, the representation of Indigenous cultures at fur trade sites like Lower Fort Garry has been largely a failure, in part because of the weakness of the interpretation, but for the most part because such performance portrays Indigenous peoples has inhabitants only of the past, as never considered in modern contexts or any real challenge to

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[200] Ibid.

[201] Ibid.

the dominant discourse, "their edges still produced in the shadow of Canada's commemorative ideals". [202]

At Lower Fort Garry the site's once ambitious restoration and reconstruction program, its traditional generic and pan-fur trade interpretation, its focus on material culture, and its overall use of space, reveals a great deal about heritage as a cultural process, about the distortions of tourist entertainment, and about how the aesthetics of place are used to construct the past in the present. The use of space, and the kinds of curatorial decisions that go into reconstructions and restorations remain largely hidden from the visitor, suggesting that what lies in front of the tourist is "real" rather than the product of research, speculation, and assumption (all affected by fluctuating budgets). As Canadian museum director Barbara Kirchenblatt-Gimblett has pointed out, for heritage programmers to achieve what they consider to be "authenticity", "requires that the interface, the means by which the representation is staged, be muted or concealed."[203]

While the lower fort has continued to maintain its usefulness as a tourist site (although visitation numbers have decreased dramatically from decades past[204]), it is at the local level that

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[202] Chris Anderson, "More than the Sum of Our Rebellions: Metis Histories Beyond Batoche", *Ethnohistory*, 61:4, Autumn, 2014, 630.

[203] Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, "Theorizing Heritage, " *Ethnomusicology* 39, no. 3, 1995, 375.

[204] In 1973 more than 300,000 people visited Lower Fort Garry. By 2006 visitation had plummeted to 35,000. See: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/pc/R64-105-59-2007-eng.pdf. Accessed 12 January, 2018. According to site sources there has been an uptick in visitation in recent years as 2017 saw 45,000 people visit the fort. Information courtesy of e-mail to author from lfg.info@pc.gc.ca, 15 January, 2018. Contrast attendance at LFG with a site such as Sovereign Hill in Australia. Sovereign Hill is a reconstructed 1850s gold rush town. In 2015 well over half a million people visited the site (as did the author in November of 2018). See:

it has less significance as a place of memory and identity, arguably a state-sponsored monument that stands apart from the community in which it is located. And while the nationalizing tendencies of heritage are often enlisted to sustain the character of the state, they regularly butt up against contested perspectives; the sub-national forms of memory that tie the meaning of place to personal acts of engagement, or to local acts of communication and perception that make meaning in and for the present. Local heritage values can often stand apart from, and even challenge, national designations. Years ago I recall a conversation with an elderly local historian in the Selkirk area named Frank Walters. Mr. Walters disagreed with the nearby lower fort's federal fur-trade commemoration; instead he felt quite strongly that the site was better suited as a place to honour those from the Selkirk area who had died in the First and Second world wars. For Walters such a monument would be more personal and more closely tied to the values of the community and its history. The fort as a national historic site, he believed, had little resonance in the community. For Mr. Walters the fur trade was "a long time ago" whereas the wars remained in recent memory. (That Mr. Walters was himself of the Second World War generation no doubt influenced his opinion.) That is not to say that as a national historic site Lower Fort Garry should commemorate home grown involvement in world wars, but it does indicate that for many like Frank Walters heritage is personal and local

Although we can accept that our understanding of history is open to revision, can we say the same about heritage and our memory of place? At places such as the lower fort too often interpretation remains stagnant and single voiced. Change comes slowly. Some visitors arrive and depart unmoved in their thinking—the "tourist gaze" as discussed in Chapter 2—while others arrive with different expectations and might challenge the messages they are given. At

https://www.sovereignhill.com.au/media/uploads/SovHill_AnnualReport_2014-15_Full_W.pdf

times reflecting the tourist gaze back to visitors, heritage agencies unwittingly reinforce conventional views of the past and at some fur trade sites even a traditional racialized version of history. Such versions of the past become predictable. For instance, the familiar domestic setting of sites such as Lower Fort Garry usually contain the material culture familiar to many visitors: the machine-made furniture fabricated to look rustic and hand-made, the mandatory wash basin, and the small straw mattress bed in the corner. When the quizzical visitor asks about the undersized bed, the nineteen-year old costumed animator will predictably respond with "people were shorter in the old days" to which the visitor will nod approvingly, and think "ah yes, that makes sense". Thus, in presenting the past as commodity, heritage places often authenticate what they imagine the visitor wants to see; a constructed and authorized past that is knowable, predictable and reassuring.

Founding Father Narratives and New Voices

Heritage often expresses "founding father" narratives and even authorized messages to forge a sense of common identity based on the past. Yet new interpretations can potentially alter this trajectory and bring new stories and new voices to the table. A Manitoba illustration of this can be seen with the national commemoration of Prince of Wales Fort near Churchill. Commenced in 1731 by the Hudson's Bay Company but not completed for four decades, the massive stone fortress was part of a plan to defend Company possessions on Hudson Bay from seaborne attack. The fort, located at Eskimo Point on the Churchill West Peninsula, was also crucial to HBC trade with the Dene and Inuit peoples of the region. In 1782 the HBC surrendered the fort to a French

force and was partly destroyed. The federal government began a partial restoration of the fortress

in the 1930s although it was not completed until 1960.[205]

When designated as a national historic site by the HSMBC in 1920, the fort's importance

was based solely on its role in the eighteenth century rivalry between France and England for

control of the resources of western Hudson Bay. In the decades since designation a variety of

other themes emerged alongside this early colonial perspective and centered on the Indigenous

history of the region, both during the fur trade period as well as for the almost continuous

occupation and resource use that occurred for thousands of years in the area prior to the arrival of

European traders. New voices appeared to challenge the 'founding father' narrative of imperial

rivalry, providing alternative views of heritage and place on the Churchill west peninsula.[206]

Following Prince of Wales Fort's designation as a national historic site – the first in

Western Canada – the federal government obtained ownership from the province of fifty acres of

land around the fort in 1922.[207] However, it wasn't until nine years later in 1931 that the Board

approved and erected a plaque at the fort. It reads:

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[205] See Robert Coutts, "Prince of Wales Fort" in Gerald Hallowell (ed.) *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 2004), 504.

[206] The Churchill west peninsula comprises the west bank of the Churchill River across from the modern town of Churchill, Manitoba. As discussed in the previous chapter, it contains a variety of historic sites and from a heritage perspective is generally considered to be the region extending from Eskimo Point in the north to the remains of Fort Churchill NHS (1783-1930) in the south. The Fort Churchill site was also the wintering site (1619-1620) of the Danish explorer Jens Munk , a short lived HBC post in 1689, and the Churchill River Post built by the HBC in 1717 and abandoned in 1740.

[207] According to LAC documents, "by the order of the Governor General in Council on the 4th of February 1922, Prince of Wales Fort comprising an approximate area of 50 acres was set apart … as an historic memorial site and placed under the control of the Commissioner of Dominion Parks." LAC, RG84, Parks Canada Records, A-2-a, reel T-11295.

> Built upon plans drawn by English military engineers to secure control of Hudson Bay for the Hudson's Bay Company and England. Construction in 1733 [sic, 1731] and completed in 1771. Surrendered to and partially destroyed by a French naval force under La Perouse in 1782. Its ruins are among the most interesting military remains on the continent.[208]

What is interesting about this text is the way that it conflates the interests of the HBC and England, a comment no doubt on the role of chartered companies in furthering imperial strategies in the eighteenth century. Of course, England was not alone in creating such companies to promote its commercial interests worldwide.[209]

Historically, Prince of Wales Fort would take forty years to complete. Initially the fort was considered finished by 1741 however the poor workmanship and design of the original construction would necessitate another three decades of rebuilding. In the end it was an impressive (if anachronistic) achievement, a stone structure to rival others of the period, and built in an inhospitable environment with a very short construction season. Over three hundred square feet in size with outer walls forty feet thick and twenty feet high, the fort contained four large flankers, a parapet and embrasures for the forty large cannon that would guard every approach. The interior consisted of the governor's quarters, barracks for the officers and men, storehouses, tradesmen's shops, a powder magazine, along with sheds and stables. Despite its impressive construction, the fort was severely undermanned and was captured without a shot in 1782 by a French naval force under the command of Jean-Francois Galaup, Comte de la Perouse. La Perouse mined the fort walls and reduced the fort to mostly rubble before sailing south to capture

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[208] LAC, RG37, Minutes of the HSMBC, February, 1931.

[209] The English-based Muscovy Company chartered in 1555 and the Dutch East India Company formed in 1602 were among the first transnational "corporations".

York Factory.[210] The HBC returned the next year to build Fort Churchill some four miles

upriver.

In the Minutes of the HSMBC for May of 1933 a motion was carried for nearby sites

Sloop Cove and Cape Merry to "be considered as part of the general historic site associated with

the old fort at Churchill."[211] Sloop Cove, located three kilometers south of the fort on the west

peninsula, was used by the HBC to harbour the wooden sailing vessels used by the company for

whaling expeditions and northern trade with the Inuit of western Hudson Bay. The Cove was

designated as nationally significant because of the inscriptions left there by the men who lived at

Prince of Wales Fort. One of these names, that of trader and explorer Samuel Hearne, is

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[210]   See Robert Coutts, "Prince of Wales Fort" in Gerald Hallowell (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to Canadian History*, 504.

[211] Ibid, 27 May, 1933.

elaborately inscribed on the rocks above the cove. During the eighteenth century there was approximately three meters of water in the cove at high tide. Iron mooring rings, still visible today, were driven into the rocks to secure the sloops. Today, the cove is mostly dry due to "isostatic"(post-glacial) rebound and because of hydro diversions located upriver on the Churchill River. Cape Merry National Historic Site is located on the northern tip of the eastern peninsula on the town side across from the fort. It consists of two gun batteries built by the HBC in 1744 and 1747 located across from the fort to help defend the mouth of the river.

Unlike historic places such as Lower Fort Garry, the historic sites of the Churchill area are better able to communicate a more authentic language of place, even if the emphasis on eighteenth century French-English conflict and the fur trade is only part of the story of that region. By being less contrived, less circumscribed, and more open to new voices, the region (and here I am talking about the whole of the peninsula) suggests the possibility of innovative vistas and new landscapes that might tell a bigger story, an Indigenous story in the case of the Churchill west peninsula. As discussed in chapter two, here heritage does not try to simply replicate a version of the past, it does not overtly attempt to manufacture authenticity, but remains rather a part of it, and a part of the larger landscape. It avoids the imagined *reproduction* of the past in the present opting instead for the *persistence* of the past in the present. Of course, the partial restoration of Prince of Wales Fort, rather than its interpretation as a ruin, introduces a degree of artifice, and its impressive presence, like many examples of historical architecture, can focus perceptions of the past in narrow and conventional ways. For the average visitor to the west peninsula it is what draws their attention.

Interest in protecting the ruin that was Prince of Wales Fort began in November of 1929 when the Chief Engineer of the Department of Railways and Canals in Ottawa recommended that to prevent "further deterioration" of the fort repairs be carried out to the "front portal [front gate] including digging out of the old guns partially buried" and the construction of a house for a watchman to prevent vandalism at the fort site.[212]Two years later the National Parks Branch under the leadership of J.B. Harkin asked that Railways and Canals go further and carry out "minimal repair" to the ruins of the fort walls. In reply the Department provided an estimate of the work required to provide nominal repairs at the fort, a total of $20,000 and twenty men working for four months to partially repair the exterior walls, restore the entranceway, and lift the cannons and place them on concrete slabs.[213] Even with the limited work proposed for Prince of Wales Fort, interest in the project soon grew. One visitor to the site, F.L. Farley, wrote to Harkin in the summer of 1931 commenting that, "Within the next tens years this old Fort will become one of the greatest attractions to travellers not only from Canada but from the U.S. who undoubtedly will soon make the trip to the Bay to see its wonders in the same manner as they go to Egypt to see the pyramids."[214]

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[212]   LAC, RG84, Parks Canada Records, A-2-a, reel T-11295, Chief Engineer, Department of Railways and Canals to Major A. A. Pinard, National Parks Branch, Department of the Interior, 7 November, 1929. Vandalism reported at the fort site included the theft of artefacts, mostly by workers employed in building the Churchill port facilities across the river. The deep-water port of Churchill opened in 1931 and shipped grain to Europe brought from the prairies to the port via the Hudson Bay Railway.

[213]   Chief Engineer, Department of Railways and Canals to J.B. Harkin, Dominion Parks Branch, 3 December, 1931. Ibid. In 2010 E. J. Hart published a lengthy biography of Harkin, the first Commissioner of the Dominion Parks Branch. It is entitled, *J.B. Harkin: Father of Canada's National Parks* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press) 2010. While Harkin remained a force for many years in the creation and conservation of many of Canada's national parks, he was also a key player in historic site preservation and the early development of tourism at parks and sites.

More extensive work on the fort did not begin until the summer of 1934 as part of a Depression-era federal public works project. Records kept from that time, as well as period photos, show that restoration and reconstruction concentrated upon the exterior walls. In places, the walls had been reduced to rubble while in other locations much of the original construction remained. Interrupted by the Second World War, the project continued in the 1950s with work concentrating upon the interior stone structures. This involved the demolition of the heavily damaged second stories of most buildings as well as the partial reconstruction of others. Archaeological work continued at and around the fort during the work and after.

Figure 15. Ruins of Cape Merry Battery, ca. 1920. The federal government reconstructed the battery in the late 1950s. (Archives of Manitoba)

It is evident that some aspects of the fort's original workmanship were altered during restoration. For example, concrete was employed extensively as coping on exterior and interior walls and as back up material were whole sections of walls were rebuilt. Despite these interventions a 1994 study by the Architectural Division of Parks Canada determined that the 1930s and 1950s work retained most

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214   Ibid, F.L. Farley to J.B Harkin, 5 July, 1931.

of the original material of the fort *in situ*.[215] Significantly, the report also concluded that the form

and scale of the eighteenth-century fort remained unimpaired, as was its relationship to the

surrounding landscape. Despite more recent threats to the stabilization of the fort walls (a section

of wall collapsed in 1997), Prince of Wales Fort retains the integrity of place and its significance

as part of the cultural landscape of the west peninsula.[216]

Although the fort continues to maintain its situational integrity, its story is only a small

part of the narrative of that region. Emerging alternative views of its history as well as new

narratives regarding the multi millennia history of the west peninsula discussed in more detail in

the previous chapter, speak to a much grander heritage. That the HSMBC in 1920 ignored the

fact that the Churchill West Peninsula contains resources that speak to over three thousand years

of occupation by Indigenous peoples is hardly surprising given that the cultures of these people

were little understood or appreciated at the time. However, research has shown that there are in

fact few areas in Canada that so clearly display the long continuity of human occupation and

resource use as does this relatively small area of the Churchill west peninsula. For hundreds of

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[215] See Jacqueline Hucker, *Prince of Wales Fort: A History, Documentation and Analysis of the 20th Century Repairs to the Outer Walls*. Architectural Division, National Historic Sites Directorate, Parks Canada, 1994. Much of Hucker's work relied upon a photogrammetrical analysis of the exterior walls, a process whereby modern photographs are compared to photographs of the walls prior to, during, and after restoration. The restoration of the Cape Merry battery, completed in 1960, was also part of the restoration of the site. Weekly journals recorded the progress of the work, although most were from the 1950s.

[216] For a more lengthy description of the fort's character defining elements see "Prince of Wales Fort National Historic Site" in *Canada's Historic Places*http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=7760. Accessed 22 January, 2018. A comprehensive research program, begun in the 1990s, included archaeological assessments of the rampart and foundation, an analysis of the physical properties of the stones used in construction, and the installation of instruments to monitor the thermal and moisture regime of the walls.

generations peoples of the "Arctic Small Tool Tradition" (the Pre-Dorset and Dorset), Thule, and modern Inuit occupied this area where they hunted, fished and traded. Physical and archaeological evidence of these occupations in the form of tent rings, cache sites, kayak rests, graves, and the remains of summer camps can be found throughout the Seahorse Gully and Button Bay areas, and speak to the great antiquity of the Indigenous presence in the region.[217] The west peninsula also contains the remains of the HBC post of Fort Churchill which was occupied by the HBC from the late eighteenth century until 1930.As a cultural landscape few regions in the country can rival the Churchill West Peninsula, and in the 1990s the Manitoba government considered nominating the area as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Unfortunately, the nomination never went forward as it was felt at the time that too many sites from first world nations were being put forward at the expense of potential sites elsewhere in the world.

That same decade, the introduction of commemorative integrity and commemorative intent into the national historic sites program, resulted in a strategy that ultimately restricted a more broadly based interpretation of the ancient history of the west peninsula. While an area plan approach to the Churchill west peninsula was simply a casualty of this Ottawa-based national initiative, the ultimate goal of the policy was to restrict a wider thematic interpretation of many historic sites across the country by relating historical interpretation of place to original HSMBC recommendations, a great number of which, like the commemoration of Prince of Wales Fort, dated to the early decades of the twentieth century. Parks Canada summarized its commemorative intent policy thusly:

> The reasons for designation should be expressed using the words and

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[217] Seahorse Gully NHS is examined in greater detail in Chapter 3.

phrases in the HSMBC minutes and approved plaque texts in a way which remains faithful to the HSMBC's intent.[218]

If the 1960s and 1970s witnessed the development of new national historic sites in Manitoba and across the country, a retrenchment occurred after 1980 as fewer sites were acquired. Although Parks Canada's Systems Plan[219] expanded designations to include emphasis on the history of Indigenous peoples, women, and ethno-cultural communities, most resulted only in the installation of new plaques. The arrival of commemorative intent policy, however,

Figure 16. Pre-Dorset house remains, Seahorse Gully, n.d. (Parks Canada).

indicated a more conservative era of interpretation, especially in regard to place. In relying almost exclusively upon sometimes very old Board recommendations, heritage place was

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[218] Parks Canada, *Guide to the Preparation of Commemorative Integrity Statements: Developing the Statement of Commemorative Intent,* http://www.pc.gc.ca/eng/docs/pc/guide/guide/sec3/commemorative Accessed 24 January, 2018.

[219] For a copy of the 2000 Parks Canada System Plan see: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/plan. Accessed 12 January, 2018.

narrowed rather than expanded. As discussed in more detail in chapter six, Parks Canada's

National Office grew anxious about the more inclusive cultural narratives that regional public

historians were developing around many national historic sites, including a changing focus from

"site" to "place" and the broader interpretations that went with it. Commemorative intent

effectively limited the discourse to older and more conventional historical narratives.

The policies of what historian and heritage manager Frits Pannekoek once called "the cautious

intellectual bureaucracy of Parks Canada" meant that at places such as Churchill historical

interpretation remained bound to older colonial themes such as French-English military

rivalry.[220] The chance to broaden the narrative, to bring in changing perspectives and to expand,

both temporally and geographically, into new areas of commemoration and protection, especially

regarding Indigenous histories, (much of the rich archaeological resources of the Churchill area

remain without federal protection) was therefore lost, as it was at a number of national historic

sites across the country. The three thousand-year cultural history of the Churchill west peninsula

(along with its unique natural history) is a place of continuity and meaning and the history of the

region should be treated in its entirety. The focus on the comparatively short history of the fur

trade and the imperial rivalry of the eighteenth century is exclusively related to European

occupation. Such a practice is not simply Euro-centric but represents only a very small part of

the heritage of that place.

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[220] See Frits Pannekoek, "Who Matters? Public History and the Invention of the Canadian Past", *Acadiensis*, vol. XXIX, no. 2, Spring 2000, 8.

Remembering *Kihciwaskahikan*

The commemorated heritage of Prince of Wales Fort and related sites – at least at the federal level – is linked to the significance of place, although the full scope of this heritage is restricted by the limited interpretations of an official past. Though interpretation is influenced by the choices made in determining heritage place, the same outcome can be accomplished through the limitations of temporal interpretation, or the imposition of a particular period of historical significance to a chronology or time period that best fits a socially constructed understanding of what is heritage and what is not. The history of York Factory (known in Muskego Cree as *Kihciwaskahikan* – the "Place of the Great House"), a nationally commemorated fur trade site in northern Manitoba is a case in point. Built in the late seventeenth century near the mouth of the Hayes River on Hudson Bay, the post persisted for almost three centuries, closing in 1957. For much of the nineteenth century, York was the Hudson's Bay Company's major entrepôt and

transshipment centre in the northwest when most trade goods and pelts in the west made their way through this bayside factory. It is that time period, along with the earlier period of French-English conflict, that provides the focus for much of the site's commemoration and interpretation. Today, the Commemorative Intent statement for York Factory, first developed by Parks Canada in the late 1990s and modified in 2017, reads: "York Factory is commemorated for its critical role in the French-English struggle on Hudson Bay for control of the fur trade, as an important Hudson's Bay Company trading post and entrepôt for over two and one half centuries, and for its role in the expansion of the fur trade into the interior of Western Canada."[221]

For the Indigenous peoples of the western Hudson Bay region almost three centuries of contact and commercial exchange not only influenced traditional modes of production, but also affected social and political development, domestic relations, and seasonal movement. The Muskego Cree had a centuries-old relationship with York Factory as traders, consumers, provisioners, and labourers. Although their involvement in domestic production persisted well into the twentieth century, fur trade mercantilism helped create a system of credit and debt that increasingly brought the Muskego peoples of Hudson Bay into a global capitalist system. Locally produced goods were replaced by European commodities, a decline in the resource base of the district, the commercialization of social relationships, as well as significant demographic alterations that resulted in increased poverty and depopulation, and ultimately marginalization. As elsewhere, the introduction and articulation of European capital paved the way for the replacement of Indigenous production—the domestic economy--particularly as wage labour and the production of commodities such as fur and country provisions for Euro-Canadian traders was

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[221] See http://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/mb/yorkfactory/decouvrir-discover/commemoration. Accessed 12 November, 2017.

established by the HBC in their efforts to accumulate capital.

Figure 18. Depot Building, York Factory, 2002 (Robert Coutts)

Over its long history York helped integrate Indigenous economies into an international structure of commodity production and trade, and introduced Muskego and Metis peoples into a global economy that was based upon a colonial exploitation of resources. But it was York's precipitous decline after 1870 that greatly impacted the Muskego Cree of the region and helped to set the trajectory of the economy of the subarctic for decades to come. The deterioration of the resource base of the region and the resulting, and significant, demographic alterations were manifested in increased poverty and depopulation, and ultimately the marginalization of the Indigenous peoples of western Hudson Bay.[222] The decline of York Factory during the last decades of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth was more or less replicated

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[222] For a discussion of the impacts of York Factory's decline see Frank Tough, *"As Their Natural Resources Fail": Native Peoples and the Economic History of Northern Manitoba, 1870-1930* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1996), 63-74, and Robert Coutts, "'We See Hard Times Ahead of Us': York Factory and Indigenous Life in the Western Hudson Region, 1880-1925", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Vol. 51(2), Spring 2017, 434–460.

at fur trade posts throughout much of Canada's subarctic. Declining prices, the growing scarcity

of game and fur bearing animals, and the development of resource industries in the south, all

contributed to the impoverishment of a great many subarctic Indigenous groups.[223] Scarcity was

of course not uniform across the subarctic in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but

reduced access to resources was a common feature of that territory and that time period.

York Factory is one of the oldest commemorated sites in Western Canada, being

designated as nationally significant in 1936, although the site was still operated by the HBC until

1957. In May of 1936 the HSMBC recorded "That in the opinion of the Board the struggle for

Hudson Bay is an event of national importance in the history of Canada and that it should be

commemorated by the erection of a memorial at York Factory."[224] A plaque text was approved

by the HSMBC in 1938 but for unknown reasons did not get Ministerial approval until 1954 and

was not erected at the site until three years later in July of 1957. It read:

> Established by the Hudson's Bay Company in 1682 as Port Nelson. During the contest
> for Hudson Bay between France and Great Britain its possession changed hands six times.
> It was finally restored to Britain by the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713.[225]

When after almost three centuries of continuous operation the Hudson's Bay Company

closed York in the summer of 1957 local Indigenous people left for inland communities at

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[223] See for instance Patricia McCormack, *Fort Chipewyan and the Shaping of Canadian History*, 1788-1920s (Vancouver: UBC Press) 2010, and Arthur Ray, *The Canadian Fur Trade in the Industrial Age* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 1990.

[224] LAC, RG84, Parks Canada Records, York Factory NHS, A-2-a, microfilm reel T-11470.

[225] Ibid.

Figure 19. Muskego Cree family near York Factory, 1915, (Archives of Manitoba)

Shamattawa and Fox Lake.[226] The main contingent of York people were resettled by the

Department of Indian Affairs at the newly created community of York Landing on Split Lake,

two hundred and fifty kilometers inland from the Bay. Today, York Landing remains the home

of the York Factory First Nation, though many elders return yearly to the old Hayes River site to

rekindle memories from their childhood. Younger Muskego accompany the elders on these trips,

curious about their heritage as a coastal people. From these excursions and reunions we see that

historic place remains central to Muskego life in the north. Even today, the history of the people

of that community and that region continues to speak to the historical centrality of Indigenous

people as kin, as labourers, and as consumers at the places that were colonized.

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[226] Both Shamattawa and Fox Lake, which had started out as wintering encampments, were established as permanent communities more than a decade prior to the closing of York in 1957 although they were not recognized as separate bands by the federal government until 1947. Those few Shamattawa and Fox Lake people who remained at York in 1957 left for these settlements rather than go to York Landing.

Initially hoping to lease the site to Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, an overture

rejected by the federal government, the HBC in 1959 leased the one hundred and five hectare site

to a former HBC post manager, Harold Bland. Bland, a long time Company employee had

managed York between 1934 and 1954. Planning to run the site as a hunting lodge, Bland agreed

to protect the surviving resources at York, including the 30,000 square foot Depot Building, a

massive warehouse constructed between 1832 and 1838.[227] Other historic resources at the site

included the small library building, the ruins of an early nineteenth century stone powder

magazine, a cemetery (its use might have dated to the late eighteenth century), as well as

thousands of artefacts left at the site and stored in the Depot building. Other than these above

ground resources, it was York's landscape that provided evidence of a once bustling place.[228]

Drains, palisade lines, building depressions and the remains of piers and summer camps spoke to

the importance of this place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Archaeological

resources—many excavated in the post-1978 period—were abundant.

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[227] Ibid, T-14170. A.R. Huband, Executive Assistant, Hudson's Bay Company, Winnipeg to J.D Herbert, National Historic Sites Division, 12 January, 1960. Later, when the federal government acquired York, Bland's application to continue operation of his hunting lodge was rejected because of the negative impacts on the game resources of the area, an important source of subsistence for the Indigenous people who had returned to the area. See Winnipeg Tribune, 13 May, 1968.

[228] The present site of York Factory (known as York Factory III, 1788-1957) dates from the late eighteenth century. Earlier locations, approximately three kilometers downstream include York Factory I (1684-1714) and York Factory II (1714-1788) that were abandoned because of riverbank erosion and flooding.

Figure 20. Aerial view of York Factory NHS, 2017 (Gordon Goldsborough)

By 1959 the federal government (at the urging of the HSMBC) began to show interest in

York as an historic site. At the invitation of the HBC a site survey was completed that year as

were structural drawings of the Depot. That same year T.C. Fenton, the Supervising Engineer for

the Division recommended that the government acquire York Factory and "take reasonable steps

to retard [the Depot's] deterioration and prolong its life as long as possible. Replacement cost if

it were lost", he adds, "would be very considerable".[229] From no interest in acquiring the site in

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[229]   LAC, RG84, A-2-a, Parks Canada Records, York Factory NHS, reel T-14170. T.C. Fenton
to Chief Engineer Gordon Scott, National Historic Sites Division, 18 September, 1959.
However, an earlier memorandum to the minister from the Assistant Deputy Minister E.A.

1957 to contemplating acquisition and the cost of reconstruction just two years later was a large step for the department in terms of preserving heritage resources in the subarctic. Lobbying by outside agencies such as the Hudson's Bay Record Society (HBRS), the Manitoba Historical Society, and even the Minnesota Historical Society, urged the federal government to acquire York, with Willis Richford, the Director of the HBRS, suggesting that the site be kept in repair by "private enterprise" as "Canada's record has not been too good in preserving her historical relics, which is much better than building replicas".[230]

Over roughly the next decade, with other heritage places such as Lower Fort Garry taking up considerable funding, little was done towards acquiring York Factory, the federal government no doubt wary of the costs of preserving such a remote historic site.[231] Not surprisingly, York's

isolation worked against its protection and preservation, Northern Affairs minister Walter Dinsdale in a 1961 letter to Churchill MP Robert Simpson writing that "the Factory has a good history, but its state of isolation is a very grim factor." York, he argued, presented "practically insurmountable drawbacks of terrain and inaccessibility, and the affect they would have on supply, labour, and tourist flow make it a poor risk for the foreseeable future."[232] Despite his

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Cote recommended that the department not go beyond the "moth-balling stage [at York Factory] for some years to come". E. A. Cote to Minister, Ibid, file 01340, 24 August, 1959.

[230] Ibid, Willis A. Richford, Executive Director, HBRS to Alvin Hamilton, Minister of Northern Affairs and Natural Resources, 17 January, 1958.

[231] In 1961 Northern Affairs minister Walter Dinsdale wrote to Derek Bedson, the Clerk of the provincial Executive council in Manitoba, stating that "I can now say that the Department has decided against preserving the remaining building [at York Factory] for the present, our emphasis has to be on Lower Fort Garry and Prince of Wales' Fort to carry the story of the Fur Trade as far as Manitoba is concerned." Ibid, Walter Dinsdale to Derek Bedson, 6 March, 1961.

reticence, the minister did note that the earlier survey of the site was a "historical record against the day when York might again come alive."[233]

In 1967 as the federal government busied itself with other fur trade projects in Manitoba, the provincial government proposed the idea of dismantling the Depot building at York Factory and moving it to The Pas. The provincial minister of Tourism and Recreation Sterling Lyon, in a letter to Arthur Laing, the federal minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, proposed that "In light of the vandalism and fire risk for the depot bldg., I would like to propose for your consideration a project whereby York Factory would be dismantled and transported to The Pas where it would be re-assembled and converted into a museum showing the development of the fur trade in Canada." Lyon added that, "while this may appear a formidable task, I am informed that the frame of the [Depot] building is prefabricated and held together with hooks which would provide for fairly easy dismantling and reassembling."[234] According to Lyon, the building components would then be moved in winter to The Pas by tractor train. Where Lyon and his advisors got the notion that the depot building at York was "prefabricated and held together with hooks" remains a mystery. In fact, the building was early nineteenth century balloon construction, painstakingly erected with studs rather than joinery, wooden knees to tie and reinforce roof trusses and beams, a shallow wooden foundation to allow for shifting permafrost and easy replacement, and interior wooden wedges that were used to raise and lower support posts as dictated by the movement of the permafrost.[235] Although a preliminary costing

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[232] Ibid, Walter Dinsdale to Robert Simpson, Member of Parliament for Churchill, 3 March, 1961.

[233] Ibid.

[234] Ibid, Sterling Lyon to Arthur Laing, 5 January, 1967.

for the move came in at $275, 000.00 (no doubt an optimistic figure even in 1967), the federal

department outright rejected the plan with Peter Bennett, the Assistant Director of the NHSD

remarking that he "was completely opposed to moving the building from its present site".[236]

However, Lyon's scheme had two welcomed consequences. Reacting to the plan, the HSMBC

recommended that the federal government acquire the site from the HBC ("we entered

negotiations with the Hudson's Bay Company … to acquire York Factory precisely in order to

forestall the proposal by the Government of Manitoba …"), and secondly it spurred the Board

into developing a policy stating that historic buildings like the Depot cannot be moved from their

in situ location.[237] This policy and it s various iterations would guide the NHSD for years.

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[235]   See Robert Hunter, Architectural History Branch, Federal Heritage Review Office Building Report 88-72, *Depot and Library Buildings, York Factory, Manitoba*, 11. Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, York Factory files.

[236]   LAC, RG84, A-2-a, Parks Canada Records, York Factory NHS, reel T-14170, Peter Bennett to John Rick, NHSD, 6 November, 1967.

[237]   Board minutes indicate that opposition to the move was unanimous, recommending strongly "that the site of York Factory be acquired [and] that steps be undertaken towards stabilization …" LAC, RG84, Historic Sites and Monuments Board Records, vol. 1179, HS-1, vol. 26, 4.

Figure 21. The cemetery at York Factory NHS, 2002 (Robert Coutts)

Perhaps more importantly, it reinforced the importance of place in defining and evaluating

heritage value at a time when the relocation of historic buildings was somewhat commonplace.

After months of negotiation with the HBC, transfer of York Factory to the federal

government occurred in 1968. At a ceremony held at Lower Fort Garry in July of that year, Jean

Chretien, then the minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development officially announced the

acquisition of York, stating that Canadians can visit the site and "renew their understanding of

bygone days." Continued Chretien, "I am told that although York Factory changed hands many

times … it ended up in the hands of the English. Is there some hidden significance in today's

ceremony? Not really, for today we are all Canadians and we own things jointly and together. A

more constructive arrangement I think".[238]

The transfer of York Factory heralded decades of research and stabilization work by Parks Canada. Land use and structural histories, a social history, a five year archaeological program that ran between 1978 and 1982, stabilization studies, restoration work, management planning, research into riverbank erosion and a controversial plan to replace the rotting main floor of the Depot building, all helped to protect and interpret this significant northern resource. Periodic archaeological digs continue at the site and in the 1990s a large modern Parks residence replaced the rudimentary accommodations that once graced the site. Unfortunately, this modern building compromises the integrity of place at the site, its location too close to the historic resources. The nearby Silver Goose Lodge operated by the York Factory First Nation on property adjacent to the historic site has now closed down. Because of the site's continuing isolation visitation remains low, averaging less than 300 people per year.[239] In recent years tours to York from Winnipeg have been organized.

Figure 22. Muskego Cree families at York after the signing of an adhesion to Treaty Five, August, 1910 (Archives of Manitoba).

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[238] Ibid, vol. 1179, HS-1, vol. 29. 2. Coming on the heels of the election of Pierre Trudeau and his federal Liberal government in June of 1968, Chretien's comments about York echoed the new government's commitment to the policy of Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

[239] See Parks Canada Attendance, 2006-2012. http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2017/pc/R61-107-2012-eng.pdf. Accessed 30 January, 2018.

Conclusion

At places such as York Factory, Prince of Wales Fort, and Lower Fort Garry it is still often the "business" of heritage that supports the formation of cultural identities that are authoritative, that often replace memory with history, and that fashion a present disconnected from the past. But if history can generate overarching narratives, it is often place that can bring out alternative meanings, landscapes of memory that challenges these dominant discourses. Where, for instance, Lower Fort Garry is an attraction and an authorized and at times contrived portrayal of the past, York Factory remains a true "place" with layers of memory and meaning that have resonated over centuries. I make these comments not as a neutral observer but as someone who worked in the historic sites program for many years. And I write as someone who believes that what we say about the past is shaped by the present at the same time that it informs that present. To look at new places, or old places with new perspectives, we see that "heritage work" is not always "authorized", or the exclusive terrain of the professional. Nor does it have to be the inevitable product of a dominant discourse.

At the same time, at places such as York Factory heritage interpretation is hamstrung by a bureaucratic focus on a narrow period of significance. But significance for whom? For Euro-Canadians an emphasis upon an early period of imperial rivalry, or York's emergence as a commercial hub of the fur trade, defines the site as nationally significant, at least in the eyes of the HSMBC. It is framed as a positive, confident, and nation-building story. Yet, there is another story, the account of how Indigenous economies were drawn into international commodity production, an imperial economy based upon the exploitation of resources. And then there is the story of decline, a story that for modern heritage agencies pushes places like York off the

commemorative map, but for Indigenous peoples becomes critical to their economic and cultural survival, to their history of adaptability, their history of marginalization, their history of being sidelined. Yet these are stories not seen to be worth commemorating. For many in northern Manitoba "outside the palisades" describes more than just trade relations, it is the heritage legacy of the fur trade.

Arguably, it is this story, a story that continues to resonate throughout northern Manitoba, that should be an important component of the interpretive focus as it helps to tell the history of colonialism and the consequences for those who are colonized. That it is not part of the official heritage of the site, or a part of the dominant discourse, raises issues around who in fact speaks for the past. Whose voice dictates the preferred narratives of history, in the case of York Factory a commemorative emphasis on the period of European growth and influence prior to 1870, and for the Churchill west peninsula the prominence of European occupation over Indigenous histories. Can we publicly remember and recognize something other than what Cecilia Morgan calls "the sweeping stories of national progress and uplift ... that have little room for the histories of marginalized groups"?[240]

With contemporary heritage sites that "celebrate" the fur trade in prairie Canada it is cultural processes and contemporary views that provide the overarching interpretations that form the authorized heritage discourse. Idealized views of a colonial past and the emphasis on early European commerce and settlement frequently overshadow the ancient histories of heritage place or the significant time periods of Indigenous life that continue to resonate in the present day.

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[240] Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada: History, Heritage, and Memory, 1850s-1990s*, 131.

Chapter 4: "We Came. We Toiled. God Blessed"[241]*: Settler Colonialism, Constructing Authenticity, and Commemoration*

Heritage distils the past into icons of identity, bonding us with precursors and progenitors, with our own earlier selves, and with our promised successors.

David Lowenthal*, "Identity, Heritage, and History"*

"Firsts" have played a critical role in the shaping and re-shaping of heritage, place, and memory. As discussed in the previous chapter, the commemoration of the fur trade has often laid claim to such distinctions – the first post inland from Hudson Bay, the first post west of the Rockies, the first white man to explore such and such a river, etc.[242] But it is with settler colonialism where such claims have been used to

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[241] Figure 23. Text on plaque celebrating the centennial of Mennonite immigration to Manitoba erected at the Manitoba Legislative Building in 1974.. Photo by Robert Coutts, February 2018.

express authenticity, sustain claims to place, and in the West used to authorize the prairie narrative. It is with the remaking of the prairie landscape that we see the influence of founding father narratives, the "firsts" of arrival and settlement and their importance to the formation of the group dynamics that would eventually lead to the recognition within specific groups of what Frances Swyripa has called "shared pioneering credentials".[243] At the local level the renaming of place, the erection of churches, the creation of new forms of land tenure, and the erection of shrines and historical markers, all showed how settler colonialism imposed "order and meaning on the prairie landscape at the most basic and human level".[244] Remaking the "commons" was the aspiration, commemorating it was the reward.

Eventually, at a more macro level the internal narratives of the settlement frontier would become part of the wider heritage movement, the new prairie ethnoscapes being recognized as critical to nation building and cultural advancement. In the 1980s the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada commissioned a major report on prairie settlement patterns, treating these landscapes as a phenomenon that could be represented tangibly through their structural and spatial aspects. With the goal of establishing new national historic sites, candidate landscapes were required to contain an acceptable level of extant historical resources, the significance of those resources to be ultimately determined by the Board. The Board's study was

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[242] In the U.S historian Jean O'Brien has argued that 19th century white settlers in New England used local histories and their claim to modernity through "firsts" to marginalize Indigenous peoples and promote the myth, one that even today remains a part of American perception, of Indian extinction. See Jean O'Brien, *Firsting and Lasting: Writing Indians out of Existence in New England,* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 2010.

[243] Frances Swyripa, *Storied Landscapes: Ethno-Religious Identity and the Canadian Prairies,* 79.

[244] Ibid, 74.

limited to agricultural settlement and included rural occupancy of either individual farm

settlements or nucleated communities. The Metis river lot patterns of the Red River Settlement

and the South Saskatchewan Valley were not considered in the study. According to the report,

"river lot farming … was minimal and had little impact, other than as an adjunct of the fur trade,

on the economy of the region."[245] In fact, river lot farming was more than minimal, was not

simply an "adjunct" to the fur trade, and did have considerable impact upon the economy of the

region at the time. "Individual farm settlements or nucleated communities" generally referred to

Anglo-European and Anglo-Canadian farming, the latter to the establishment of ethno-cultural

and ethno-religious settlements on the prairies in the late 19th century. The 1984 study and the

subsequent heritage nominations it generated were critical steps in the official recognition and

commemoration of settler colonialism, defining authenticity, supporting claims to place, and

entitling the prairie narrative.

Building upon the commemoration of western fur trade sites, this chapter continues the

analysis of heritage, place, and memory this time within the colonialist and settler narrative. It

considers the commemoration of selected places of Euro-Canadian settlement that have formed

part of the chronicle of progress and nation building. The chapter is largely focused on the way

the interpretation of historic place in the rural west came to assign an attachment to the soil to

capitalist labour markets, to private property, individualism, and the perception of an empty land

in the territories occupied by Indigenous cultures and fur trade mercantilism. It is a story that

derives from what Irene Spry called "the tragedy of the loss of the commons", or the transition in

Western Canada from common property resources, to open access resources, to private

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[245] Parks Canada, *Winnipeg Historical Collection*, Lyle Dick, "Prairie Settlement Patterns", 1984. 365.

property.[246] More importantly, it tracks the commemoration and celebration of this tradition, how that commemoration was created and how it evolved over time; how settler colonialism became an "authentic" past worthy of designation, preservation, and the creation of its own heritage mythology.

Through the study of selected community histories and the commemoration of particular cultural landscapes and places, this chapter will also explore how the patterns of popular history making have been reflected in certain cultural communities, including the processes by which they have come to shape an oftentimes pervasive view of a settler past.

Figure 24. Immigrant women at the Dufferin market in Winnipeg, ca. 1915. (Archives of Manitoba)

With settler colonialism place becomes significant through the development over time of traditions, myths, and narratives. Landscapes become ethnoscapes where local and national

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[246]   Irene M. Spry, "The Tragedy of the Loss of the Commons in Western Canada", in A.L. Getty and Antoine Lussier, *As Long as the Sun Shines and the Water Flows: A Reader in Canadian Native Studies,* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1983, 2000), 203.

memories are found in pioneer histories and group founding stories, monuments and shrines, the preservation of architecture, or by speculative reconstructions.

In this chapter I consider a variety of sites that illustrate the designation of settlement heritage and the "construction of authenticity" in Western Canada. By focusing on a handful of historic places that commemorate the pioneering tradition I hope to illustrate the goals and limitations of the commemorative ritual and to consider this tradition more broadly. These include the River Road Heritage Parkway that commemorates early Anglo-Metis settlement in Red River, the distinctive European cultural ethnoscapes of such places as Neubergthal Street Village National Historic Site and the Doukhobor settlement at Veregin in Saskatchewan, a recently designated national historic site. I also focus on Manitoba's Mennonite Heritage Village, an outdoor "museum" of early Anabaptist settlement in Manitoba, as well as upon the commemoration of Motherwell Homestead NHS, an example of late 19th century Anglo-Ontarian settlement in southern Saskatchewan. Beyond describing the origins, commemorations, and sense of place for each, I look at each within the broader heritage designation of settlement patterns across the prairies.

In reviewing national and provincial commemorative documentation, local community histories, as well as texts relating to ethno-cultural settlement, I consider how these writings portray land and settlement, how memory is cultivated and celebrated, how community cohesion is achieved, or at least attempted, and how the sense of progress, especially as it relates to place and site, is reified. Arguably, these commemorations are broadly representative of settlement heritage on the prairies. They typify a particular theme in Canadian history through the reshaping of the landscape, the official recognition of founding father narratives, and the spatial dynamics

of ethnoscapes. Each, in their own way, represent attachment to place and soil as well as the entirety of the settlement experience.

Although the heritage of ethno-cultural settlement had long been recognized at the local or community level through markers and memorials or by local histories, they were underrepresented nationally, especially the impact of ethno-religious settlement in the west. In attempting to broaden commemoration across the country, Parks Canada's System Plan, developed in the late 1990s and published in 2000, placed greater emphasis upon the designation of ethno-cultural communities, along with the commemoration of women and Indigenous peoples.[247] It represented a major step for the HSMBC, a group that had traditionally concentrated upon such themes as, military history, the fur trade, and early Anglo-settlement.

Canadians are involved in history, especially family and community history. When talking about "heritage" it is often the local and regional which tends to capture their awareness. In the chapter "Places and Pasts" the authors of the 2015 book *Canadians and Their Pasts* discuss the significance of local heritage, citing the poet and critic Eli Mandel who described "the overpowering feeling of nostalgia associated with the place we know as the *first* place, the *first* vision of things, the *first* clarity of things." They go on to note "our sense of the past is also established by relations with others and accumulate as we work together in a process described as the 'production of space,' in which our perceptions and the dimensions of the world around us are shaped by human activities." [248] As such, public history agencies that commemorate place,

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[247] See: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/plan. Accessed 21 March, 2018.

[248] The Pasts Collective, *Canadians and Their Pasts* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 105-119, 105. See also Eli Mandel, "Images of Prairie Man" in Richard Allen (ed.), *A Region of the Mind: Interpreting the Western Canadian Plains* (Regina: Canadian Plains Studies Centre, 1973), 206.

just like museums, have an obligation to contextualize the regional within a broader story.

According to historian Gerald Friesen there is "a very real public interest in what institutions

such as museums and [historic] sites do and say, and to recognize that for many people exhibits

and plaques are more believable – and interesting -- than academic monographs. This means that

what heritage agencies do in the area of commemorating ethno-cultural history matters."[249] To

this I would add the essential commemoration of place, and the acknowledgment of the

memories evoked by the views, values, and contours of the landscape.

"A Thoroughfare for an Extended Village"

The topic of setter colonialism in Western Canada most often suggests themes related to

European, Anglo-Ontarian, and ethno-religious settlement on the prairies. The "pioneers" as they

are usually described in popular treatments -- their toil narratives, square lot surveys, or

characteristic communal land patterns most often used to illustrate the impact of immigrants

upon the physical landscape. Yet the creation of ethnoscapes in any significant form really

begins decades prior to the 1879 National Policy with the early 19th century establishment of

river lot agriculture in the Red River valley and the later Metis settlements along the South

Saskatchewan River. Although Metis life in these settlements tended to focus upon hunting,

fishing, freighting, and trade, agriculture also played a substantial role in the foundation of a new

form of cultural landscape in the West – the narrow river lots patterned after the seigneurial

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249 Gerald Friesen, as quoted in Michael Payne, "Commemorating Ethno-cultural Communities in Manitoba", *Manitoba History*, no. 50, October 2005, 13.

system of New France.[250] Situated north of Winnipeg, now the modern-day historic site known as the "River Road Provincial Park", we can still see the vestiges (although fast disappearing due to modern exurban expansion) of the old river lot system of the Red River valley. First surveyed by Peter Fidler of the Hudson's Bay Company in 1813 for the Selkirk Settlers, river lots became the principal land holding order in Red River. Their expansion beyond the Red River valley ended in 1869 with the sale of Rupert's Land to Canada and the establishment of the square lot survey.

River Road Provincial Park (named the River Road Heritage Parkway until 1997) commemorates the early settlement of the lower region of the Red River Settlement, a western

Figure 25. The Red River and River Road looking south from St. Andrew's Rectory, 1858 (Archives of Manitoba)

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[250] For descriptions of agriculture and the river lot system in Red River see Norma Hall, Chapter 2, "Red River farming" in *A Casualty of Colonialism: Metis Red River Farming 1810-1870* at: https://casualtyofcolonialism.wordpress.com/bibliography/, 2015. See also Robert Coutts, "St. Andrew's and the Agricultural Economy" in *The Road to the Rapids: Nineteenth Century Church and Society in St. Andrew's Parish, Red River*, (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2000), 131-152.

Canadian colony that dates to the first decades of the 19thcentury. First known as the "Rapids"

settlement and later as St. Andrew's Parish, it was established in the late 1820s on the Red River

by English-speaking Metis, many of whom had been declared surplus by the HBC, and by retired

Scottish fur traders and their Metis families. Here they farmed their narrow riverlots, hunted and

fished, worked seasonally on the York boat brigades, and engaged in trade with the Company

and with local Cree and Ojibwa.

River Road is located approximately twenty kilometres north of Winnipeg in the modern-

day municipality of St. Andrew's. It is a local byway with a long history. Curving along the west

bank of the Red River, the road first appeared on settlement maps in 1836 and linked the narrow

lots that angled back from the river's edge. Originally known as the "Inner Road", it partly

connected the sprawling parishes that originated at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine rivers.

Eventually, this inner road was replaced by the "King's Road" located about a mile or so to the

west. For the people of old St. Andrew's parish, River Road was for much of the 19th century a

"thoroughfare for an extended village, a kind of back street for a parish that had no proper main

street because it possessed too little commerce to require anything so grand."[251]

Some distance along this now popular country drive, at a sweeping bend in the Red River,

modern travellers get their first glimpse of St. Andrew's Church, its familiar steeple rising

prominently above the low horizon of the shallow river valley. As the oldest extant church in

Western Canada (it was constructed in 1849), St. Andrew's-on-the Red, as it has become known,

stands today a pastoral reminder of a time when church and community were among the integral

constituencies of everyday life.

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[251] Jean Friesen and Gerald Friesen, "River Road" in Gerald Friesen, *River Road: Essays on Manitoba and Prairie History* (Winnipeg; University of Manitoba Press, 1996), 4.

The history and significance of place, to some extent at least, is still visible along River Road. But as mentioned above, the region has lost much of its earlier heritage because of the development of the area as a prosperous commuter community not far beyond Winnipeg's outer suburbs. Heritage memory is carried less by place than by standardized forms of interpretive signage. Only vestiges of the parish's once thriving riverlot geography remain though increasingly recede with the erection of each new substantial house, two and three-car garage, and manicured lawn. However, at one time St. Andrew's and River Road, like all of 19th century Red River, were riparian settlements. This developmental pattern was the result of a variety of factors that effectively served to restrict habitation to the long narrow lots that bordered the Red and Assiniboine rivers. These rivers and their tributaries facilitated transportation, and their banks provided the timber necessary for both fuel and shelter. Only near the river's edge was the land considered viable for cultivation, the rivers and creeks providing the main source for the settlement's water as well as fish to supplement the local diet.

The geographic pattern throughout the colony was hybrid in nature. Its topographical layout was based on the Quebec riverlot model although actual land use mimicked the infield and outfield system found in Scotland and brought to Red River by the Selkirk settlers. The settler's home, assorted outbuildings, and small kitchen garden were located near the river's edge. Behind the farmstead was situated the infield or the small fenced and cultivated 'parks' where the farmer grew his cereal and garden crops. Beyond the infield, and occupying the rest of the two-mile lot, stretched the larger outfield. While some settlers used the outfield for occasional cropping, most grazed livestock in their unfenced areas. As well, each landowner possessed what became known as the "hay privilege" on the two miles of land extending beyond their riverlot. Beyond the hay privilege, Red River colonists possessed equal rights to the wild hay and timber

of what became known as "the common". Of course the extent of cultivated acreage, as well as the number of livestock, varied from landowner to landowner. Those Metis who occupied the bulk of their time on the HBC York boats or on the buffalo hunts had less time to cultivate and seed beyond a few acres and relied primarily upon smaller kitchen gardens. Others depended less on wage labour and hunting and often cultivated a greater acreage or kept livestock such as cattle, oxen, and horses.
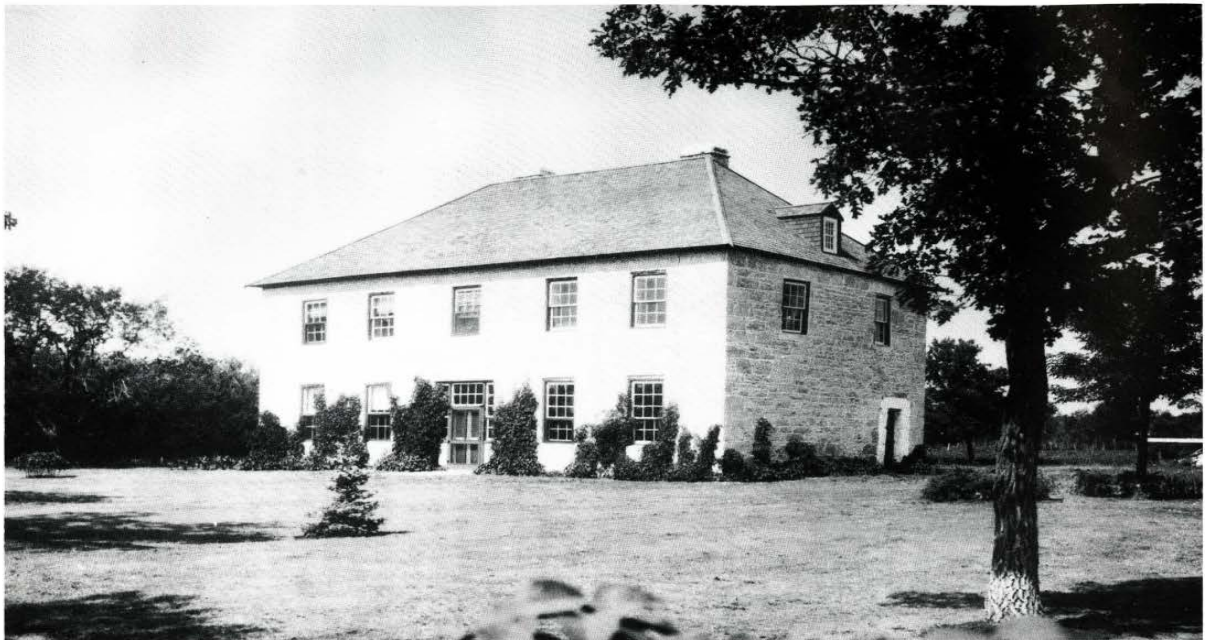
Figure 26. Miss Davis' School (now Twin Oaks) was built in 1858. Depicted here in the 1930s. (Archives of Manitoba)

The Red River Settlement in general, and St. Andrew's in particular, present a sense of identity established, not simply by the uniqueness of land and place, but by the practices and traditions of an adaptive economic strategy. For local settlers the peculiarities of climate, geography, technology and the availability of commercial markets forced local families to

exploit the resources of the rivers and plains – an expedient, if not profitable, tactic for life in a restrictive economy.

With the Red River Resistance of 1869-70, the passing of the Manitoba Act, and the subsequent alienation of Metis lands in the new province, life changed in old Red River. The transition to a new political order after 1870, along with the influx of Ontarian settlers, altered the character of the community. Some departed the River Road area to seek new economic opportunities elsewhere or left as the result of dispossession. Those who remained found their influence challenged by a federal policy that promoted mass immigration to the province and to the Northwest Territories. Colonization beyond the borders of the old parishes such as St. Andrew's and the development of Winnipeg as a distribution and supply centre consigned St. Andrew's to the periphery of the new large-scale agricultural economy of Western Canada. Despite the survival of some impressive limestone architecture, the River Road district settled into the slow life of a rural backwater, its meager land base unable to compete with the large-scale agriculture of the "New West".

But as interest in the history of the area increased with the development of tourism in the 20th century, River Road and the surrounding area began to enjoy new popularity as a heritage destination. A 1977 report to the provincial government noted that River Road was one of the most significant historical districts in Western Canada. "No other identifiable area" the report concluded, "possesses the wide variety of historical structures and sites that represent all aspects of early settlement life from fur trade to religion, education, and farming in such close proximity to one another and along a road and river that are in themselves historical."[252] That both the river and the road are "in themselves historical" is interesting; they are effectively labeled heritage by

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[252] Archives of Manitoba, *River Road Heritage Parkway*, 1977, 1.Howard Pawley fonds, 1977-162, M-93-7-17, file 5.

their mere existence, though of course both landscapes witnessed the evolution of local economies and local ways of life.

Across the country, the increasing demand for heritage conservation and the provision of outdoor recreational opportunities resulted in the 1972 announcement by Prime Minister Pierre Eliot Trudeau of the *Byways and Special Places Program* that focused on recreational opportunities for heritage river corridors. A year later it was enhanced by the federal-provincial *Agreement for Recreation and Conservation*, known simply as the ARC program.[253] ARC developed the concept of "federal-provincial cooperation in the planning, development, operation, and management of areas containing important historic resources."[254] The agreement was a milestone in the development of historic resources across the country, partnering federal and provincial heritage and financial assets with a greater emphasis upon heritage tourism.

In Manitoba, a number of sites along the Red River were considered suitable for a federal-provincial partnership under the Manitoba ARC Authority Incorporated to give the partnership its full name. After a century of neglect and of urban and exurban development removed from the rivers, these objectives were the first to consider rehabilitation of the Red River as a natural and cultural corridor. The overall plan set aside $13 million on a number of sites from St. Norbert and the La Salle River in the south to NetleyMarshon Lake Winnipeg in the north. They were to be anchored by a federal development at the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine. The Forks site, once a centuries-old meeting place for prairie Indigenous nations, the center of the Red River Settlement, and the location of Upper Fort Garry, had become an

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[253] Legislative Library of Manitoba (hereafter LLM), *Red River Master Development Plan,* September, 1981.

[254] LLM, *River Road Heritage Parkway: Concept Plan,* 1982, 1.

increasingly disused railway yard and an empty and derelictspace alienated from the city core.

Though beyond the scope of this study, the story of the development of the Forks -- first the

creation of green space by Parks Canada and later the commercial and recreational initiatives that

emerged from private-public development -- did go a long way in rejuvenating Winnipeg's

history as a river-oriented settlement. As historian Claire Campbell writes, the Forks "was a

massive project of urban reclamation, to reinvigorate a derelict industrial core into an

economically self-sustaining complex of farmers' markets and cafes, performance spaces and

public sculpture, and a riverside park."[255]

The Manitoba ARC agreement was concluded in October of 1978 with River Road

selected as a key heritage development in the Red River Corridor plan.[256] With the details of the

River Road design yet to be worked out, planners did identify the overall challenge for the

project to be that of "controlling and acquiring the adjoining landscape for required visual and

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[255] Claire Elizabeth Campbell, *Nature, Place and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017), 92-93. Beyond the nine acre Parks Canada land at the Forks, the site lacks the green space once promised by developers. Housing has also been on the agenda for the site but has yet to be realized. In *Nature, Place, and Story*, Campbell endeavours to rewrite "public history as environmental history", with the Forks, she argues, having been made "useful again". Though a site reclaimed, the Forks does little to interpret public history as environmental history as its riverside focus is for the most part overwhelmed by the kind of urban development found in most communities looking for a mix of retail, commercial, and entertainment attractions. The federal government's 1990s *Green Plan*, once heavily publicized for the Forks, is for the most part a forgotten objective, essentially lost under the pressure for continuing financial investment in the built environment. For more on Campbell's study of the Forks development see Chapter 5 of this study. The nearby *Upper Fort Garry Heritage Park* on Main Street does contain green space with gardens, identified building locations, a sound and light heritage wall, as well as online and smart phone QR code interpretation. The park's deliberate low-key development, though criticized by some, does go some way in creating a heritage urban oasis.

[256] LLM, Manitoba ARC Authority Inc., *River Road Heritage Parkway: Concept Plan,* 1982, 1.

planning improvement"; planning jargon for creating a landscape environment and place that

reduced the impact of surrounding modern development.[257] As we will see, this original lofty

goal would not be achieved in the years to come.

Figure 27. Kennedy House, River Road, 2007 (Manitoba Historical Society)

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[257] Ibid, 3. The *Concept Plan* did recognize the increasing negative impacts of "development pressures" and that the project represented "a last chance opportunity." Ibid, 4. According to the site analysis contained in the 1982 *River Road Parkway: Proposed Project Plan*, the landscapes of the River Road area "have been created and manipulated over time by the natural processes of a slow river meandering through a fairly restricted flood plain. The resulting landform, vegetation, and river configuration have contributed to the land-use patterns that we see today [1982]. River Road itself has evolved as an integral part of this land use pattern, historically linking its components to each other, to the river, and to larger urban centres. This evolutionary process continues as new pressures for housing, recreation, and leisure activities increase". LLM, Manitoba ARC Authority Inc., *River Road Parkway: Proposed Project Plan,* 12.

The 1982 River Road Parkway Concept Plan identified the settlement of River Road (and St. Andrew's Parish) as "a major development in the initial settlement of the Canadian West and the role of the Hudson's Bay Company in that settlement."[258] Four themes were identified for interpretation at various nodes along the road, including river lot agriculture, English Metis society, social class, and the transition between 1860 and 1890 of political, economic, and social institutions in the region.[259] This last theme represented a major narrative, not just for the River Road area, but for the whole of Red River and for the Indigenous peoples who lived within its boundaries. Surviving resources and interpretive signage could adequately relate the story of the last three themes; as for river lot agriculture, a century of changing land patterns had effectively diminished the historic role of place in the old parish. Although descriptive narratives could provide visitors to the area with some idea of traditional land holdings, no provision was made by the ARC Authority to acquire and preserve a river lot in the area. And while that particular land-use pattern was still visible at the time of planning (1982), the increase in suburban sprawl along River Road has all but obliterated on the ground traces of the agricultural pattern that characterized the earliest European and Metis settlement in the West. The decision to not protect the heritage of place, but to focus instead upon the development of scenic vistas and recreational nodes, and the acquisition and restoration of the built heritage of the area, represented an opportunity missed.[260]

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[258] Ibid, 1.

[259] Ibid, 8.

[260] Around that same time, Parks Canada restored Riel House, the surviving 19th century home of the Riel family and a national historic site located in St. Vital in the south of the city. An opportunity to purchase and preserve the old river lot associated with the house was

The final plan for the parkway proposed the development of six natural, recreational, and heritage nodes, many of the latter represented by 19th century examples of stone architecture. These included Twin Oaks (described above), Kennedy House, the stone house built in 1866 by William Kennedy the Metis former HBC employee and arctic explorer, and Scott House, a more modest structure that was partly dismantled in the 1980s because of structural issues and is now interpreted as a "ruin fragment". According to the 1982 River Road Concept Plan "selective destruction of the building is recommended with the leaving of a ruin fragment", a technique used with various heritage buildings throughout Europe. Initial plans for Scott House included a vegetable garden and enclosures for pigs, horses, and hens – all animals that had once been a part of farming in the area. However, the addition of livestock at the property never occurred.[261]

One of the largest restoration developments along the road was St. Andrew's Rectory a national historic site like the nearby church. Constructed in 1854, and for many years a private museum, the rectory was declared of national historic significance in 1962 and was purchased by the federal government in the 1970s. The site's later heritage interpretation focused on stone architecture and the role in the settlement of the Church Missionary Society, a London-based Anglican evangelical order founded in 1799 as "The Society for Missions to Africa and the East."[262]

declined by the federal government and that land too was then predictably altered by modern urban development.

[261] LLM, Manitoba ARC Authority Inc., *River Road Heritage Parkway: Concept Plan,* 1982, 9. Kennedy House was closed in the spring of 2015 because of structural issues. Closing with it was the Maple Grove Tea Room, a popular tourist destination. The elaborate gardens adjacent to Kennedy House were developed in the 1920s.

[262] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, *St. Andrew's Rectory National Historic Site, Management Plan,* 1980. A second management plan was published in 2003 although it

Funding for work on the rectory fell to Parks Canada. The "restoration" of St. Andrew's Rectory NHS was a major undertaking and was completed in the early 1980s. Much like the walls at Lower Fort Garry, however, the work on the Rectory more closely resembled reconstruction than restoration as much new material was used both for the exterior and the interior. At nearby St. Andrew's Church, structural and cosmetic repairs to the historic building began in the 1930s and continued intermittently until the 1980s.[263] Although no monies were made available under the Canada-Manitoba ARC agreement for work on the church, the building was later restored under the National Historic Sites Cost-Sharing program with structural work completed in the Spring of 1995.[264]

As elsewhere along River Road, funding went largely towards the restoration and maintenance of built heritage, a built heritage that did not represent the historic life of the community and its origins as an agricultural community.[265]Overall site development failed to incorporate the commemoration of the historically unique land-holding system of the region. Other than what is related on some interpretive panels, the visitor learns little of the remaking of the riverine landscape and the importance of the land in the formation of community culture. What would eventually become the transformation of the commons through large-scale prairie

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added little to the existing scope and interpretation of the Rectory. See: http://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/98469/publication.html. Accessed 13 April, 2018.

[263] Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Rupert's Land Archives, St. Andrews-on-the Red, http://www.rupertsland.ca/about/archives/. Accessed April 13, 2018.

[264] *St. Andrew's-on-the-Red, Historical and Architectural Survey and Rededication Service,* May, 1995. *Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection.*

[265] As riverbank erosion has been a problem for some time along River Road, stone riprap was added in the 1990s at key points along the riverbank.

Figure 28. Interpretive signage along River Road, 2007. (courtesy of Sherry Dangerfield)

agriculture and the later recognition, even celebration, of that transformation would not form part of the commemoration of the historical culture of Red River. The Metis loss of land to speculators and incoming Ontarian settlement after 1870 would instead be underscored by the commemorative erasure of that heritage and language of place. A preoccupation with the preservation of a non-representative built heritage would ultimately skew the historical understanding of life along River Road in the 19th century, suggesting that the typical Indigenous freighter and hunter of the region lived in the grandeur of limestone halls.

After nine public meetings between 1980 and 1981, the development of the River Road Heritage Parkway was undertaken by five jurisdictional interests including Parks Canada, Manitoba Highways, Manitoba Historic Resources Branch, Manitoba Parks Branch, and the

Rural Municipality of St. Andrew's, which included the Selkirk and District Planning Board.[266] The proposed project plan laid out in detail the kinds of management systems that would be required in developing, managing, and operating the parkway. After reviewing a number of options, the report recommended that the provincial Historic Resources Branch take on the role of "formal lead agency" with Manitoba Highways to continue to maintain the actual road maintenance and the Selkirk and District Planning Board to take the leadership in any future planning endeavours.[267]

However, the recommended management regime did not occur. When the ARC Authority was eventually disbanded in an informal management approach was adopted and a number of provincial and federal departments maintained control over components of the parkway. Over time, the lack of centralized management led to funding issues, particularly the lack of financial support for ongoing maintenance. For example, the interpretive nodes and scenic pull offs were poorly maintained and the bicycle pathway between the road and the river was soon overgrown. Although the interpretive signage contained accurate, interesting, and well-written material, the physical condition of the signage deteriorated over time, despite the parkway being designated a provincial heritage park in 1997. In the early 2000s the road was paved and in 2007 the provincial government replaced the interpretive signage at the different parkway nodes. While providing an overview of the history of the road, the community, and local river lots, the new signage also developed the "A Family Journey", which followed the journey of the fictitious Thomas family as it made its way to north to Lower Fort Garry.[268] In

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[266] LLM, Manitoba ARC Authority Inc., *River Road Parkway: Proposed Project Plan,* 64.

[267] Ibid, 64-72.

2013 Manitoba Parks and Natural Areas Branch assembled a new Draft Management Plan for River Road. This thin 11-page document adds little in terms of strategy for the park. Other than to clarify its management under the current Parks and Protected Spaces Branch, the document simply repeats the original ARC goals "to preserve several sites containing 19th century homes, promote public awareness and appreciation of these sites and provide recreational opportunities along the Red River."[269]

Figure 29. Scott House, River Road, 2016. Because of the current condition of the "ruin fragment" and the obvious lack of maintenance, the property has been closed to the public. (Manitoba Historical Society)

[268] The new signage was developed by Sherry Dangerfield Interpretive Planning. It won Interpretation Canada's Gold Award of Excellence in 2007

[269] Manitoba Parks, *River Road Provincial Park: Draft Management Plan*, Spring 2013. 7. See: http://www.gov.mb.ca/sd/parks/consult/pdf/june_18/river_road_dmp.pdf. Accessed 16 April, 2018.

In small part the significance of place can still be glimpsed along River Road. It remains to some degree rural. However, where the meaning of some historic places have been sacrificed to tourist comforts and an invented past, the heritage of River Road is being lost as the result of neglect and from the gentrification of riverside properties. Only remnants of the area's river lot geography and cultural landscape remain, though they continue to disappear with the building of each new upscale house. Like so many heritage plans, River Road represents an opportunity lost. In the Introduction to a 1973 plan for prospective zoning for the road there is a discussion of the importance of the visual landscape and how it should be considered as a natural resource "prone to depletion and destruction, highly sensitive and difficult to renew".[270] It suggests that for the proposed parkway:

> The visual field experienced in the act of viewing [River Road] is the manifestation of all the landscape resources, including plant communities, topographic variety, harmonious land uses … and unique features incorporating cultural, historic, and natural systems.[271]

The proposed parkway, the document recommends, should maintain "a high degree of visual continuity throughout its length."[272] Since those 45-year old proposals much has been lost in one of Manitoba's oldest communities. Once little more than a muddy cart track, River Road is a vanishing reminder of a Metis heritage of hunting, fishing, freighting, and trade, and the overland trail that helped integrate these activities within the community.

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[270] AM, River Road Heritage Parkway, *Zoning and Acquisition Proposals*, 1973, Schedule AG 0002A, A2.

[271] Ibid.

[272] Ibid.

"Clean and Well Kept Grounds"

Much of the late 19th-century non-Indigenous occupation of Western Canada centered on ethno-religious settlement, especially immigrant settlement from central and eastern Europe. In terms of commemoration, the founding narratives of groups such as Mennonites, Ukrainians, and Doukhobors among others, moved beyond national mythologies to a greater emphasis on regional contexts, the celebration of the immigrant settler generation, and the possession, meaning, and importance of the land itself. For the descendants of ethno-religious settlers the national narratives around political and cultural ascendancy that defined Anglo-Canadian and Anglo-European settlement were largely supplanted by the specifics of the settlement experience, and by cultural and religious persistence. Frances Swyripa has argued that by the 1970s "as nostalgia for the past and its artefacts gathered momentum, the material heritage of the [ethno-religious] settlement era – defining the land, recalling its human dramas – acquired unprecedented symbolic value."[273] She adds, however, that the settler generations regarded pioneering as temporary so little of their original vernacular architecture, other than churches, cemeteries and a handful of houses and farm buildings, remained.[274] What did endure was the land itself and often the cultural landscapes that marked the signposts of possession. Despite the desire to link history with space, much of the modern heritage movement attempts to establish a memory of place without the actuality of place, or at least the originality of place. Creating contrived and often romanticized reproductions of the built environment, from churches to barns, from one-room schoolhouses to early log cabins in pastoral village settings with all their fabricated material culture, has long been a part of Canada's commemorative tradition. One of

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[273] Swyripa, 200-201.

[274] Ibid, 201.

the earliest such imitations was Black Creek Pioneer Village, located in the North York area of

Toronto and opened in 1960. It interprets a 1860s Anglo-Ontario farming community and

includes both relocated and reproduced "pioneer" structures. Upper Canada Village opened in

1961 near Morrisburg, Ontario along the St. Lawrence Seaway includes 40 reproduced and

relocated heritage buildings including mills, stores and trades buildings.[275] Upper Canada Village

also interprets life in a 1860s Anglo-Ontario farming community. A more recent, and western

example of a reconstructed/restored heritage site, is the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village near

Edmonton. Founded in 1971 (and designated a provincial historic site in 1975), it is described as

an "open air museum" and brings together a number of surviving buildings from the region to

interpret Ukrainian settlement in central Alberta in the early decades of the 20th century. In

describing open air museums such as the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, Historian Karen

Gabert writes: "Museum curators are able to win over the most sceptical of visitors at open air

sites, in part because they stay invisible. Traditional museum exhibits bear the clear marks of

their creators; open-air exhibits can erase or at least ignore all such evidence and encourage the

fantasy of having happened upon an in situ historic wonderland." [276] While Gabert's point is an

interesting one – open-air museums do encourage the fantasy of re-visiting the past – most

visitors, I believe, are well aware of the quixotic if not questionable integrity of their

surroundings. When as a child our family visited "Frontier Town" in up-state New York, I was

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[275] Much of the impetus for the creation of Upper Canada Village was the construction of the St. Lawrence Seaway and the destruction of surviving mid-19th century structures in the region. Some of the buildings from that area were moved to the new heritage attraction beginning in 1958.

[276] See Karen Gabert, "Locating Identity: The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village as a Public History Text" in R.L Hinther and J. Mochoruk (eds.), *Re-imagining Ukrainian-Canadians: History Politics and Identity* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 55.

well aware, even as an 8-year old and as fun as that site was, that we had not happened upon some "in situ historic wonderland".

Another example, and closer to home, is Mennonite Heritage Village Museum established in 1967 near Steinbach, Manitoba. The open-air museum interprets the story of Mennonite culture from its origins in the 16th century but focuses primarily upon the story of ethno-religious settlement on the eastern prairies of Manitoba in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. As the outdoor museum has developed over the years it has become a major tourist attraction and has attracted thousands of visitors each year since it opened in 1967. According to a 1975 report prepared for the Manitoba Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs entitled "A Survey of the Mennonite Heritage Village Museum", which was based upon a 1974 study of the site's thirty thousand plus visitors, "at the museum, the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society has constructed a village characteristic of Mennonite communities in Manitoba in the 1870s and 1880s." The report went on to conclude that "the Museum has two major objectives: to protray pioneer life in Manitoba and Western Canada, and to preserve the Mennonite heritage".[277]

The creation of the village was the brainchild of the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society which was formed in 1958 although concern for the preservation of Mennonite heritage in the Altona area dates back to as early as the 1930s.[278] In a province that moved quickly to commemorate a pioneer past – the Manitoba Historical Society was founded in 1879 as the

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[277]   LLM, Manitoba Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, *A Survey of the Mennonite Village Museum,* Winnipeg, 1975, 10.

[278]   LLM, "Ethno-cultural Museums and Historical Societies in Manitoba: A Study Commissioned by the Manitoba Multicultural Museums Committee, December 1983." 4.

Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba, just nine years after the province joined

Confederation -- much is revealed about staking claim, not only to the land, but to founding

father narratives. That the first Mennonites were looking to preserve their settler past just half a

century after arriving in the new province in 1874 further underscores the colonial preoccupation

with entitlement and the swiftness characteristic of the colonialist project.

The idea of a museum based on artefacts collected by John Reimer, a teacher in the

Steinbach region was proposed early on. The Historical Society, however, had bigger plans and

eventually a 40-acre site was purchased just north of Steinbach in 1965 where a building to

house the artefacts was completed by 1967.[279] Other buildings would soon follow that would

"provide a graphic representation of life in southern Manitoba from 1874 to approximately 1930

for the purpose of preserving for present and future generations, the contributions made by

Mennonite settlers … an important part of Canadian heritage."[280] The first historic building

moved to the site was the Waldheim House constructed in 1876 south of Morden. A log structure,

Waldheim house, was originally built with a thatched roof and an attached barn. Other buildings

moved to the site and restored include a Semlin, or sod, house, a house-barn originally

constructed in 1892 in the West Reserve near Winkler, an outdoor oven, a livery which is now a

restaurant, the Chortitiz Old Colony Church built in 1881 also near Winkler and moved to the

village site in 1967, a school, an 1892 grainery, a blacksmith shop, a general store, and the

Hochfield House, constructed in 1877 and moved to the village in 1986. The centerpiece of the

village is the large operating windmill, a reconstruction of the first mill built near Steinbach in

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[279] Ibid, 45.

[280] Ibid, 46.

1877 and augmented by parts from a period mill in Germany. A number of memorials, gardens, an orchard, a visitor centre, and of course a gift shop, also form part of the site. Funding for much of the village development changed over the years. While admissions revenue has remained substantial, the site has also relied upon grants from the town of Steinbach, the RM of Hanover, as well as the federal and provincial governments. Annual operating and special initiative grants to Mennonite Heritage Village have consistently remained among the highest given by the province to heritage initiatives. Special community fundraising campaigns have also traditionally accompanied specific building projects such as the construction of the windmill and the "Village Centre". In the 1980s, to help solidify Museum funding on a more long term basis, the provincial Historic Resources Branch encouraged the museum board to formulate a long term plan that looked at attendance and market analysis, a review of programs, facility requirements, and a financial review. Until that time the museum board had often come to government for funding assistance after a capital project had already been developed.[281]

The Mennonite Heritage Village website, like the promotional material for so many heritage developments, uses the phrase "Travel Through Time" as its overarching theme, urging visitors to "explore our rich history and be inspired".[282] In the language of heritage and place virtually all history is considered *rich*, its intent being a useable past meant to inspire us in the present. The site advertises a "broad range of activities and demonstrations, from wagon rides to

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[281] LLM, *The Mennonite Heritage Village Story,* Mennonite Heritage Village, 1975 (updated 1990), 8-21. See also David McInnis, Historic Resources Officer, to Donna Dul, Director, Historic Resources Branch, AM, CH0007A, file D-9-8-12.

[282] See: https://mennoniteheritagevillage.com/. Accessed 23 April, 2018.

bread baking … in this bustling village that offers a fresh experience with each visit."[283] In his

recent work, *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada*, Alan Gordon contends that the creation of the Mennonite Heritage Village was

more than an expression of multiculturalism, but represented a shift in the mainstream Mennonite community toward a greater engagement with the rest of Canada. The village focus upon material culture, he argues, echoed museum (and outdoor museum) approaches elsewhere, and with their pioneer stories recasts memories of the Mennonite experience as part of a larger strategy of integration and the reformulation of Mennonite identity.[284]

Figure 30. Reconstructed windmill, Mennonite Heritage Village (Mennonite Heritage Village Inc.)

Such sites are often referred to as museums, and like the original intent of the Mennonite

Historical Society, the village near Steinbach remains a museum, albeit a large and outdoor one.

Like Black Creek Pioneer Village or the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, these types of

developments continue to be popular with visitors who prefer their history neatly packaged and

easily accessible. At such sites history is always promoted as *rich* and *inspiring* where the past

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283   Ibid.

284   Alan Gordon, *Time Travel: Tourism and the Rise of the Living History Museum in Mid-Twentieth-Century Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 268-269.

(or a version of it) is to be *experienced*. As David Lowenthal has suggested, such descriptions of the past can transcend nostalgia as we search for what he labels "a fancifully imagined or surrogate yesteryear."[285]

The appeal of places like Mennonite Heritage Village is the presentation of *origins,* even if these depictions are idealized and even formulaic. It is perhaps obvious to characterize settler sites in general as the struggle against obstacles – obstacles such as climate, rudimentary technology, and the overall challenge of the land. But while the idea of struggle ("Look how they had to grow their own food to survive." or "Look at how simple the technology was.") helps to define the spaces of settler history, there is at the same time a contrived simplicity, even naivety, about it that provides visitors with a kind of comfort in the past and the sense that they (through their ancestors) have worked hard and deserve their present reality and position of ascendency in overcoming the harshness of the environment around them. The typical layout of the outdoor village museum can often convey conflicting messages, the simplicity and convenience of the artificial site in fact portraying comfort and security rather than the struggle and adversity the visitor typically associates with settler culture. While no doubt not the explicit intentions of those who create such artifice, it is messages of community and intimacy that might inadvertently supplant those of hardship and adversity.

These values can lie at the core of how a person might experience the past; by portraying the past in the present we often channel present values. When visitors to Mennonite Heritage Village were asked for their opinions on the site, the not unexpected comments of "enjoyable",

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[285]   David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 25.

"authentic" and "educational" were logged. Only somewhat less frequent were compliments

regarding the "clean and well kept grounds".[286] Such *prima facie* values help to organize a past

that is comforting, even if the present and the future are not. The golden age that the time

traveller enters bears no resemblance to anything real; the nostalgia of the "in-situ historic

wonderland" that historian Karen Gabert describes might in fact represent all that is missing in

the modern world.[287]

"This is a Place that Will be Lived In"

In a 2015 article published in the *Pembina Valley Online*, Marguirite Krahn, the chairperson of

the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation fundraising committee, discussed the plans of a Mennonite

family to live in a housebarn recently moved to Neubergthal Street Village National Historic Site.

"We are not the Steinbach Museum [Mennonite Heritage Village]", she wrote, "this is a place

that will be lived in."[288] In writing about the historic Mennonite village located near Altona,

Manitoba in what was originally the West Reserve, Krahn, touched on the dissimilarities

between the living history museum and a heritage place where the cultural landscape is both real

and evolving. In authenticating early European settlement on the prairies -- in portraying the

physical and emotional ties to land and place and how such places are comprehended and

recognized -- it is at communities like Neubergthal where we see the way that a particular type of

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[286] LLM, Manitoba Department of Tourism, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs, *A Survey of the Mennonite Village Museum,* Winnipeg, 1975, 28-47.

[287] Karen Gabert, "Locating Identity: The Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village as a Public History Text", 55.

[288] Margurite Krahn, Pembina Valley Online, 2 March, 2015. https://www.pembinavalleyonline.com/. Accessed 24 April, 2018.

settler colonialism imposed a distinct order and world view upon the landscape at the human level.

At such localities as Neubergthal it is the land that best exemplifies the heritage of the past in the present. It is not through the nostalgia of performance that the past is made sense of, or at those places that Lowenthal called "the past as a foreign country with a healthy tourist trade"[289]. In a 1990 article entitled "Heritage: The Manitoba Experience" historian Jean Friesen comments upon the growth of heritage-related activities in the province such as the ethno-cultural festivals and celebrations that take place at sites like Mennonite Heritage Village. These "bland, populist, neutral version[s] of the past", she argues, have become part of "pioneer ideology", an acceptable past for non-Mennonite visitors that would be seen as "immodest, worldly and undesirable" by Old Colony Mennonites.[290]

The community of Neubergthal is located in south-central Manitoba and has a small population of less than two hundred people. When Mennonites began arriving in the province after 1874 they settled first in an area known as the East Reserve, a block of eight townships located southeast of Winnipeg. Because the land was considered of poor quality many soon left for the seventeen townships that made up the West Reserve situated just west of the Red River. Here the new settlers found a treeless prairie rich in black and clay loam soils. As one of the earliest groups to farm on the prairies their success encouraged the Canadian government to expand its immigration strategies to attract European settlers to the West. As a result of this developing agriculture a number of supply centres were quickly established in the region. To

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[289] Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, 4.

[290] Jean Friesen, "Heritage: The Manitoba Experience", *Prairie Forum*, vol. 15, no. 2, 1990, 209.

survive the harshness of the prairie winter in a land once thought completely inhospitable, the Mennonites recreated a form of settlement that had developed over centuries in their homelands in northern Europe and the steppes of Russia. This settlement pattern became known as the street village, a shared experience on the land and a unique perspective on the landscape and the settlers' place in it.[291]

Founded in 1876 by a group of related families, Neubergthal would be one of over a hundred street villages in southern Manitoba established between 1875 and 1900. The street village is characterized by a single main road lined by housebarns (a distinctive architectural feature of early Mennonite communities and reminiscent of structures found in Holland, Germany and parts of Poland) and surrounded by narrow fields. Tree plantings along this road protected the village from the winter winds. Originally the land was owned cooperatively and villagers shared much of the work. Later, in 1909, the collectivization of land ownership ended though farm work often continued to be collaborative. Life in Neubergthal revolved around a close cooperation among residents. Villagers assisted their neighbours with harvesting and threshing, butchering and building. Leisure time was usually spent collectively and the church was the central institution of village life as it defined values and behaviour, how residents made their living, and how the people governed themselves. The village school was another centre that helped to transmit cultural and religious values.[292]

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[291] Parks Canada, *Winnipeg Historical Collection,* Neubergthal Street Village National Historic Site, Commemorative Integrity Statement, 1998, 6.

[292] Ibid, 3.

Figure 31. Neubergthal, Manitoba, 2009. The village, founded in 1876, was declared a national historic site in 1989 as an example of the distinctive form of group settlement known as the Mennonite street village. Remnants of the original narrow lots that fronted the main road can still be seen (Parks Canada)

Neubergthal, one of approximately seventeen remaining street villages in Manitoba, was recognized to be of national significance by the HSMBC in February of 1989. The selection of the village was derived from the 1984 Parks Canada study of prairie settlement patterns which recommended that "the agricultural settlement of the Canadian prairies is a theme of national significance."[293] Although the Board advocated commemorative concentration on the era of the

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[293] Ibid. The Board also noted that the particular forms of land use that accompanied ethnic settlement on the prairies, in particular the Morman settlement at Stirling in Alberta,

wheat boom (identified as the period between 1900 and the beginning of World War II), it also

noted the need to identify the ethnic diversity of the region. In recognizing Neubergthal and the

street village land use pattern, the Board in 1989 stated:

> Mennonite Street Villages are prairie settlement forms of both national historic and architectural significance and they should be commemorated at New Bergthal[294], Manitoba, which not only possessed a considerable amount of resource integrity but an apparently unique "sense of place".[295]

It is important to note that the entire landscape of Neubergthal has been declared a

national historic site. The particular layout of the street village from the main road, the rows of

planted cottonwood trees, the original narrow 10-acre strips of farm land of which vestiges can

still be seen, fence lines, and gardens are all considered to be what Parks Canada calls Level 1

resources, or heritage resources directly related to the overall reason for national significance.

Joining these aspects of the cultural landscape is the vernacular architecture of the housebarns

that sheltered families and farm animals under one roof, some original houses and outbuildings,

as well as public buildings. The statement of Commemorative Intent for Neubergthal echoes the

1989 commemoration almost word for word. Discussions between the federal government and

the community of Neubergthal regarding the development of a cost-sharing agreement began in

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and the Ukrainian 'Four Corner' settlement at Gardenton, Manitoba, should be commemorated as well. For an analysis of early Ukrainian settlement patterns in the West see John C. Lehr, "The Landscape Of Ukrainian Settlement In The Canadian West", *Great Plains Quarterly*, vol. 2, no. 2, Spring, 1982, 94-105. The commemoration of Gardenton was later withdrawn by the Board.

[294] The name of the settlement near Altona has seen a variety of spellings over the years. The name Neubergthal originated with the Mennonite village of *Bergthal* in southern Russia. In 1994 the Canadian *Gazeteer* officially changed the name from New Bergthal to its original Neubergthal.

[295] Parks Canada, *Winnipeg Historical Collection,* Neubergthal Street Village National Historic Site, Commemorative Integrity Statement, 1998, 4.

1994 and the Commemorative Integrity Statement for the historic site was developed collaboratively.

Neubergthal continues to project a strong sense of place today. Although the communal system of faming has long been replaced by individual cultivation, the central village street remains the prominent orientation, as do the long narrow yards, the traditionally placed gardens, fence lines, and rows of trees.[296] The local community takes a strong interest in the preservation of its cultural heritage. Incorporated in 1997, the Neubergthal Heritage Foundation works in partnership with Parks Canada to "preserve aspects of this heritage and find ways to share this heritage."[297] An important component of that mission is to restore and maintain buildings that were originally built and moved to Neubergthal during the time of settlement, especially the housebarns that were so idiomatic of early Mennonite architecture in Manitoba. New structures are integrated as much as possible into the overall historic character of the landscape. The 'language of place' remains strong in Neubergthal. The village is a historic place that is not frozen in time, nor does it attempt to represent itself as an open-air museum. However, in a larger sense the narrative of the Neubergthal community, like so many early settler cultures across the West, especially ethno-religious settlement, celebrates the tradition of attachment to soil and place, the "shared pioneering credentials" that have helped establish the archetypal commemorative traditions and mythologies around survival and prosperity.

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[296] Ibid, 7.

[297] See: http://www.neubergthalheritagefoundation.com/. Accessed 4 May, 2018.

Figure 32. Gardens and housebarn at Neubergthal, 2009 (Parks Canada)

Spirit Wrestlers

Another ethno-religious group that has shared the commemorative traditions of those claiming "pioneering credentials" is the Doukhobors whose early 20th century settlement in Saskatchewan is now the national historic site at Veregin known locally as National Doukhobor Heritage Village, or by the federal government by the more clumsily worded Doukhobors at Veregin National Historic Site of Canada.[298] Founded in 1904, the village of Veregin, near the present town of Yorkton in south eastern Saskatchewan, was the administrative and distribution centre for Doukhobor settlement in the region after their arrival from Russia two years earlier in 1902. Largely abandoned by the 1940s, Veregin was reborn in the 1980s as a heritage village intended to commemorate early Doukhobor history in the region. Over the years, the three remaining buildings in the village (the large impressive prayer home, a machine shop, and grain elevator)

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[298]   Canada's Historic Places, Doukhobors at Veregin National Historic Site of Canada, See: http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12783. Accessed 7 May, 2018.

were restored, while seven period buildings from the surrounding area were moved to the
original site. A modern museum/reception centre is also part of the village setting.

In 1982 Saskatchewan declared the Veregin Prayer Home a provincial heritage site. A
superbly crafted building with elaborate metal work and a two-storey wrap around balcony, the
prayer home reflects long-standing Doukhobor architectural traditions. Unlike other Doukhobor
villages in Manitoba and Saskatchewan where the local prayer home was part of a central street
village concept similar to Neubergthal, at Veregin the large home was located at the head of the
village, signifying its prominent role in the community and its function as the residence for
community leader Peter Verigin.[299]

Figure 33. Prayer Home at Veregin, 2017. (National Doukhobor Heritage Village)

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[299] Ibid. Although the settlement took its name from Doukhobor leader Peter Verigin, it
was incorporated under the spelling 'Veregin'. The community recognizes both spellings as
legitimate. Robert Coutts, *Doukhobor Village, Veregin, Saskatchewan,* Historic Sites and
Monuments Board of Canada Submission Report, Ottawa, October, 2003, p. 1984.

The Doukhobor movement originated in the 17th century in southern Russia in what is now the Ukraine. A breakaway sect from the Russian Orthodox Church, the movement came to be known by the Russian term *Dukho-borets* which translates as 'Spirit Wrestler' and describes those who 'wrestle' against the spirit of God and the established Church. Intended pejoratively, the sect soon adopted the name for themselves, defining it as those who 'wrestle with the spirit of truth'.[300]

Late in the 19th century Clifford Sifton, the federal Minister of the Interior, negotiated an agreement with the emigrating Doukhobors, an agreement that some authors have since argued was left ambiguous in relation to the terms of the Dominion Lands Act of 1872, and which would lead to future disagreements between the Canadian government and these Russian-speaking "sons of the soil". In essence, the conflict revolved around the belief by the Doukhobors in the collective ownership of property and the federal policy of populating the West with independent, owner occupant farmers.[301] Eventually Sifton negotiated four reserves with the Doukhobors: three just north of Yorkton and one further west near Prince Albert. Veregin is located in the South Colony, located close to Yorkton and comprising fifteen townships, or 540 square miles.[302] The Doukhobors sought to establish communities based upon collectivism and pacifism and the layout of their villages with a central street, a distinctive prayer

[300] Koozma Tarasoff, "Doukhobors" in Paul Magosci (ed), *Encyclopedia of Canada's Peoples* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 422, as cited in Robert Coutts, Ibid, p. 1971.

[301] Decisions regarding land tenure were made on behalf of the collective by village elders. For a discussion of the differing views with government see Jeremy Adelman, "Early Doukhobor Experience on the Canadian Prairies", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4, Winter 1990-1991, 111-113.

[302] Robert Coutts, *Doukhobor Village, Veregin, Saskatchewan,* p.1973.

home, communal residences, and a community-owned infrastructure including farmland, farm

buildings, and elevators, reflected this assimilationist approach to settlement.

Although the federal government had approved block settlement and communal farming

for the Doukhobors, under the terms of the 1872 Dominion Lands Act each settler was expected

to register individually for a land grant at the end of the three-year "proving up" period.[303] While

the so-called "Independent Doukhobors" did register individually, Sifton was able to negotiate

an agreement with the bulk of the settlement where individual grants were registered under the

names of Peter Veregin and a number of community elders. Sifton's agreement was later reversed by his successor at the Department of the Interior Frank Oliver.[304] While Oliver's hard line resulted in the growth of the Independents, the "Community Doukhobors", or the "Sons of Freedom" as they were called, had their homestead entries cancelled. Moreover, their refusal for religious reasons to swear an oath of allegiance to the Crown resulted in growing tensions and many Doukhobors protested the punitive application of federal policy. In the

end, many of the Community Doukhobors left Saskatchewan for new colonies in British

Columbia. Their lands were sold to incoming non-Doukhobor settlers.

Figure 34. Peter "the Lordly" Verigin.
(National Doukhobor Heritage Village)

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[303] Ibid.

[304] As Minister of the Interior Oliver not only promoted a hard line policy against the immigration of non-English-speaking peoples but facilitated the surrender and expropriation of Indigenous treaty lands in the West.

Figure 35. An almost iconic image of Doukhobor women pulling a plough at the Thunder Hill Colony. Historian Ashleigh Androsoff suggests that, rather than seeing Doukhobor women as little more than beasts of burden, the portrayal of such physical activities by women as nurturing while exhibiting 'dignity' and 'patience' made it easier to reconcile these unusual physical actions with early Canadian definitions of femininity. See Ashleigh Androsoff, "A Larger Frame: 'Redressing' the Image of Doukhobor-Canadian Women in the Twentieth Century", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, **18 (1), 2007, 93. Today, as part of heritage activities at Veregin, groups of local women recreate pulling the plough by hand. (National Doukhobor Heritage Village)**

While Peter Verigin remained in exile in Russia until 1902 the early layout of Doukhobor villages followed his views regarding community property, most reflecting what was called the *strassendorf* plan with houses facing each other across a broad central avenue. Stables and barns were located behind the living quarters including housebarns similar in style and layout to early Mennonite housebarns. While prayer homes and other public buildings in most Doukhobor villages were part of the central avenue, at Veregin, as mentioned above, the large Prayer Home (and residence of Peter Verigin) occupied a central location at the head of the village. The Veregin home hosted communal gatherings, weddings, funerals and spiritual assemblies.

The National Doukhobor Heritage Village was submitted for consideration as a national historic site to the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada in 2003 and was designated in 2006 as The Doukhobors at Veregin National Historic site of Canada. According to the Board, Veregin is of national historic significance because:

> the original Veregin settlement, including the surviving buildings,
> was the administrative, distribution and spiritual centre for the region
> during the first period of Doukhobor settlement in Canada; and the
> spectacular prayer home reflects the settlement's importance to the
> Doukhobors as a religious and cultural centre, as well as the authority
> and the vision of the leader of the Doukhobors, Peter V. Verigin.[305]

Among the character defining elements of the site the Board noted "the location and interrelation of the original surviving buildings … the flat site with central open area … the volumes of the original and relocated buildings … and internal disposition of spaces."[306]

As with Neubergthal, Veregin projects a strong sense of place and like Neubergthal the communal system of faming has long been replaced by individual cultivation. However, unlike the Mennonite community in southern Manitoba, Veregin has lost much of its original spatial orientation and architecture. In some ways Veregin as a historic place is a hybrid of Neubergthal and Mennonite Heritage Village; it has relocated buildings and it functions as a site for visitors to learn about Doukhobor culture and history. At the same time, the site retains much of its authenticity and remains an active location for traditional Doukhobor religious and cultural activities on the prairies including prayer services, congregational singing, and the commemoration of the 1895 Burning of Arms, a pacifist protest in Czarist Russia that led to their expulsion from that country. If the historic 'language of place' is diminished at modern-day Veregin, the village is not frozen in time and does not present as an open-air museum. As an early 20th century ethno-religious settlement on the prairies, Veregin marks an attachment to place and the distinctiveness of a religious group whose immigration, settlement, and distinctive

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[305] Doukhobors at Veregin National Historic Site of Canada, Canada's Historic Places, http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12783. Accessed 8 May, 2018.

[306] Ibid.

land management were a part of the religiously motivated movements that made up much of

early European settlement in the West.

Proving Up

If ethno-religious communities on the prairies brought their distinctive settlement patterns to the

landscape, it was the broader patterns of Canadian, European, and American settlement that

helped to define the common look of land use patterns across the West in the last decades of the

19th century and the early years of the 20th. The "Hamlet Clause" of the Dominion Lands Act of

1872 outlined the organization of the landscape particular to certain groups, but it was the square

lot township survey, also a product of the Dominion Lands Act, which would come to largely

define space and place in the West. It was the grid pattern of townships and sections that

transformed the plains from the grasslands of the commons to a work of the hand, heart, and

mind – what historian Richard Allen once called a "region of the mind" – that would come to

reflect the colonial ideologies and obsessions of those who created it.[307] Prairie historians and

literary critics have more or less continued to pursue this region of the mind motif and have

defined the West in more than a physical or geographical sense but as socially constituted space

shaped by individual and collective perspectives that shift dynamically over time.[308] Yet, as

Simon Schama and others have argued, all landscapes are to some degree cultural and more than

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[307] Richard Allen, *A Region of the Mind: Interpreting the Western Canadian Plains* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre) 1973.

[308] See, for example, Robert Wardhaugh (ed.), *Towards Defining the Prairies: Region, Culture and History* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press), 2001. Ryan Eyford's *White Settler Reserve: New Iceland and the Colonization of the Canadian West* (Vancouver: UBC Press), 2017 looks at one example of socially constituted space within the context of settler colonial history.

the sum of their geography, even those we might classify as less than arcadian in their presentation. They are a work of the mind and the product of the memories and meanings of those who inhabit them or simply view them.[309] The prairies, like the parklands, and the northern boreal forests, are all socially constituted space in the West with different histories, different meanings, and different memories.

To entice settlers to this challenging region the federal government undertook an ambitious program of advertising and recruitment. The rise in grain prices by the turn of the century, improvements in agricultural technology including irrigation, the development of new strains of cereal crops, the expansion in the number of rail lines, and the relaxation by the federal government of its pre-emption restrictions, all allowed for large-scale cultivation by the first decade of the 20th century and a massive influx of new immigrants by the First World War. The earlier decades of "proving up", where immigrants were required to stay on the land for a specified period and demonstrate "improvements", had given way to larger and established agricultural operations. From these factors emerged the settlement patterns that would define much of the prairies. The survey grid determined the spatial configuration of fields, roads and irrigation ditches, while also influencing farmstead placement to allow easier access to roads and

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[309] Schama, *Landscape and Memory,* 23-36.

Figure 36. Motherwell National Historic Site, Abernethy, Saskatchewan (Parks Canada)

road allowances.[310] Barns and other outbuilding associated with the farmstead, along with

gardens and yards, were orientated according to topography, drainage, and prevailing winds.[311]

Searching to find a historic and cultural landscape to represent prairie farming during the

era of the wheat boom, the HSMBC chose Motherwell, a surviving farmstead and house in south

eastern Saskatchewan near the community of Abernethy. Yet, it was not the survival of the farm

and its buildings, nor its layout or representation of Ontarian settlement on the prairies, that led

to Motherwell's federal designation in 1966. Rather, it was the career of W.R. Motherwell, a

former Liberal Minister of Agriculture that led to his designation as a person of national

significance by the Liberal government of Lester Pearson. Later the designation was expanded

and the Motherwell site was acquired by Parks Canada in 1968 and after restoration was opened

to the public in 1983.[312] As agriculture minister between 1921 and 1930 Motherwell helped

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[310] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Lyle Dick, "Prairie Settlement Patterns: Preliminary Report", *Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada*, Ottawa, 1984, 400.

[311] Ibid.

develop what came to be known as "scientific agriculture" on the prairies. The commemorative

intent statement for the site reflects the expanded commemoration and notes its architectural

significance, the career of W.R. Motherwell, and the site as an example of a well-to-do

homestead of the settlement period in the West.[313] According to the site's character defining

elements as defined by Parks Canada, the Motherwell Homestead exhibits elements of the

scientific approach to agriculture including the use of shelterbelts to protect against wind and soil

erosion, the sighting of the farmstead near a rail line and the communities of Abernethy and

Indian Head, and the division of the landscape into functional quadrants defined by domestic

occupations, farmyard operation, garden, and water supply.[314] Later, when the Board expanded

the designation they added the homestead as an example of the settlement period as well as its

buildings (primarily the fieldstone house and the large barn) as being of architectural interest.

The current federal plaque at the site reads:

> In the early 1880s, William R. Motherwell arrived here as part of a large
> wave of homesteaders from Central Canada, capitalizing on the federal
> government's offer of free land grants to settle the West. Over the next 25
> years, he expanded his original quarter section and built an impressive barn
> and fieldstone house that recalled the architectural styles of his childhood.
> Motherwell divided his model farmstead into four quadrants, all ringed with
> shelter belts of trees, illustrating an Ontario settler's approach to farmstead
> design and scientific agriculture on the Canadian Prairies.[315]

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[312]   Sarah Carter, Review of Florence Miller, "Motherwell National Historic Site of Canada", *The Public Historian*, vol. 31, no.1, Winter, 2009, 117. As part of the federal government infrastructure program $1.2 million was invested in 2017 in the rehabilitation of the site's Visitor Centre. See: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/sk/motherwell/visit/infrastructure. Accessed 14 May, 2018.

[313]   See: http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=1209. Accessed 14 May, 2018.

[314]   Ibid.

[315]   See: Motherwell Homestead National Historic Site of Canada, https://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=730. Accessed 14 May, 2018.

Motherwell Homestead national historic site consists of nine historic buildings built between 1897 and 1918 on just over eight acres of property.[316] First established by W.R. Motherwell, a former Ontarian, in 1882, the site was named Lanark Place after Motherwell's birthplace near Perth, Ontario in Lanark County. In 1901 Motherwell co-founded the territorial Grain Growers Association in Saskatchewan, later serving in the newly formed Saskatchewan Legislature between 1905 and 1918, most of those years as provincial Minister of Agriculture. In 1921 he was elected to Parliament as a Liberal and served as the federal Minister of Agriculture between 1921 and 1930. The two most prominent surviving buildings on the property are the impressive two-storey stone house and the large, L-shaped wood and stone barn. As second-generation farm buildings, the house and barn were variants of the common Ontarian building types transplanted to the prairies.[317] However, the larger use of space at the site also reflects the configuration of an

Figure 37. Lanark Place, Motherwell Homestead, 1912 (Archives of Saskatchewan)

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[316] LAC, RG84-A-2a, *Motherwell Homestead – Buildings Documentation*, microfilm reel, T-14257, 1968.

[317] Parks Canada, Winnipeg Historical Collection, Ian Doull, *Motherwell Homestead National Historic Park, Abernathy, Saskatchewan,* Federal Heritage Buildings Review Office, Ottawa, Building Report 88-14, 1988, 1.

eastern Ontario farmstead from the period, including the landscaping, building styles and locations, agricultural techniques, and overall physical organization.**318**

When Lanark Place was at its peak in the first decade of the 20th century the Motherwell farm consisted of six quarter sections totalling almost 1000 acres. By the time of Motherwell's death in 1943 the farm had been reduced to just over 300 acres as a number of quarter sections had been given to Motherwell's various children. Unable to keep the farm operating, the family sold the property in 1965 and a year later 8.3 acres were donated to the Province of Saskatchewan. When W.R. Motherwell and the property were given federal designation in 1966 title was transferred to Parks Canada.[319]

Throughout the long process of restoration Parks Canada relied upon a number of historical, architectural, and archaeological studies carried out by the agency over a number of years.[320] These studies looked at broader settlement and land use in the Abernethy region, the architecture history of the various buildings associated with the Motherwell homestead, and the study of the landscape architecture of Lanark place, specifically the distinct quadrants of the local landscape and their characteristics.

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[318] Ibid.

[319] Ibid, 2.

[320] The best known of these studies is Lyle Dick's *Farmers "Making Good": The Development of Abernethy District, Saskatchewan, 1880-1920* (Calgary, University of Calgary Press) 2008. A revised edition of the original 1989 work published by Parks Canada, Dick employs a microhistorical analysis of settlement and land use in the Abernethy district of Saskatchewan between 1882 and 1920 when Ontarian settlers established social and economic structures in the prairie west.

It was W.R.Motherwell himself who designed the layout of the farmstead. He had shelterbelts planted for protection from the winds and to trap drifting snow, a dugout was created for water collection from the snow stopped by the trees, and ornamental hedges and flowerbeds were installed. His intent, like other well off farmers in the region, was to mimic an eastern Ontario farmstead. To this end, Lanark Place was laid out in quadrants. Each had its own purpose and was separated by a tree line, which provided both beauty and shelter. These included the water dugout quadrant, a garden quadrant for fruits and vegetables, the barn quadrant that denoted mixed farming operations that were at the centre of the homestead, and the house quadrant containing the imposing Italianate-style stone house built in 1897, a flower garden, ornamental trees, and even a tennis court. Each of the quadrants was surrounded by shelterbelts, the rows of trees that became ubiquitous across much of the prairies.[321] The quadrant system utilized ornamental fencing in addition to the shelterbelts and separated the living area from the work areas. The ornamental gardens, laid out in geometric fashion, and the other decorative aspects of various quadrants were intended to reflect the formality of Victorian society. The larger open fields for crops and grains surrounded the four-quadrant farmstead.[322]The year 1912, the height of agricultural operations at Lanark Place, was chosen by Parks Canada as the date for restoration.

Today, Motherwell National Historic Site offers the usual catalogue of tours, school programs, day camps, and special events. Like many historic sites across the country activities such as music festivals, although not linked with the heritage of the site, are used to entice

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[321] See: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/sk/motherwell/culture/histoire-history. Accessed 15 May, 2014.

[322] Ibid.

visitors. In the era of falling attendance at historic sites such events, for Parks Canada at least, have become a mainstay of visitor programming.

The agency's periodic management plans lay out a vision for each national historic site across the country. But where such plans were once detailed and thorough, current plans are for the most part short and vague. At sites like Motherwell and Lower Fort Garry "living history" approaches are now largely underfunded. That they are often ill conceived or overly mannered in their technique is often the result of a lack of perspective by those who write management plans for ministerial approval. Motherwell's most recent (2011) management plan, though particularly eloquent, remains vague and almost deliberately obscure. For instance, the rather flowery site vision reads:

> This is the first emotive vision for the site, painting a picture of the desired future for Motherwell Homestead as a place of living history, linking the past to modern Canadian life. The quiet sounds of the prairie - rustling grasses and a burst of bird song, provide the backdrop for the sounds of work on an early 20th century farm - stomping hooves, clinking harnesses and powerful snorts as the team draws the plough, releasing the scents of freshly turned soil. Under watchful eyes, sown seeds sprout and grow, nourished by the powerful forces of sun and rain. As the autumn sun shines, join our friends and neighbours working the fields. All hands are working hard to store the grain and gardens' bounties for the long winter ahead – binding, stooking, threshing, storing, pickling. In a quiet moment, ponder what far-off families in foreign countries will be nurtured by the grains from these fields. Motherwell Homestead is a place to discover life as it was. Well cared for, bright buildings draw you into the homestead. Pride of ownership is evident in every facet of the site. Through the sensory experience of food, travel the path from field to fork. Hop on a wagon and tour the grounds, explore the nooks and crannies in the huge barn and magnificent stone house, get your hands dirty with the farm equipment, animals and gardens. Live history from the ground up.[323]

Unfortunately, with objectives such as "active site management will continue to improve the state of the site", or "visitors of all ages will have fun", much of the thin 28-page management plan provides little information on how such worthwhile goals will actually be

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[323] See: http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/pc/R61-56-2011-eng.pdf. 7.

achieved.[324] Of course, the dramatic cuts to programming at Motherwell NHS in the Spring of

2012, part of the Harper government's slashing of the Parks Canada budget across the country,

have severely restricted the scope of interpretation and the development of new projects at the

site.

As with many historic sites, limitations to the scope of the original land base have

restricted interpretation. At Motherwell, for instance, though the site boasts the presence of farm

animals and some animation around period agricultural practices, the limited size of the site and

the interpretive stress on the romance of farming makes it difficult for visitors to appreciate the

significance of place, the scope of the new agricultural economy, and the historic impact of the

township survey that came to characterize the enormous change in the landscape of the prairie

west in the latter decades of the 19th century.

Figure 38. Restored 1907 barn at Motherwell National Historic Site (Parks Canada)

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[324] Ibid, 10-11.

Conclusion

This chapter on the commemoration of settler colonialism builds upon the previous investigation of the geography of fur trade commemoration by continuing the study of heritage, place, and memory within the colonialist narrative. Regional and national commemorations of Euro-Canadian settlement history in the West in the second half of the 19th century and the early decades of the 20th reveal the contours of the national paradigm of progress and nation building throughout that period and how history quickly became heritage. It focuses upon the way the interpretation of historic place in the rural west came to assign the development of private property, capitalist labour markets, individualism (and the collectivism of ethno-religious settlements), a prominent status in the territories once occupied by Indigenous cultures and fur trade mercantilism. By examining the spaces of settler culture we are in effect examining landscapes of sovereignty and how these places enter our national psyche through the establishment of popular history making. It is these pervasive narratives that turn challenging historical, cultural, political, and economic differences into a celebratory narrative that, as anthropologist Eva Mackey writes, employs "a mythological celebration of difference to create a unified (although hybrid) narrative of national progress."[325] She adds, moreover, that "representations of Aboriginal people are appropriated to help the settler nation find and articulate a 'natural' link to the land – to help settlers become Indigenous".[326] On the other hand, the commemoration of settler colonialism can be viewed as almost predatory, endeavouring to rationalize its existence, indeed its superiority, by erasing or expunging the memories of early

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[325] Eva Mackey, "Tricky Myths: Settler Pasts and Landscapes of Innocence" in Nicole Neatby and Peter Hodgins (eds.), *Settling and Unsettling Memories: Essays in Canadian Public History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 314.

[326] Ibid.

Indigenous cultures by characterizing them as inferior and transitory. Or worse, settler

occupation stories can portray Indigenous history as one of savagery and their cultural downfall

as inevitable. As the American historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich has written, these histories have

often "transformed the violence of colonial conquest into a frontier pastoral."[327]

The selection of historic sites described in this chapter, provide snapshots of settlement

heritage in Western Canada. Unlike most analysis of settlement patterns in the West, I quite

deliberately begin with the interpretation of River Road in Manitoba as an example of the

undervalued impact of Metis agricultural and land use practices and the incorporation of the

Indigenous peoples of Red River into global markets. From there the chapter moves on to the

commemorative myths and symbols of the distinctive European ethno-religious landscapes at

places such as Neubergthal and Veregin. In examining the heritage interpretation of Motherwell

Homestead National Historic Site the chapter takes into account the broader patterns of Canadian,

European, and American settlement that facilitated the widespread township land use pattern

across the West during the boom years of the settler colonial period. These places, along with

their national and regional texts, reveal how land is understood and valued, how real and

imagined histories of community are celebrated, and how memory is both cherished and invented.

They reveal, as well, how landscapes were reshaped as colonial topographies and how founding

father narratives came to define the land as legacy and the patriotic backdrops of cultural

communities.

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[327] Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Age of Homespun: Objects and Stories in the Creation of an American Myth* (New York: A. A .Knopf, 2001), 250.

Chapter 5. Contested Space: Commemorating Indigenous Places of Resistance

> *"Places have many memories and the question of which memories are promoted and which cease to be memories at all is a political question. Places become sites of contestation over which memories to evoke."*
>
> Tim Cresswell*, Place: An Introduction*

Place and Resistance

In Canada, concepts of heritage and historic place have evolved, especially for Indigenous peoples who since the 1970s have mounted a growing resistance to outsider and often racialized views of their history and their cultural places of significance. By the 1990s administrative strategies from government such as Parks Canada's *Cultural Resource Management Policy* facilitated the incorporation of Indigenous places of significance into traditional interpretive models, although the process remained slow, largely ill defined, and very often set within the context of a settler colonialist perspective. More often than not Indigenous themes were simply grafted on to the interpretation of existing historic sites, especially at fur trade forts that had for decades only told stories of the expansion of mercantile colonialism. As a growing Indigenous influence helped to establish new priorities and new narratives we began to

see in Western Canada an increasing emphasis upon the heritage and significance of Native

space. Yet, as Cole Harris has argued, histories and commemorations involving Indigenous

populations as a whole rarely approach the topic from the perspective of space, or a "spatialized"

understanding of how a people are defined and how a landscape is re-imagined.[328]

If not attached in some subordinate way to colonialist histories, these commemorations

continue to portray Indigenous places as essentially pre-contact spaces and landscapes, putting

less weight upon post contact sites of occupation and, most importantly, the contested spaces and

sites of resistance that inherently challenge the commemorative traditions of settler colonialism

and the authorized heritage discourse. Eventually, through new priorities and the emergence of

new narratives from Indigenous writers and activists, as well as from public and academic

historians in Western Canada, we have begun to see greater emphasis on the heritage of Native

space.

This chapter focuses on the commemoration of Indigenous heritage locations in Manitoba

and Saskatchewan where resistance to national narratives and designations have helped to

redefine the character of those places that have long been associated with Canadian colonialism.

Although such sites as the Battle of Seven Oaks, and Upper Fort Garry in Manitoba, are often

associated with fur trade and settlement history, they can stand apart as meaningful spaces of

Indigenous resistance to colonial hegemony. Similarly, the commemorated 1885 battle sites of

Saskatchewan establish a similar counter narrative, a counter memory that disputes the authority

of a state sponsored heritage. This chapter will trace how the heritage–locally, regionally, and

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[328] Studying the colonial process as it evolved in British Columbia between 1850 and 1938 as
distinctive from the rest of Canada, Cole Harris traces the struggle to both restrict and make
Native space over a century of confrontation, imperialism, jurisdictional disputes, resistance and
compromise. See Cole Harris, *Making Native Space: Colonialism, Resistance, and Reserves in
British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2002), 265-292.

federally--of these places has evolved since original designation, sketching out the way

contemporary Indigenous perspectives have challenged the authority of commemorations as well

as their interpretation over time. We can also better understand the link between an evolving

historiography and the commemorative paradigm regarding the heritage of Native place in the

west as we gain a new perspective on Indigenous peoples as historical, cultural, and political

players in the struggle for contested space. Such contested places represent the interrogation of

memory, raising questions about which memories are invoked and which are forgotten; in

essence, commemoration as a political act.[329] Agendas are politicized in order to serve the

interests of individuals, of racial or religious communities, of colonizers, and of the state.

     It is perhaps at battlefields, or at contested spaces in general, where the values of heritage,

place, and memory most visibly and perceptibly come together.[330] Here are defined places and

physical landscapes, although many have been lost to urbanization, or are no longer

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[329] Tim Cresswell, *Place: An Introduction*, (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 2015), 123.

[330] The changing perspectives around the interpretation of battlefields as places of memory are discussed in Thomas Brown, *Civil War Canon: Sites of Confederate Memory in South Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press) 2015. Brown suggests that Confederate canons of memory have addressed the challenges of modernity since the end of the Civil War as some use these places to renew a faded myth while the children of the civil rights era look for what he calls "a useable Confederate past." As I write this, however, America has begun the removal of the approximately 700 monuments to the confederacy throughout the South, essentially memorials to the glorification of a slave past. By far the greatest number of these public statues and monuments were erected, not during Reconstruction (1865-1877), but between 1900 and 1920, arguably the peak of segregation, Jim Crow, and Klu Klux Klan activity in the South. Interestingly, a small spike of monument building occurred in the early 1960s around the passing of the Civil Rights Act in 1964. (See "Symbols of Power", *The Globe and Mail*, Saturday, August 19, 2017, A8-A9). Their removal has occasionally been accompanied by white supremacist violence (e.g. Charlottesville, Virginia, August 12, 2017). No state-sponsored memorials to slavery exist in a land where the "lost cause" narrative of the Confederacy continues to override the consideration of succession as treason and slavery as criminal.

contextualized within a broader historical setting. Yet those that survive more or less intact, and

are commemorated for their historical significance, can demonstrate the evolution of specific

interpretations in familiar places. These spaces and monuments tell stories of conflict that are

often univocal and occasionally multi-voiced; they can potentially relate historical events that are

transformative, or invoke for some great passion and reflection. Changing interpretations over

time can also indicate shifting cultural values and the way the past informs the present.

Designated as official heritage, however, they demand a certain level of attention and help to

provide a useable past. How that "useable past" is defined and by whom remains a subject of

debate, as do the issues surrounding contested space within postcolonial theory.

Seven Oaks and Contested Space

It is fitting, I think, to begin an analysis of the commemoration of Indigenous places of

resistance in Manitoba with the Battle of Seven Oaks, as it is commonly known in English, or *La

Bataille de la Grenouillière* as it is called in French. Seven Oaks has enjoyed an honoured, if

controversial, place in the historiography of Western Canada, and is generally recognized as a

seminal event in the colonization history of the west. For Metis peoples, Seven Oaks has

traditionally represented the emergence of strong nationalist sentiments with the events of June,

1816 at Red River occasionally characterized as the "birth" of the Metis nation, although that

interpretation is often overstated.[331] On the other hand, an older and conventional Anglo-

historiography represented the battle as the violent struggle of European settlers against the

"forces of barbarism"; a civilization versus savagery model that telescoped colonial relations in

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[331] See, for instance, Fred Shore, "The Origins of Metis Nationalism and the Pemmican Wars, 1780-1821" in Robert Coutts and Richard Stuart (eds.), *The Forks and the Battle of Seven Oaks in Manitoba History* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1994), 81.

the era of European expansion and consolidation. The historiography of a more recent era,

however, has tended to be less inflamed, usually choosing to view the battle in tragic terms as

either the resistance of a marginalized people against economic domination, or more frequently

as the inevitable outcome of a commercial war in the west among rival fur trading concerns.[332]

Despite this changing historiography, the Battle of Seven Oaks continues to represent a

significant example of the colonialism/resistance paradigm in European-Indigenous relations.

The first commemoration of the battle was by the Historical and Scientific Society of Manitoba

when they erected an obelisk monument in a small park alongside Main Street in 1891.[333] Later,

in 1920, the monument site was declared to be of national historic significance by the Historic

Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC). A federal plaque, dating from 1951, is affixed

to the monument.

Paradoxically perhaps, Seven Oaks represents a unique perspective on memory and place

in that the exact site of the battlefield, located in what is now the City of Winnipeg, has been lost

to the rapid suburban expansion of what became the district of West Kildonan in the north end of

the city. Originally part of the municipality of Kildonan, the area was split into eastern and

western halves in 1914 and assumed its present configuration in 1921. The approximate site of

the battle is marked on Peter Fidler's 1817 rough map of the Red River Settlement in the area

known as *la Grenouillière*, or Frog Plain, a river edge prairie and slough now part of old

suburban Winnipeg. However, the present-day site of the Battle of Seven Oaks monument on the

east side of Main Street near Rupertsland Avenue in north Winnipeg is only an approximation of

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332 See Gerald Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 75-80.

333 The 1891 Seven Oaks monument was actually the first historic monument to be erected in Western Canada.

the historic place.[334] Lack of precise historical knowledge of the location of the battlefield might

in part be due to the changing nature of historical writing on the event. Various texts on the battle,

as historian Lyle Dick has argued, "chart a trajectory from the raw pluralistic origins of prairie

historiography in the early nineteenth-century controversies over Seven Oaks to the polished

hierarchical structures of twentieth-century historical writing."[335] After citing the 1819 Coltman

Report on the battle, Dick, in his examination of the narratives that surround "story" and

"discourse" in the historical writing about the conflict, surveys the version of events found in the

works of Charles Bell (an amateur historian) and George Bryce (a cleric and academic), before

examining later interpretations when conflicting perspectives were "rewritten, overwritten, or

erased by its rival."[336] Here, the accounts of Seven Oaks by 20th century historians such as

Chester Martin, George Stanley, and W.L. Morton are cited in the ascendency of the "massacre"

narrative. Ultimately it was the changing narrative on Seven Oaks and the perspective of the

savage Metis "Other" that would emerge in western Canadian writing, a perspective that would

help justify the earlier dispossession of Metis lands. It was, arguably, the pluralism of many of

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[334] Fidler's 1817 map shows the battle site to have been on lots 8 and 9 "a little to the N.W. of the Road from Fort Douglas to Frog Plain". A grove of oak trees is depicted just north on lots 10 and 11. *Map showing the area of Seven Oaks, 1816. A true copy, Wm. Sax, D.P. Surveyor, April, 1818*, Library and Archives Canada, H3/701/1818, NMC 6069. The Aaron Arrowsmith's 1819 map of the Red River Settlement also locates the battle site on lots 8 and 9, although this map is based largely upon Fidler's earlier map with some topographical details added. See John Warkentin and Richard Ruggles, *Historical Atlas of Manitoba* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1970), 186-189.

The battlefield site is also in the general area of Seven Oaks House, the still extant 1853 home of John Inkster and Mary Sinclair. Inkster was a farmer and merchant in the Red River settlement. In 1891 the Inkster family donated the small parcel of land upon which sits the Seven Oaks monument.

[335] Lyle Dick, "The Seven Oaks Incident and the Construction of a Historical Tradition", *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association*, vol. 2, 1991. 93.

[336] Ibid, 92.

the early accounts of the battle -- writing that incorporated a multi-voiced approach -- that did not concentrate upon the significance of place, or at least did not view as critical the designation of the exact location of the conflict. That importance did not come until later with the erection of the 1891 monument and the hegemony of the massacre narrative that would elevate the significance of Seven Oaks in the campaign against an Indigenous past. By this time, however, place had been lost, although the erection of the monument signalled the creation of a new image for Anglo-Canadian settler society on the prairies.

A summary of the events of the 19th of June,1816 can be briefly stated. By the early years of the 19th century the Forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers had begun to play an important role in the extensive provisioning network of the North West Company, a role that was central to the development of a Metis economy in the West. With the establishment of Fort Gibraltar at the Forks in 1810, the North West Company enjoyed a significant advantage over their rivals in the control of the pemmican trade of the Red River and Assiniboine valleys. Keenly aware of this, the Hudson's Bay Company determined that a presence at the Forks was required. The ambitious settlement scheme of Thomas Douglas, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk, a major shareholder in the HBC, would help combat Nor'Wester influence in the lower Red River district, disrupt the Canadians' critical supply line to the interior, provide a home for retiring HBC servants, and potentially become the supplier of agricultural foodstuffs to the fur trade. Although the first party of Selkirk's Scottish settlers who arrived at the Forks in 1812 met no opposition from the Metis inhabitants of the district, the story of the first years of the settlement was marked by increasing friction with the North West Company and its Metis employees, leading ultimately to the pemmican embargo of 1814, the burning of the Selkirk settlers' crops and homes in the summer of 1815, the sacking of Brandon House by the North West Company, and the destruction of Fort

Gibraltar by Colin Robertson of the HBC in 1816. The stage was now set for the events at Seven

Oaks; the intense competition for furs and the gathering storm over commercial and geographical

control of the Red River district would lead to the conflict between a fur trade empire under

challenge and its lightly regarded opponent.

In June of 1816 a large party of Metis freighters under the leadership of Cuthbert Grant, a

North West Company clerk and trader, was in the process of moving a supply of pemmican from

the upper Assiniboine to Nor'Wester canoe brigades on Lake Winnipeg. Hoping to avoid the

Forks, which was now controlled by the HBC, Grant's party left the Assiniboine in the vicinity

of what is now Omand's Creek and moved overland, coming within a few miles of Fort Douglas,

the colony fort located approximately a mile north of the river junction. Spotted by the

inhabitants of the post, a small group of settlers under the command of the colony governor,

Robert Semple, moved out to meet Grant's party, intercepting them some distance northwest of

Fort Douglas, near an area known locally as *La Grenouillere*. A verbal confrontation between the

hostile parties led to a general exchange of gunfire (Anglo-Canadian historiography generally

accused the Metis of firing the first shot although the 1818 Coltman Report concluded that it was

in fact one of Semple's men who opened fire) and resulted in the death of twenty-one settlers,

including Governor Semple, and one Metis. Grant then seized Fort Douglas while the surviving

colonists embarked for York Factory. Later, Lord Selkirk and a contingent of Demeuron soldiers

recaptured Fort Douglas, and colony settlers, who had been encamped near Lake Winnipeg, were

persuaded to return to the settlement. The merger of the two competing fur trade companies four

years later in 1821 put an end to the open hostilities between the Metis and the HBC sponsored

colony along the Red River. Ultimately, Red River would be transformed into a largely

Indigenous settlement and would remain so until the arrival of the Canadians and other

immigrants after 1870.

As Manitoba and the west increasingly came under the control of Anglo-Canadians

immigrants, their version of the events at Seven Oaks--the massacre narrative--became the

dominant one. Metis perspectives, as well as the official record of the battle as represented by the

Coltman report of 1818, were lost to the ascendency of settler colonialism, the racialization of

the Metis, and, to a lesser extent, the official commemoration of a prevailing and authorized

heritage. Only in recent times have rival perspectives challenged the socially and politically

invoked memories that are embedded in place as competing viewpoints challenge the accepted

historiography and defy traditional tourism commodities.[337]

As mentioned earlier, public commemoration of the Battle of Seven Oaks began with the

erection in 1891 of a monument near the battle site by the Historical and Scientific Society of

Manitoba. On land donated by the Inkster family, and with funds from the Countess of Selkirk

(the daughter-in-law of Thomas Douglas, the Fifth Earl of Selkirk), the nine foot high monument

was unveiled on the 19th of June, 1891, the seventy-fifth anniversary of the battle. It was a

solemn ceremony with a number of dignitaries including Lieutenant-Governor John Schultz,

historians George Bryce and Charles Bell, the Rev. Samuel Matheson, later the Anglican

Archbishop of Rupert's Land, and John MacBeth, the president of the Manitoba Historical

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[337] See for example Lawrence Barkwell, *The Battle of Seven Oaks: A Metis Perspective* (Winnipeg: Louis Riel Institute, 2015. Second edition). Interestingly, while Barkwell provides an admirably detailed account of events from a Metis perspective, the cover of his publication is illustrated with the C.W. Jefferys' painting "Battle of Seven Oaks, 1816", a completely inaccurate portrayal of the battle in which mounted Metis and Indians are depicted charging a ragtag group of "settlers", most of whom are on foot. It is this illustration that for many years graced the book covers, school literature, and interpretive panels of the dominant plot.

Society and a direct descendent of an original Selkirk settler. Among the crowd were other

representatives of the old Scots-Irish families of Red River. A number of the speeches from that

ceremony were reproduced in the Society's *Transactions,* a series of lectures published

intermittently between 1879 and 1980.[338] Reading the speeches one is struck first by the serious

tone of the day, but as well by the absence of bellicosity in the remarks. The word "massacre"

was never uttered – that interpretation would come later with revisionist Anglo historiography –

and instead a tone of sadness and tragedy seemed to mark the day. If Rev. Canon Matheson

described the memorial as "the scene of a battle bitter in its cruel intent", the Lieutenant-

Governor noted the "differences of opinion as to the causes which led to the combat and loss of

life these stones record", while Society president John MacBeth described Seven Oaks as "an

unfortunate conflict" and a "lamentable affair". Under the title "Seven Oaks" the inscription on

the monument reads simply: "Erected in 1891 by the Manitoba Historical Society through the

generosity of the Countess of Selkirk on the site of Seven Oaks, where fell Governor Robert

Semple and twenty officers and men, June 19, 1816." No mention is made of the one Metis

killed in the incident.

  In 1920 the Seven Oaks monument came to the attention of the Historic Sites and

Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC), a federally appointed group that had been formed only

one year earlier. Unable to pay the taxes on the monument site, the Lord Selkirk Association of

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[338] "An Account of the Affair of Seven Oaks: The Circumstances That Led up to it; a Description of the Contestants; the Events of the Conflict, including the Death of Governor Semple and his Followers; and a Report of Proceedings of the Gathering for the 'Unveiling of the Seven Oaks Monument', June 19th, 1891 by George Bryce and Charles N. Bell", Manitoba Historical Society *Transactions*, Series 1, No. 43, 19 June 1891, Winnipeg. The *Transactions* series was published between 1879 and 1909, between 1926 and 1936, and from 1944 until 1980.

Rupert's Land, the organization that owned and maintained the monument, approached Prime

Minister Arthur Meighen to find a suitable owner for the site. Meighen passed along the request

to the HSMBC. According to the Minutes of the Board, in January of 1920 it agreed to assume

ownership of the monument and the land.[339] Further, it was agreed that the site was of national

historic significance and should "receive attention in the way of preservation".[340] The land was

eventually transferred to the Crown three years later in 1923.

Unlike HSMBC recommendations from more recent decades, no reason was given for the

Board's decision to declare the Battle of Seven Oaks a national historic site, nor was a

background paper (now referred to by Parks Canada as an 'Agenda Paper') prepared. At the time,

the Minutes simply noted the decision of the members of the Board and no discussion was

recorded. Nor was a plaque text presented prior to designation as the Board simply highlighted

the original 1891 inscription engraved on the monument.[341] Notably, the battle was declared a

national historic "site", not a national historic "event", even though the exact location of the

battle was unknown. The site became simply the monument and small plot of land adjacent to

Main Street and, like a lot of monuments, only indistinctly connected to the larger concept of

historic place. In 1951 the Board attached its own bronze plaque to the monument although,

according to the *Minutes,* it chose to retain the original inscription.[342] In 1954 the Board

abandoned plans to install a plaque bearing the names of those killed in the battle when the

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[339] Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, *Minutes*, 30 January 1920.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid, 18 May 1920.

[342] Ibid, May-June, 1951.

marker did not include the one Metis member of Grant's party who died on the battlefield.[343] In

1977 the Board installed a revised plaque (although the 1951 date remains). The current text

reads:

> Here at the Frog Plain, on June 19, 1816, Robert Semple, Governor of the Red
> River Settlement, and about 26 men confronted a North West Company brigade
> from the Assiniboine River, led by the young Metis clerk, Cuthbert Grant. The
> Metis saw the settlement as a threat to their way of life; Semple, brave but
> obstinate, was prepared to insist on his authority as Governor. Tempers flared, a
> shot was fired, and Semple and twenty of his men were cut down. Regardless of
> what Grant's plan had originally been, he was now committed to action, and went
> on to capture Fort Douglas, headquarters of the Settlement.

Although this current plaque text does not use the word "massacre", and it is the Metis

who are "confronted", it does couch the battle in very passive terms with phrases such as

"tempers flared" and "a shot was fired". The roughly 600 characters of a standard federal plaque

text rarely allow for interpretive subtleties. However, the sentence, "The Metis saw the

settlement as a threat to their way of life" suggests the continuation of a settler colonialist

perspective. The 2009 *Statement of Commemorative Intent*, the Parks Canada policy that lays out

the reasons for national significance, expands on the statement by indicating that Seven Oaks

"represents the conflict between two different ways of life, that of the Metis and the Red River

Settlers."[344] What was in essence a commercial and territorial conflict is reduced instead to a

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[343] Letter from A.J.H. Richardson to Rev. Antoine D'Eschambault, 18 September 1956, and Rev D'Eschambault to Richardson, 25 September, 1956. Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, *Correspondence*, Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, Vol. 1384, file HS 10-4, part 2.

[344] *Battle of Seven Oaks, Statement of Commemorative Intent and Designated Place*, Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, Parks Canada report number 2009-CED-SDC-027. See also http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=149. According to the document's "Description of Historic Place", the designation "refers to the plot of land,

cultural one. Neither the plaque nor the *Statement of Commemorative Intent* mentions the

Pemmican Proclamation[345], an act of hostility and a direct attack on Metis livelihoods, leaving

the reader to infer that Indigenous people were unable to cope with changing circumstances

without reverting to ferocity, or what historian W.L. Morton called the "wild blood of the

brules".[346] What were these "two different ways of life" described in the federal document and

why is there an assumption that a bloody conflict was the inevitable result? With the history of

early colonies such as Red River, we deal with the interpretation of intercultural spaces of

contact, the borderlands, or contact zones, that often remain perceptions of an idealized past and,

in the case of Seven Oaks, a paternalized history that not so subtly underscores the theme of the

Native "savage". Such spaces of contact are often used to maintain the hegemony of the

colonialist narrative and the inevitable triumph, after much hardship and adversity, of the

"superior way of life" of the colonizer.[347]

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located in the northeast corner of Main Street and Rupert's Land Boulevard in the City of Winnipeg".

[345] Proclaimed in 1814 by Red River Governor Miles Macdonell, the Pemmican Proclamation forbade the export of pemmican and other supplies from the District of Assiniboia, the large colonial district set up by the HBC with the establishment of the Red River Colony. Intended by Macdonell to retain foodstuffs for the settlers, the act severely restricted Metis commerce in the region.

[346] Margaret MacLeod and W. L. Morton, *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown*, Second Edition (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1974), 49.

[347] Historian George Stanley's views on the 1885 Resistance are relevant here when he argued the "inevitable disorganization which is produced among primitive people when they are suddenly brought into contact with a more complex civilization". See G.F.G Stanley *The Birth of Western Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961, first published in 1936), 179.

If official government interpretations of Seven Oaks did not engage with the massacre narrative, at least not overtly, such was not the case with the mid-20th century works of historians such as Marcel Giraud and W.L. Morton. With a selective and biased use of sources, both helped to establish a historical perspective on the battle as a manifestation of Metis savagery, creating a historical discourse that fostered and celebrated the ascendency of Anglo-prairie culture.[348] And it was that academic interpretation that strongly influenced more contemporary attitudes in the years to come. With Lyle Dick's thorough and nuanced account of the historiography surrounding Seven Oaks and the construction of a historical tradition, this is not the place to examine that scholarly literature in detail.[349] Suffice to say, though, in more recent times scholarly treatment of the battle has been far more balanced and the massacre narrative has all but disappeared, at least in the serious histories. Less so in some popular sources, however.[350]

How has Seven Oaks as contested space been interpreted in non-scholarly treatments, most particularly in the commemorative media? The ceremony that marked the opening of the 1891 monument, as well as the installation of government plaques and the development of the federal *Commemorative Intent Statement,* were generally civil endeavours, although the language,

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[348] In his description of the battle of Seven Oaks Giraud uses the word "massacre" repeatedly. See Marcel Giraud *The Metis in the Canadian West*, Volume 1. Translated by George Woodcock, (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1986), 458-464. Morton in *Cuthbert Grant of Grantown* employs the terms "collision" and "massacre" to describe Seven Oaks. See Ibid, 38-72.

[349] See Dick, "The Seven Oaks Incident and the Construction of a Historical Tradition," 1-30.

[350] See for instance Peter Newman, *Caesars of the Wilderness* (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1989),173-175. See also Joseph Martin who, in his article entitled, "Conflict at Red River: Collision at Seven Oaks" in Robert Coutts and Richard Stuart (eds.), *The Forks and the Battle of Seven Oaks in Manitoba History* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, 1994), 58-64, concludes that the battle was a "massacre". Martin's article repeated his conclusion in a 1965 piece entitled "The 150th Anniversary of Seven Oaks" in *Transactions* (Winnipeg: Manitoba Historical Society, Series 3, no. 22) 1965.

at least in the 1891 ceremony, remained distinctly colonialist in its tone. More recently, on the bicentennial of the battle in June of 2016, a number of interpretive panels were erected adjacent to the Main Street monument, the result of funds provided by a number of federal, provincial, cultural, and community organizations.[351] The panels provide the historical background leading up to Seven Oaks, as well as an account of the battle and its legacy in the history of the West. The interpretation begins with a portrayal of the establishment of the colony and a short history of the Metis peoples of the region. Signage then provides a description of the Pemmican War, and in a panel entitled "A Storm is Gathering …" the story is told of the immediate events leading up to the battle. A description of the battle itself is told in a text imaginatively labeled "Red Sky in the Evening", and a postscript panel is simply called "Legacy".[352] Throughout the various public texts, the interpretation focuses on the economic and territorial stresses that led to the conflict at Seven Oaks, and avoids the traditional cultural stereotypes that see the Metis actions as the result of "the conflict between two different ways of life". It is a subtle, yet very significant change of language, removing the clash of cultures narrative and the implied inferiority of Indigenous populations. Seven Oaks did not create a sense of nationhood for the Metis but was instead an expression of that identity. As with most cultures, the freedom to practice commerce is critical to nationhood, but it was with the Battle of Seven Oaks that the Metis moved further toward commercial independence, as well as to establishing a sense of place

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[351] These organizations included Parks Canada, the Province of Manitoba Community Places Program, the Winnipeg Foundation, the City of Winnipeg, the Manitoba Metis Federation, the Manitoba Historical Society, the Anglican Church of Canada, and the Seven Oaks School Division.

[352] An additional panel entitled "Finding the Past in the Present" tells the story of how the grade 4 class at Robert Semple School studied the battle in 2011 and their "reunion" five years later to reminisce about the experience.

in the west. It would take the Sayer private trade affair of the 1840s to consolidate this independence.[353]

With Seven Oaks we see how contemporary Indigenous viewpoints have challenged the authority of commemoration. An evolving historiography and the recognition of Indigenous resistance in the west can lead to an enhanced understanding of Indigenous peoples as historical, cultural, political, and most importantly contemporary players in the struggle for contested space.

Place and Replace: Seven Oaks to Upper Fort Garry

Place can mean simply geographical mapping and territoriality, but of course it has a much wider significance. Emma Larocque, in tracing Metis ideas of place, describes the concepts of "attachment, rootedness, groundedness, materiality, familial-ity, home, homelands".[354] Identity, meaning, and the power of memory, especially those memories associated with space and place, provide the reality for expression and experience. When we recall events associated with place, the landscape becomes a centre of meaning, not an abstract physical location but a geography charged with personal significance that shapes the meaning of community, identity, and social and cultural belonging. If the Battle of Seven Oaks has come to signify historical and cultural claims to place, it is the image of the buffalo hunter and the paddling voyageur, the dispossessed of the Red River Settlement, and later the "Road Allowance People", that illustrate how the story

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[353] For an account of the Sayer free trade trial of 1844 and its significance see Friesen, *The Canadian Prairies: A History,* 100-102.

[354] Emma Larocque, "For the Love of Place – Not Just Any Place: Selected Metis Writings" in Adele Perry, Esyllt Jones, and Leah Morton (eds.), *Essays on Western Canada: Place and Replace* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2013), 179.

of contested space has remained a persistent theme in the history of Indigenous peoples in Manitoba.

For early Manitoba Anglo historiography Seven Oaks became a sort of founding storyline, a heroic mythology and master narrative in the colonialist project. In this scenario Indigenous people were presented as "lawless, violent, unstable, and irresponsible".[355] To underscore this outlook, the trajectory of Indigenous insurgence was continued to the Red River Resistance of 1869-70 and onward to 1885. Writing in 1885 the historian George Bryce wrote "having tasted blood in the death of Governor Semple, they [the Metis] were turbulent ever after … and preserved their warlike tastes… It need not that I should recite to you the doings in the rebellion of 1869-70, it was simply the outbreak of the 'Seven-oaks' and 'Sayer' affairs again."[356]

While Bryce, Morton and others drew such straight-line connections, did public commemoration follow the same path? As with the Seven Oaks battlefield, Upper Fort Garry and its role in the Resistance of 1869-70 can stand apart as a meaningful space of Indigenous resistance to colonial hegemony. The events of that critical period in the province's history, like Seven Oaks before it, embody a landscape of memory and meaning, a racialized place charged with social, political, and cultural importance. Yet, has the heritage commemoration of the upper fort evolved since its original designation as a national historic site and can we trace the way contemporary perspectives might have challenged the authority of commemoration and interpretation over time?

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[355] Dick, 104.

[356] George Bryce, "The Old Settlers of Red River", Manitoba Historical Society, *Transactions*, Series 1, no. 19, 1885.http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/transactions/1/settlers.shtml.

Upper Fort Garry, the massive stone fort built by the HBC in the late 1830s and enlarged in the 1850s, was the centre of a sprawling community of diverse peoples living on river lots that fronted the Red, Assiniboine and Seine rivers. The fort was a critical supply and transport hub in the western fur trade and for much of the 18th and 19th century Upper Fort Garry and its predecessor forts at the Forks linked the economy of the region to a system of trade throughout western North America.

Surrounding the upper fort was the Red River Settlement. For much of its existence, at least until the influx of settlers from the Canadas after mid-century, the colony was a Metis settlement. A small population of Scottish descendants of the Selkirk settlers, a handful of retired Orkney servants of the HBC, some French Canadian settlers and First Nations peoples, were dwarfed by a much larger population of French and English-speaking Metis who inhabited the settlement's various parishes. Reliant upon a mixed economy of agriculture, hunting, trading, provisioning, and seasonal wage labour with the company, the Metis of Red River adapted to the realities of a self-sufficient life in an isolated colony.

Throughout much of the 19th century Upper Fort Garry at the Forks remained the centre of Indigenous Red River, the focus for commerce and trade, administrative activities, civil government, and judicial proceedings. From Upper Fort Garry grew the roots of a new Native commerce, a challenge to the HBC monopoly in the old settlement and later, the development of Winnipeg and a burgeoning economy of supply, manufacture, and transport. Canadian annexationists began to arrive in the settlement in the late 1850s and HBC rule in the Northwest came increasingly under attack by Canada and Great Britain. Indigenous influence also came under siege. As negotiations to transfer the region to Canadian authority commenced in the

1860s, the Metis inhabitants of the West became alarmed that their land and cultural rights, including the protection of language, faith, and education, would not be respected.

Louis Riel soon emerged as the leader of Metis resistance in Red River. In the vacuum that was civil government in Red River, Riel seized Upper Fort Garry in early November of 1869, consolidating his authority in the settlement. His decision to seize the upper fort reinforced Indigenous claims to space, especially the racialized and contested space of the fur trade in which the Metis had played a subordinate role. In December of 1869 Riel declared a provisional government, drafted a list of rights, and in January of 1870 met at Upper Fort Garry with Donald Smith, the HBC official and special commissioner from the Canadian government, in front of a crowd of 1000 mainly Metis local settlers. Riel's decision to work with a representative assembly ensured that peace and relative unity would prevail in Red River. When he permitted the execution of an unruly Canadian prisoner, Thomas Scott, in March of 1870, he introduced a flashpoint in Ontario politics but the debate did not disrupt affairs in Red River. The English-speaking Metis of the settlement joined their French-speaking counterparts in the Legislative Assembly of Assiniboia and voted unanimously to accept the Manitoba Act and to enter Confederation as the first new province. Later that summer, Riel was forced to flee the settlement ahead of the arrival of Col. Garnet Wolseley's troops. While the Provisional Government had won concessions, and a new province was created, the Metis were soon subjected to the "Reign of Terror," as incoming troops and Canadian colonizers used violence to show their displeasure with Metis status in the new province.[357] The history of Winnipeg in the early 1870s demonstrates how these early Canadian immigrants and their armed force effectively

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[357] Diane Payment, *Native Society and Economy in Transition at the Forks, 1850-1900,* (Ottawa: Parks Canada, Microfiche Report Series 383, 1988), 55-56.

limited Indigenous rights to place and cultural worthin the old settlement and drove many from Manitoba to seek new lands to the west. As contested space, decisive moments in the history of western North America took place on the ground at the Forks and within this fort, a site about the size of several city blocks and containing, at its busiest moment, a dozen buildings and a few hundred residents.

Upper Fort Garry was an early commemoration of the HSMBC; its national designation in 1924 making it part of "Forts Rouge, Garry, and Gibraltar National Historic Site of Canada". Like other commemorations at the time no specific reason was given for the designation, and the plaque still affixed to the surviving stone gate of the fort in downtown Winnipeg reads rather cryptically:

> Near this site stood the following forts: Fort Rouge, under La Verendrye, 1738; Fort Gibraltar, of the North West Company, 1810, became Fort Garry of the Hudson's Bay Company, 1822; replaced by Upper Fort Garry, of stone, begun 1835, extended in 1850's when this gateway was erected, demolished 1882.[358]

Although the specific designation pertaining to Upper Fort Garry is early, the Forks of Red and Assiniboine where the upper fort was located, was not declared a national historic site until 1974 and focuses on a thematic history that dates back thousands of years.[359] The boundaries of the

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[358] Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, *Forts Rouge, Garry and Gibraltar National Historic Site of Canada, Winnipeg, Manitoba,* http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=1728.

[359] Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, *The Forks National Historic Site of Canada*, http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=151. The HSMBC plaque reads: "Strategically located at the junction of two major rivers which form part of a vast continental network, this spot has witnessed many of the key events of Western Canadian history. This was a traditional native stopping place and for this reason La Vérendrye erected Fort Rouge near here in 1738. It has been a centre for trade and

site are somewhat vague, however the commemoration does recognize a larger sense of place

and the development of pre-contact trading networks, the expansion of the post contact fur trade,

and the early development of Winnipeg as a hub for rail transport. Despite the breadth of the

historic themes developed for the Forks, the land now designated by Parks Canada as the Forks

National Historic Site, and indeed the wider commercial and recreational area known in

Winnipeg as simply "The Forks", does not include the St. Boniface side of the Red River where

the significance of heritage place is as much a part of the historic river junction as the west side

of the river.

The roughly 6000 years of history commemorated at the Forks makes the site the most

temporally extensive, still inhabited, historic location in the country, with Upper Fort Garry

representing only a limited element of its heritage. The Forks as a multi-millennia "Meeting

Place" has remained the site's overarching theme since its development in the late 1980s, even if

the claim has been at least partly exaggerated as part of the long-term marketing campaign by

both Parks Canada and the Forks North Portage Partnership.[360] As historian Claire Elizabeth

Campbell has recently argued, ironically it has been the Forks' historical identity as a meeting

place that has effectively encouraged extensive modern developments of an ahistorical character.

"By characterizing the Forks as a meeting place, " she writes, " whether six thousand years ago,

two hundred years ago, or last Saturday, we can insert present-day activity into a genealogy of

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exploration, a focus for the first permanent European settlement in the Canadian West, cradle of the province of Manitoba, nucleus of the city of Winnipeg, a hub of rail and road transport, and the gateway for the settlement of the prairies."

[360] See the Forks North Portage Partnership website: http://www.theforks.com/business/the-forks-north-portage-partnership/mission-mandate-vision.

use."[361] Outside of the modest Parks Canada controlled green space, the Forks today is

dominated by commercial, retail, and recreational developments (the nearby Canadian Museum

for Human Rights being the largest). Once an almost forgotten railway yard, the Forks is now

largely a commercial attraction (and occasional gathering place) with only circuitous marketing

connections to the history of that site.

For nearby Upper Fort Garry, which was demolished in 1883, the only remaining vestige

of the original structure was the post's north gate, a stone archway hidden among the buildings

of the city's downtown core and adjacent to a gas station. In the early 1980s the gate was

augmented by a reconstructed north wall and accompanied by outdoor interpretive signage that

focused on the layout of the HBC fortification in the 19th century. Little coverage was given to

the larger role of the stone fort, nor to the daily lives of its Metis and Scottish inhabitants. In

2004 much of the original land where Upper Fort Garry once stood was declared by the City of

Winnipeg as surplus property. The newly formed "Friends of Upper Fort Garry" submitted a

proposal to develop the site as a historic park, and with money raised from private and public

donors, assumed title to the property in 2009.[362] Archaeological work at the site was followed by

such physical developments as the use of stone to outline the location of original buildings, the

creation of pathways, the planting of trees, and the building of a "Heritage Wall" that mimics the

location of the fort's original west wall. (In the case of Upper Fort Garry the sense of place is

realized more with landscape elements than with attempts to speculatively reconstruct the

buildings of the original fort.) Website materials provide information for the public and for

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[361] Claire Elizabeth Campbell, *Nature, Place and Story: Rethinking Historic Sites in Canada*, 100.

[362] See "Friends of Upper Fort Garry", http://www.upperfortgarry.com/.

school groups while QR (Quick Response) codes at the site provide material on buildings, events, and personalities. In 2010 the site was designated a Provincial Park and was opened to the public in the summer of 2015. Planned future developments include the construction of a National Metis Museum and interpretive centre adjacent to the site.[363]

As part of the development of Upper Fort Garry Provincial Park a historical overview was developed along with a number of themes related to the history and significance of the site. Early on it was decided to focus a good deal of the interpretation upon the Indigenous history of the fort and more specifically its role as the "birthplace of Manitoba", referring generally to the events of 1869-70. Under the thematic title "Upper Fort Garry and the Red River Resistance: The Birth of Manitoba and Winnipeg and the Growth of Canada" much of the interpretation emphasized the fort's role in the entry of Manitoba into Confederation.[364] While other topics such as the history of the fur trade and the role of the Selkirk Settlers were given coverage, it was the struggle for Metis rights in the west that gave the upper fort its real commemorative significance as an Indigenous sense of place that emerged from conflict, attachment, and nationhood.[365]

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[363] Ibid.

[364] In a 2014 article in the Winnipeg Free Press, *Friends of Upper Fort Garry* chairman Jerry Gray stated "There's all kinds of stories that come out of that fort and the reason we're doing this one right now is it's significance to our history with the signing of the papers of 1870 for Confederation. The focus on that is the reason we're saving this fort." See Winnipeg Free Press, 18 October, 2014. https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/friends-of-upper-fort-garry-defend-reasoning-279655462.html.

[365] At a 2014 ceremony at the upper fort park Manitoba Metis Federation president David Chartrand told the gathering that the park's primary significance was as a Métis location. "Upper Fort Garry is the birthplace of the Métis Nation," Chartrand said. "It's here in 1869 that the Métis introduced what's been described as the first bill of rights ... this will be the site to showcase the Métis national heritage centre." See:

Decentering the Commemorative Narrative: The 1885 Resistance in Saskatchewan

The sociologist John Urry coined the phrase the "tourist gaze" to describe the set of expectations

and perspectives that visitors often have when they participate in heritage tourism and the search

for an "authentic" experience.[366] This "gaze", or a similar set of expectations, can influence how

people interact with historic places, especially when these spaces are presented as tourism

commodities to be consumed. While heritage can be approached in many different ways and for

many different reasons, it is, as Urry suggests, the socially and politically embedded memories

that are often a part of place that can be the source of much disagreement.[367] In Western Canada

the historically contested sites of the 1885 Northwest Resistance reveal a social and political

heritage embedded with a variety of memories and meanings. Within a manifest destiny

perspective these places have traditionally represented the expression of the Canadian and

colonial narrative: the expansion of dominion policy. For Indigenous people, however, these

places represent loss and opposition to this narrative, yet at the same time often symbolizing the

survival of culture and identity. Like nationalism itself, federal designation customarily searches

for a heritage that is centralist, unambiguous and "useful". However, as both literal and

commemorative battlefields, contested heritage places such as the 1885 sites signify landscapes

of memory that have pluralized the past, or have at least de-centered that past from the single-

https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/park-to-celebrate-upper-fort-garry-279699702.html. Not all agreed with Chartrand's perspective or the interpretive focus at the park. The province's Scots community, as represented by the Scottish Heritage Council, expressed their disagreement with the de-emphasis on the traditional Scottish history of the upper fort in favour of a greater Indigenous perspective. See "Scots Slam Perceived Snub", *Winnipeg Free Press*, 17 October, 2014. https://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/scots-slam-perceived-snub-279533302.html

[366] John Urry, *Consuming Places* (London: Routledge, 1995), 129-140.

[367] Ibid, 131-132.

voiced messages of authorized commemoration. The ongoing renegotiation of the past in the present reveals that certain places carry additional layers of meaning and thus more potential for dissonance, conflict, and resistance to a sanctioned discourse.[368] Dissonance for Saskatchewan sites such as Batoche, Fort Battleford, Duck Lake, Fish Creek and others refers to their roles as places of tourism consumption– the tourist gaze--as well as their political roles as Indigenous sites of resistance.

Traditional commemoration of the 1885 Resistance sites, not unlike Seven Oaks and Upper Fort Garry, tend to put emphasis upon history as a chronicle of winners and losers. Historian Walter Hildebrandt has called these "sacred sites" where ideologically the past is interpreted as the conquerors see it.[369] Fort Battleford, commemorated as a North West Mounted Police post that helped further Canadian expansionism in the west, is also the place where eight First Nations participants (five Cree and three Stoney) in the 1885 uprising were hanged; their story of resistance, along with their mass grave site, not a part of designation and forming little of site interpretation. In more recent times, and much like the federal interpretation of the Battle of Seven Oaks, interpretive perspectives have been, on the face of it at least, more moderate. However, like Seven Oaks site interpretation at places such as Battleford is increasingly noteworthy for its passivity. On the site's website, for instance, visitors are encouraged to "discover the perfect storm of events which led to a confrontation between members of local Cree First Nations and the scarlet serge-clad officers of the North West Mounted Police,"and

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368 Kenneth Foote, *Shadowed Ground: America's Landscapes of Violence andTragedy*(Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), 208.

369 Walter Hildebrandt, *Views from Fort Battleford: Constructed Visions of an Anglo-Canadian West* (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, 1994), 103.

where in1885 "things take a tragic turn."[370]"Perfect storm" and "tragic turn" are anodyne and innocuous phrases with little meaning, serving to disempower history as without cause and effect, essentially rootless and inert. Conflict is minimized and as authorized heritage it is safe history where some may learn but none will be offended.

Fort Battleford, located along the North Saskatchewan River near its confluence with the Battle River in the west central part of the province, was designated as nationally significant in 1923, although the site remained a community-based museum until its transfer to the federal government as a national historic park in 1951.[371]The original HSMBC plaque, erected at the site in 1924 reads:

> Sacked by the Rebel Cree Indians under Poundmaker. Here on 26 May, 1885 after the battle of Batoche and the capture of Riel, Poundmaker and his band surrendered to General Middleton.[372]

Despite the terse language (and misinterpretations) of this original plaque, it, like other commemorations of the Resistance, came under early criticism, particularly by the journalist W.A. Kennedy who criticized the "looseness of the language" and the exaggeration of Poundmaker's influence over his followers.[373]In 1951 when Fort Battleford was gifted to the federal government a new more fulsome plaque was installed at the site. It read:

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[370] Parks Canada, Fort Battleford National Historic Site of Canada: http://pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/sk/battleford/info.

[371] C.J. Taylor, *Negotiating the Past: The Making of Canada's National Historic Parks and Sites* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1990), 145.

[372] Library and Archives Canada, RG 84, Vol. 1382, HS 10-3-6.

Here, in July 1876, Superintendent James Walker established a post of the

North West Mounted Police in the heart of Cree country. "The Fort" grew

to a strength of 200. During the uprising of 1885 it gave refuge to more than

400 people and was the base for operations at Cut Knife Hill and Fort Pitt,

leading to the surrender of Chief Poundmaker and the search for Big Bear.

With the extension of settlement and mechanization of the force it ceased

to be the barracks in 1924.

Notably, the 1951 plaque played down the "siege" of Fort Battleford by hostile Cree (though in

reality it was a desperate search for food by the starving members of Poundmaker's band).

Nonetheless, that interpretation remained prominent in many of the site's early publications and

is mentioned in the 1997commemorative intent statement for Fort Battleford, although the word

"siege" is placed in quotation marks**.**[374]However, no siege occurred as the fort was never

attacked or surrounded and its surrender was never demanded. In fact, Chief Poundmaker went

to Battleford to ask for supplies promised to his starving people and to reassure the NWMP that

he had no plans to join Riel. In 2010,after pressure from local Cree First Nations, Parks Canada

agreed to cease using the word "siege" in its interpretive description of the events that took place

at Battleford in the spring of 1885.[375]

Former Parks Canada historian Alan McCullough has argued that the interpretation of

Fort Battleford, like other 1885 sites, has gone through three iterations within the federal system.

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[373] See Alan McCullough, "Parks Canada and the 1885 Rebellion/Uprising/Resistance", *Prairie Forum* 27, no. 2 (Fall 2002), 167.

[374] See Fort Battleford Commemorative Intent Statement, below.

[375] See "Cree Win War of Words over "Seige" of Fort Battleford 125 Years Ago", *The Globe and Mail*, 21 October, 2010. Https://beta.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/cree-win-war-of-words-over-siege-of-fort-battleford-125-yearsago/article1461558/?ref=http://www.theglobeandmail.com&.

Early commemoration, he argues, viewed these places as part of "Canada's westward drive to become a transcontinental nation". The second, which appeared in the 1950s, attempted to, he suggests, moderate the colonialist nature of the original commemorations by allowing for the recognition of some Indigenous resistance. The third, McCullough writes, began in the 1970s and while not abandoning the theme of Canadian expansion, did place greater emphasis upon the societies displaced by this expansion.[376]

Arguably a fourth iteration exists, the product of changing Parks Canada policy towards historic sites in the 1990s, and specifically the introduction of Cultural Resource Management Policy (CRM). As part of this policy direction, Parks Canada developed Commemorative Integrity Statements (CIS) that were designed to narrow interpretation to the original intent of the Board in its initial designation of a site, no matter how old that designation. At Fort Battleford NHS the stated commemorative intent, developed in 1997, returns to a largely colonialist interpretation. It reads:

> Fort Battleford National Historic Site of Canada commemorates the role of the North-West Mounted Police at the fort from 1876 to 1885 in extending the Canadian government's interests in the west. The role of the fort during the North-West Rebellion/Resistance of 1885, included its role in the "siege" of Battleford, as a base for the military operations at Cut Knife Hill, Fort Pitt, and the search for mistahi-maskwa (Big Bear). It was also the site of the surrender of pîhtokahânapiwiýin (Poundmaker) to General Middleton's forces on 26 May 1885.[377]

Here the focus of interpretation remains with the extension of government interests and the fort as a base for military operations. The missed opportunity to broaden the interpretation to

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[376] McCullough, 163.

[377] Fort Battleford, NHS Commemorative Intent Statement. See: http://pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/sk/battleford/decouvrir-discover.

describe the negative impact upon local Cree and Metis populations, the reactions of starving Indigenous populations, Poundmaker's band in particular, and the role of the fort as a conqueror's bastion against local and regional interests, ignores the different voices of history and how they can be revealed in contested space. Instead, as an historic place Battleford continues to speak to the conservatism of public commemoration and interpretation, an interpretation that is centralist, unambiguous, and useful.

Perhaps no historic place in Western Canada illustrates the themes of contested physical and commemorative space more than Batoche, the site of the penultimate battle in the Northwest Resistance and the subject of much interpretive debate over the decades. Batoche today is a major national historic site in the West, the site of the largest battle of the 1885 campaign, and more importantly is viewed as a homeland, or origin community, for Metis peoples, both in the past and today. Each year "Back to Batoche Days" celebrates the gathering of Metis families in the region who have ties to the site and its origins. Since the late 1970s considerable federal investment has gone into the research, protection, and restoration of the site, including the battlefield, the restored Church and Rectory, the cemetery and site of the east village, and the remains of the 1885 earthworks – known as a zareba -- that protected the camp of the Canadian forces under General Middleton during the four-day battle. A large modern interpretive centre was constructed in the mid-1980s and contains exhibits and a multi-media show. Site tours are also offered to visitors.

The sense of place at Batoche is a critical part of its heritage significance. The landscape is rolling parkland, with fescue grasslands and brush-filled areas in a shallow river valley. The more elevated parts of the site provide a beautiful overview of the South Saskatchewan River. Trembling aspen is the dominant tree species with some balsam, poplar, birch, and dogwood (red

willow) growing near the river. The old river lot system of land tenure is still visible on the land as are remnants of the Carleton Trail that once connected early freighting settlements on the prairies.

While virtually every 1885 site has, over time, undergone certain changes in its commemoration and interpretation, it is Batoche that has experienced the greatest attention over the decades and for the reasons stated above remains the focus of the Resistance story in the west, not the least for its role as the "headquarters of the rebels".[378] Batoche was commemorated by the HSMBC in 1923 and when a plaque was unveiled at the site two years later on land donated by the Church, controversy erupted when the Catholic Vicar-General of Prince Albert called the Batoche plaque a "gross insult to the men who fought under Riel".[379] Moreover, a delegation from Quebec boycotted the ceremony. Like other commemorative plaques from the period the text was short although it predictably reinforced a colonialist and military theme. The text of this first plaque read:

> NORTH WEST REBELLION. BATOCHE HEADQUARTERS OF THE REBELS
>
> Its capture by General Middleton after four days of fighting, 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th May 1885, ended the rebellion. The Midland Regiment, the 10th Royal Grenadiers, 90th Regiment, Winnipeg Battery, "A" Battery, Boulton's Mounted Infantry, and French's Scouts took part in the battle.[380]

Despite local protests over the absence of any reference to Riel, Dumont and the Metis and First Nations defenders, or the fact that the plaque was unilingual English, the Board refused to change the wording, and although defaced a few years later, it remained in place for another

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[378] See the Batoche plaque text below, LAC, RG 84, vol. 979, file BA2, Part 1.

[379] LAC, RG 84, vol. 1380, HS-10-3-2, Part 1.

[380] LAC, RG 84, vol. 979, BA2, Part 1

fourteen years.[381] In the 1930s, as scholarly attention turned to the events of 1885, it was the work of George Stanley who characterized the "rebellions" of 1870 and 1885 as opposition to attempts by Ottawa to control the west. Historical writing of the time also saw the battles, including Batoche, as the conflict between primitive and civilized peoples. As MuCullough argues, Stanley's view remained the most widely accepted interpretation in English language historiography until the 1960s[382] and while not characteristic of later public history research, it has arguably continued at various historic sites, albeit in a more low-key form, until the present day.

Although the original Batoche plaque was removed in 1939, its replacement, with a somewhat more descriptive and bilingual text was not erected until 1947. It read:

Batoche

Here, on the 15th of May, 1885, after four days of fighting, the Metis under Louis Riel surrendered to General Middleton commanding the Canadian troops.[383]

With regional pressure to acquire Batoche as a national historic park, the National Parks Branch began acquiring assets at the site in the 1950s. The remnants of Middleton's zareba was designated a national historic site in 1950 and the land acquired soon after, as was the Batoche Rectory in 1955 and the Church in 1970.[384] Soon after, Parks Canada acquired the site of the former east village and the main battlefield (including the remains of Metis rifle pits), the park

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[381] McCullough, 171.

[382] Ibid, 170.

[383] LAC, RG 84, vol. 979, BA2, Part 2.

[384] McCullough, 173.

now totalling approximately 2700 acres. With the creation of a Parks Canada office in Winnipeg in 1976 and the hiring of a variety of professionals such as historians, archaeologists, planners, and curators, an extensive program of research was undertaken, as were plans for the development of Batoche as a major historic site. As part of these developments, a new plaque text was developed by the Board signalling a new direction for the site. It read:

> Batoche
>
> In 1872 Xavier Letendre *dit* Batoche founded a village at this site where Metis freighters crossed the South Saskatchewan River. About 50 families had claimed the river lots in the area by 1884. Widespread anxiety regarding land claims and a changing economy provoked a resistance against the Canadian Government. Here, 300 Metis and Indians led by Louis Riel and Gabriel Dumont fought a force of 800 men commanded by Major-General Middleton between May 9 and 12, 1885. The resistance failed but the battle did not mean the end of the community of Batoche.[385]

This text reflected the changing views of the significance of the site, the evolving interpretation of both the battle and the community, and the sense of place that emerged from a 1972 management plan. The new interpretation, according to the plan, was to focus on "the life style of the Metis in the 1880s" allowing visitors to "think of the story and the action [the battle] from the Metis point of view."[386] The plan effectively advocated for a new voice – the Metis voice – and a view of the story and the place as contested space. As site development moved towards an opening to mark the centennial of the battle in 1985, a subsequent management plan reinforced this direction, focussing on two equivalent themes: the Battle of Batoche, as well as the history of Metis settlement at Batoche. Coupled with this new direction, and based largely upon the

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[385] Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, *Batoche National Historic Site of Canada,*http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=731

[386] Parks Canada, *Batoche Management Plan,* 1972, RG 84, Parks Canada file 8400/B3.

work of historian Diane Payment, the history of the community and the region in the post 1885 era was also included in the interpretive storyline at the site.[387] When opened in 1985 Batoche quickly became a major tourist venue, with Parks Canada spending considerable funds on interpretive infrastructure. More importantly, messaging at the site moved away from the traditional and singular focus on the battle, or at least the Canadian view of the battle, to a more inclusive social and cultural history that looked at community and resistance from a variety of perspectives and voices. Visitors were not only encouraged to understand the totality of the site, but to understand it as a heritage place and a contested space of ideas and perceptions. Arguably, Batoche NHS had now become the preeminent heritage site in the country to challenge, at least implicitly, the colonial viewpoint that for so long had been the accepted narrative.

But if much had changed at Batoche (and at other sites), it would not to go unchallenged by Parks Canada's National Office in Ottawa. Concerned that they were losing control of the message and the authority of a national narrative, Parks mandarins initiated the development of Commemorative Intent policy in the mid-1990s that helped to signal a new and conservative era of interpretation, especially in regard to place. Generally opposed to the wider social and cultural narratives that public historians were bringing to many historic sites across the country – including a changing focus from "site" to "place" and the wider meanings that went with it – the new policy effectively restricted interpretations to older (and sometimes much older) historical commemorations. It was a conventional approach to say the least and one that used bureaucratic

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[387] See Diane Payment, *A Structural and Settlement History of Batoche Village*, Parks Canada, Manuscript Report Series no. 248, 1977. While Payment's later book, *The Free People/Li Gens Libres: A History of the Metis Community of Batoche Saskatchewan*, published in 2009, builds extensively upon earlier themes in her work, it was in her 1977 report for Parks Canada that she first developed the history of Batoche to include the post 1885 period.

idioms to contest changing interpretations of the past. As Gordon Bennett, at the time the Chief

of Policy and Strategic Planning for National Historic Sites and one of the architects of

commemorative integrity and commemorative intent policy, wrote: "In an era when change is

often promoted for its own sake, or when shared values are dismissed as an encumbrance, an

anchoring on fundamentals can be powerful indeed, a liberating engine for positive change."

The phrases "shared values" and "anchoring on fundamentals" as used here are certainly loaded

ones, in essence barely coded language for the ascendancy of a national and colonialist narrative.

Added Bennett by way of justification for the new policy: "what does not get measured does not

get managed", as if heritage value is little more than quantification.[388]

Other Parks Canada managers were more direct. In a speech entitled "Commemoration:

A Moving Target?" given at a 1994 conference marking the 75[th]anniversary of the HSMBC, the

then Director General of National Historic Sites Christina Cameron described the "insidious

influence" of "what we now call political correctness."[389] Singling out a number of sites for

having strayed from their original commemorative intent, Cameron then focused on Batoche

where she criticized the emerging public history research and interpretation of Metis persistence

in the face of hostile settler colonialism and the military defeat of 1885. However, such a critique

sees heritage as removed from place, or more particularly from the layers of local memory and

meaning associated with that place. Within the centralist framework of commemorative intent,

values are hardly "shared" but are instead handed down from on high. Aspirational goals become

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[388] Gordon Bennett, "Commemorative Integrity: Monitoring the State of Canada's National Historic Sites", *Momentum* vol. 4, no. 3, ICOMOS Canada, 1995, n.p.

[378] Christina Cameron, "Commemoration: A Moving Target?" in Thomas Symons (ed.), *The Place of History: Commemorating Canada's Past* (Ottawa: The Royal Society of Canada, 1997), 29.

more important than scholarly research, and national narratives must be "useful" in order to justify the current hegemony of interests. To answer the question in Cameron's title, commemoration should always be a "moving target".

Despite Ottawa's disapproval of the changing interpretation at Batoche, the Commemorative Intent statement developed for the site in 1997 by the Prairie and Northern Regional Office of Parks Canada listed a number of factors supporting the commemoration. These included Batoche as the site of the armed conflict between the Metis and the Canadian government, the Metis community of Batoche, as well as the significance of river lot use patterns at the site.[390] Supporting messages elaborate upon these main themes, although the battle of May 1885 remains the cornerstone of the commemorative intent.[391] Historic place plays a significant role in the statement and focuses upon the site's symbolic and associative values, including the general setting of the site on the South Saskatchewan River, the surviving buildings, rifle pits, and the Canadian defensive earthworks, the vestiges of the Carleton Trail, "Mission Ridge" which was the site of the final charge of the North West Field Force, and perhaps most importantly the distinctive form of land use that is the river lot system that was so integral to community life in the region.[392] This last landscape feature was the subject of a separate 1989 Board commemoration which stated that the Metis river lot pattern was a nationally significant part of historical land use on the prairies.[393] By being commemorated at Batoche it symbolizes a

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[390] Batoche National Historic Site: Commemorative Integrity Statement, March 1997, Parks Canada Files, Parks Canada Winnipeg Office, 2.

[391] Ibid, 10-11.

[392] Ibid, "Historic Place", 4-7.

[393] Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, Batoche National Historic Site of Canada, http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=731

geography charged with historical significance and speaks to the cultural and terrestrial

significance of the place and the layers of memory and meaning we attribute to it. Batoche today

readily reveals the survival of culture, heritage and identity through place.

Figure 39. Reconstructed Metis rifle pit at Batoche NHS East Village, 2009 (Parks Canada)

Of course a number of other national historic sites such as Duck Lake, Tourand's Coulee

(formerly Fish Creek), Frog Lake, Fort Carlton, Cut Knife Hill, Loon Lake, and Frenchman's

Butte, all factor into the 1885 story, including the role of prairie First Nations under Big Bear,

Poundmaker and a number other Indigenous leaders. Each of these sites is marked with a cairn

and plaque and is situated on federally owned properties of varying size. Although designated

early by the Board, their interpretation has changed over the years, much like Fort Battleford and

Batoche. But unlike these latter sites they do not possess the same level of development and

interpretation, although each represents critical components of heritage place. (The site of the

Battle of Cut Knife Hill, located on the Poundmaker Reserve in western Saskatchewan, does host

a nearby small interpretive centre run by the First Nation.[394]). For instance, the Duck Lake site,

the location of the first battle of the Resistance, is located on a 12-hectare space near the town of

Duck Lake in Saskatchewan and within the Beardy's and Okemasis Cree Nation Reserve.[395]

Tourand's Coulee, 27 kilometers south of Batoche, was the site of the victory of a small force of

Metis and First Nations fighters under Gabriel Dumont over 850 troops of the North West Field

Force. Heritage place includes the 36-hectare battle site as well as 17 hectares that comprised

Middleton's encampment. Commemorated in 1923, the Board mistakenly considered the

encampment land as the battle site; it was not until 1971 that the actual site of the conflict was

identified and acquired by the federal government.[396]

Two things become evident when studying the public history of the 1885 sites in the west.

One, the impact of these historic places, of these landscapes of memory, still remain as heritage

spaces, especially at sites such as Batoche. Two, perceptions of these places and their meaning

have changed, though often tentatively and not without struggle. If anything can be gleaned from

these sites it is that how they are understood has changed substantially over the decades. The

colonial narrative has either been dropped or at least subdued. This is not surprising given the

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[394] See "Description of Historic Place", *Parks Canada Directory of Federal Heritage Designations, Battle of Cut Knife Hill National Historic Site of Canada,* http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/page_nhs_eng.aspx?id=737

[395] Canada's Historic Places, *Battle of Duck Lake National Historic Site of Canada*, http://www.historicplaces.ca/en/rep-reg/place-lieu.aspx?id=12916.

[396] Parks Canada, Battle of Tourand's Coulee/Fish Creek National Historic Site of Canada, *Management Plan*, 2007, 4. The 2000 Commemorative Intent Statement for the site is fairly straightforward, stating that Fish Creek was designated a national historic site because "at this place occurred a military engagement of the North West Rebellion /Métis Resistance between Middleton's North West Field Force and Gabriel Dumont's Métis and First Nations forces." No mention is made, however, of who actually won the battle. See Ibid, 4.

changes in the scholarly record as over time published accounts moved away from the early

racialized perspectives of Indigenous peoples and their resistance to government invasion. Yet,

the passive approach still characterizes much of the interpretation as heritage agencies attempt to

strike what they might see as a balanced interpretation, the result perhaps of the illiberalism of

central policy makers towards regional goals.

Figure 40. Metis mass grave at Batoche NHS, 2009 (Parks Canada)

Much of this methodology has come about through the use of the "many voices" technique.

Rather than replacing the authoritarian government voice at historic sites with what was

considered to be an equally narrow and single-minded approach, multiple perspectives are

enlisted in public interpretation to provide visitors with a "collage of vivid stories and images

rather than one authoritative description and explanation of an event."[397] Theoretically, "many

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[397] See Frieda Klippenstein, "On a New Approach to Heritage Presentation at National Historic Sites", Parks Canada, *Research Links*, (Summer/Autumn, 1999), 3-4.

voices" recognizes "the validity of various perspectives on an historical event without having to synthesize them, or to judge which are most "true"…."[398]

As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this work, Chris Anderson's 2014 article "More than the Sum of Our Rebellions: Metis Histories beyond Batoche" makes a strong argument in regard to the Indigenous presence at sites like Batoche. Indeed, Anderson's views regarding Indigenous perspectives at historic sites go beyond this Saskatchewan site to a variety of historic places across the prairies, including a site such as Lower Fort Garry. Anderson argues that simply increasing the Indigenous presence at historic sites in fact "short changes the complexity, resistance, adaptation, and resilience of Indigenous nations and their communities in the years (sometimes centuries) following the historical locales they emphasize." For Anderson simply increasing the Indigenous presence is only "mummifying Metis community in the strands of Canadian commemorative fabric".[399] Like Anderson, I do not necessarily advocate for simply increasing the Indigenous presence or Indigenous perspectives at current sites for it only attempts to interpret post colonial history at colonial sites, in some respects portraying Indigenous peoples as existing only in the past. If on the one hand Batoche is viewed as a site of contestation, other heritage places, especially fur trade sites, tend to interpret an Indigenous presence as a representation of cooperation and partnership in a mercantile endeavour – the fur trade -- that was anything but equal and cooperative.[400]

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[398] Ibid.

[399] Chris Anderson, "More than the Sum of Our Rebellions: Metis Histories beyond Batoche", 620.

[400] While I agree with Anderson's points regarding an Indigenous presence at historic sites, I do not fully agree with his opinion about the work of Laura Peers who has studied Indigenous interpretations at a variety of historic sites in Canada and the U.S. If Peers

Conclusion

An examination of heritage commemoration and contested space can challenge the traditional racialized discourse of the colonialist narrative, revealing the dissonant nature of heritage. Here dissonance refers to the conflicts and disharmonies between perceptions of the past and contemporary awareness and use. It is created by interpretation where identifiable messages about place and past often conflict. As geographers Gregory Ashworth and John Tunbridge have argued: "All heritage is someone's heritage and therefore logically not someone else's: the original meaning of an inheritance [from which the word 'heritage' derives] implies the existence of disinheritance and by extension any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially."[401] For Indigenous people in particular, it is the "disinheritance" of place and the oftentimes biased and damaging discourse of commemoration that lies at the root of contested heritage.

Influencing this discourse can effectively alter contemporary power relations as modern issues around land, space, sovereignty, and economic rights become entwined with perceptions of the past. Intangible and tangible Indigenous heritage – places in particular -- are bound together with identity claims and, according to Australian archaeologist Laurajane Smith, remain

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argues that the inclusion of Indigenous voices in national historic site contexts can pose fundamental challenges to the central messages communicated about the past, I do not think that she believes that an increased presence will necessarily counter the "hegemonic stereotypes about Indigenous authenticity" (630) as Peers has also commented on the difficulties of interpreting post colonial history at colonial sites. See Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions,* 169-180.

[401] Gregory Ashworth and John Tunbridge, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (Chichester: John Wiley and Sons, 1996), 21.

important "theatres of memory"[402] It is here where heritage is made real, made meaningful, and given expression. On the prairies, the Battle of Seven Oaks and Upper Fort Garry historic sites, along with the Fort Battleford and Batoche sites are each theatres of memory where contested space and commemoration have impacted the ways we think of heritage and place. By moving away from traditional settler colonial viewpoints, or the conservative and authorized perceptions of hegemonic bias, we might begin to see in Manitoba and Saskatchewan the emergence of a post-colonialist heritage and a new inheritance.

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[402] Laurajane Smith, *Uses of Heritage,* 282.

Chapter 6: Heritage Place: The Function of Modernity, Gender and Sexuality

"Heritage is a distinctly modern concern in the sense in which the question of what is "old" and what is "new" belongs to a peculiarly modern sensibility."

Rodney Harrison*, Heritage: Critical Approaches*

Modernity and Heritage

The term "modernity" can have complex meanings. In the humanities and social sciences it can describe a particular historical period within the chronology of pre-modern, modern, late modern and post-modern. It can refer as well to a social and cultural view of the world that focuses on the transformation from the pre-modern to the modern world, a transformation, according to some scholars that occurred post-Enlightenment and for others much later, in the mid-to-late 19[th]century.Generally, these changes occurred in the areas of art, architecture, history, technology, science, intellectual theory, and capitalism. Modernity has been associated with personal subjectivity, scientific rationalization, a decline in formal religious perspectives, the emergence of nation states and bureaucracy, urbanization, the decline of small-scale agriculture,

and the move toward globalized market economies.[403] Michel Foucault adds to this list by including the questioning of tradition, the growth of capitalism and global market economies, individual freedom and democracy, and the growth of secularism.[404] Late modernity might also include the globalization of technology, advances in electronic media, and an increased time for leisure, although post-modernity might suggest a realignment of free time in the face of a diminished time for leisure.

In studies of heritage and place modernity can have particular relevance. Arguably, modernity created heritage, or at least facilitated an emerging preservationist movement. It has created pasts that are part of the present. An essentially recent conception, heritage responds to vulnerability and risk, and in a late modernist world has adapted a taxonomic structure relating to systems of collection, organization, classification, and prioritization first developed in contemporary sciences, to deal with that vulnerability. Modern heritage became about materiality and these physical reminders of an oftentimes romanticized past helped to underpin the new directions in so many areas of culture and society. While public space was always present in the past, modernity has helped to create the idea of a more comprehensive public sphere, or at least has facilitated its emergence and growth. In this expression of modernity, the past came to be increasingly valued and its physical resources and places believed vulnerable and often threatened.

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[403]   See Marshall Berman, *All That is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988), 15-20.

[404]   Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Growth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977, 1988).

Cultural historian Rodney Harrison has suggested that heritage in the 20th century became increasingly bureaucratized and removed from everyday life.[405] With the consolidation of the nation-state came the creation of state intervention, generating lists of heritage places from local significance to international consequence. The growth of governments and bureaucracies -- another signpost of modernity – saw the origin of protection charters and the drafting of legislation to safeguard threatened spaces, places, and monuments. Moving ahead, the year 1972 is often associated with the creation (or at least consolidation) of modernist heritage as that was the year of the creation of the World Heritage Convention and the more widespread view, in the West at least, that heritage places were important, and governments were increasingly given *the* role in protecting the past.

Finding Her Place

If the modernist era ushered in a growing worldwide emphasis upon the protection of heritage spaces, the focus of protection and interpretation remained largely traditional in scope. Great men, or at least the places inhabited and belonging to great men (or their battles or their politics), received the greatest attention by heritage agencies, including those in Canada. Women played only a small part in the creation of official heritage and then it was only a handful of individuals who were recognized. Gender in the larger sense, little studied in the academy, was not considered significant for heritage commemoration or interpretation unless it was to see women of the past as servants, helpmates, mothers, and occasionally the domesticized matrons of upper class domiciles. (Catherine Motherwell who once lived at Lanark Place at Motherwell is one example of the latter.) And even in these roles their actual lives were little more than

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[405]   Rodney Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches,* 68.

backdrops for the larger stories that were taking place around them -- for example, W.R.

Motherwell as national politician and scientific agriculturalist. For historic site animation

programs they were there in much the way a chorus provides support for the lead actors in a play.

They helped to fill the room much like the English feminist writer Virginia Woolf's 1929

misquoted line describing the plight of female writers, "For most of history, Anonymous was a

woman."[406]

In an Afterword entitled "Proceeding from Here" in the American text *Restoring*

Women's History through Historic Preservation, historian Heather Huyck writes:

> Historic places tell us who we are as a people and where we have come from. Omitting any significant portion of our history distorts all of it. Historic places, because they contain so much past evidence and are so powerful in conveying the past to the public, provide great opportunities for sharing women's history by simply asking the right questions about landscapes, structures, and artefacts and by seeing the women's history already there…[407]

Huyck's prescription, however, is only part of the issue in the attempt to integrate women's

history into public history. In Canada, initiatives to recognize women's history in the public

sphere have largely underachieved because these initiatives have been pursued within an existing

and limited commemoration of historic places. Yes, individual women have been commemorated

both nationally and provincially, and that is to be commended. Nationally, a 1991 Parks Canada

System Plan was the first to identify the commemoration of women's history as a priority and a

series of subsequent national workshops (with mostly feminist scholars) deliberated over how

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[406] Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own; Three Guineas.* London: Penguin Books, 1993, 51. Actually, Woolf's famous passage is a misquote of her line, "I would venture to guess that Anon, who wrote so many poems without signing them, was often a woman."

[407] Heather Huyck, "Proceeding from Here" in Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer Goodman, *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2003), 364.

this goal was to be accomplished.[408] Yet, as Parks Canada historian Dianne Dodd has

demonstrated, as of 2008 (admittedly some time ago), of the 1,942 commemorations made by the

HSMBC since 1919 only six percent concerned women or institutions associated with women.[409]

Despite these dismal figures, former Parks Canada historian Alan McCullough has

claimed that the national heritage agency is able to "refocus" historic sites through its centralized

administrative system to "recognize women's history and heritage". The delay in this recognition,

he argues, can be attributed to the constraints on public commemoration where he maintains that

"academic history and public memory are not in agreement [and] Parks Canada must search for

common ground before proceeding to commemorate."[410] Of course, to assume a disharmony

between academic history and public memory is problematic, but regardless the argument does

little to excuse the agency from taking a leadership role. Dianne Dodd, however, strikes a more

optimistic tone, contending that:

> Through most of HSMBC/Parks Canada history, Canadian women
> have had difficulty in accessing the needed material [presumably
> financial] and human resources to acquire, develop, and interpret sites,
> and to gain site designations once they have developed them. Before 1990,

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[408] See: Parks Canada, National Historic Sites Systems Plan, 1991,
https://www.google.ca/search?q=Parks+Canada+System+Plan+1991&rlz=1C5CHFA_enCA503CA503&tbm=isch&tbo=u&source=univ&sa=X&ved=0a. Accessed 4 June, 2018.

[409] Dianne Dodd, "Canadian Historic Sites and Plaques: Heroines, Trailblazers, The Famous Five", in *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship,* vol. 6, no. 2, Summer, 2009, 29-66. Dodd writes that in 2008 of the 126 designations relating to Canadian women (or 6 percent of the total number of HSMBC designations since 1919), the largest number, 66, related to individuals, 33 to events, and only 27 to sites. Virtually all of these sites are simply plaqued sites without active interpretation and, as discussed later in this chapter, that number declines in Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

[410] Alan McCullough, "Parks Canada and Women's History" in Gail Lee Dubrov and Jennifer Goodman, *Restoring Women's History through Historic Preservation,* 339.

there were only nine women's history sites and most of those belonged to religious communities. However, since the late 1990s when Parks Canada made women's history a program priority [sic], the number of sites, albeit not administered by Parks Canada, has increased substantially as the agency acquired sites that women's groups or local organizations had earlier developed.[411]

Whether the increase in sites (most not owned or administered by Parks Canada) devoted to women's history indicates substantial growth might be a matter for debate, especially as women's history has been a program priority for a good number of years.[412] Good intentions were derailed, not by misguided objectives, but by budget considerations.

The issue of dealing with gender history at historic places in Western Canada has many facets but its application brings a significant concern. Since national and provincial discussions began to increase the number of such commemorations, significant budget cuts to heritage initiatives in the late 1990s and into the 2000s, both federally and provincially, have severely curtailed the protection of historic spaces and restricted the creation of new sites, sites that might be devoted to exploring the political, social, and cultural features of women's history.[413] Where the period between 1970 and 1990 witnessed the establishment of a large number of historic places across the West (and across Canada), since that time few sites have been created and the

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[411] Dianne Dodd, "Canadian Historic Sites and Plaques: Heroines, Trailblazers, The Famous Five", *CRM: The Journal of Heritage Stewardship*, vol. 6, no. 2, Summer 2009, 32.

[412] For the HSMBC some more recent designations pertaining to places of women's history have been only indirectly related to gender. Although organizations and buildings associated with particular individuals or women's groups were included, so too were sites where the designation of women's history had little to do with gender or feminism. For instance, Butchart Gardens, an elaborate garden setting located on the Saanich Peninsula north of Victoria, was designated as a national historic site related to women's history because its founder and designer Jennie Butchart was female. See Dodd, Ibid, endnote 9.

[413] These budget cuts, which began in the late 1990s, were capped by massive reductions (at least federally) to heritage programs in the spring of 2012. See, "Federal Budget 2012: Parks Canada feels the pinch as Harper government makes more cuts", Toronto Star, 30 April, 2012.

vast majority of commemorations by provincial and federal heritage boards -- including the

commemoration of women and women's history -- have resulted only in plaques.

The response, other than to erect commemorative plaques, has been to attempt to

incorporate women's history into existing interpretive programming at historic sites in provinces

such as Manitoba and Saskatchewan. To label this approach as problematic is perhaps an

understatement. At one level, the incorporation of women's history into fur trade sites, into

settler colonial sites, into resistance sites, and into house museums is a workable option as

women's lives were critical to how such places functioned. At another, it too often reduces

women's history to the roles played by domestic servants, farmers' wives, and the genteel

matrons of fur trade posts who tell visitors of their latest needlepoint project.[414] In many

instances these interpretations are conservative and static. Of course, women did have important

functions in all these historical scenarios although they are little explored beyond the superficial

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[414]   I want to note that this last comment refers to the superficial way women are often
portrayed at fur trade sites like Lower Fort Garry and is not intended to characterize a
more general interpretation of women in the history of the fur trade. Since the ground
breaking work of Sylvia Van Kirk in 1980, the changing views of race and gender and the
social and cultural roles of Indigenous women has greatly influenced the course of fur trade
social studies over the last forty years. Van Kirk studied the processes by which Indigenous
women gained agency in the fur trade primarily through their relationships with HBC men,
particularly officers. But as Adele Perry suggests, Van Kirk's *Many Tender Ties* is an
example of a type of feminism where heterosexual relationships are set within a liberal
interpretation of the western Canadian fur trade, a "consensual possibility" and "positivist
naiveté" that Perry says does not readily fit "the messy context of the colonial archive" as it
came to be understood by feminist scholars working in the 1990s and 2000s. For such
writers, agency, she argues, does not sit so comfortably with the "enduring legacies" of
colonialism and sexuality. See Adele Perry, "Historiography that Breaks Your Heart: Van
Kirk and the Writing of Feminist History" in Robin Jarvis Brownlie and Valerie Korinek,
Finding a Way to the Heart: Feminist Writings on Aboriginal and Women's History in Canada
(Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 2012), 85, 92. See also Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many
Tender Ties: Women in Fur Trade Society, 1670-1870* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer), 1980.
While the focus of gender studies in regard to the fur trade has evolved in recent years at
historic sits in the West, such nuances have only scratched the surface of their
programming.

and always secondary to what the men were doing. Their inclusion within the traditional

structures of heritage interpretation mirrors the inclusion of women in traditional historical

writing by second wave feminists, or what historian Joan Sangster calls "compensatory

writing".[415] Where men in history and in heritage representation are most often portrayed as

individuals, women are most often portrayed as a type, sometimes because of a lack of historical

record pertaining to individual women but principally because their gender is not the focus of the

story.

The characterization of historical female occupations, as some authors have argued, is

historically part of the influence of modernity and a masculine gendering that is based upon

views regarding the inferiority of women, along with non-white races and the working class;

their roles defined as pre-modern and localized in the world of nature. At heritage places, women

are often associated with the organic and natural rhythms of pre-industrial societies, considered

as historical players within the household and valued for their reproductive capacities.[416] The

impact of modernism in the world of heritage has meant that women's roles at industrial sites, in

politics, and in places of commerce and public service, are little explored at historic places in

Canada.

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[415] Joan Sangster, "Beyond Dichotomies: Re-Assessing Gender History and Women's History in Canada", *Left History*, Vol. 3, no. 1 (Spring/Summer), 1995, 1.

[416] B. Graham, G.J. Ashworth and J.E. Tunbridge, *A Geography of Heritage: Power, Culture, and Economy* (New York: Routledge, 2000), 44. See also, Rita Felski, "The Gender of Modernity" in S. Ledger, J. MacDonagh, and J. Spencer, (eds.), *Political Gender: Texts and Contexts* (New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1994), 146. Uma Kothari and Tim Edensor in "The Masculinization of Stirling's Heritage" in V. Kinnaird, *Tourism: A Gender Analysis* (London: John Wiley, 1994) 115-134, argue that the artefacts from the past that have been valued as heritage have been largely selected from the perspective of "heritage masculinization."

Parks Canada's Statement of Commemorative Intent (SOCI) relates directly to the heritage issues around the commemoration of gender and place.[417] As part of its strategy to deal with cultural resources, in the 1990s the agency brought in the concept of the SOCI to focus national historic site interpretation on the original reasons given by the HSMBC for commemoration. After much discussion with Parks historians (both regionally and in Ottawa), as well as with managers, archaeologists, and site interpretive personnel, short statements were drawn up for each site that in many cases were simply re-worded versions of what the Board had found to be noteworthy when they first commemorated a specific place. While this re-focus did not entirely preclude integrating topics such as women's history into site programming, it did restrict their scope, especially when those commemorations were created decades earlier, some as early as the 1920s. With no new national historic sites (or at least no new federally or provincially operated sites with interpretive programming), the interpretation of women as domestics, or women as helpmates has tended to remain the primary focus for gender history in a public setting in Western Canada. That such a result occurred is not entirely surprising as heritage, unlike history, is resistant to change and is often managed at official levels by bureaucracies that function within conservative and conventional views of the world. Regardless, the good intentions and calls for more women's history and gender-based heritage of the 1991 Parks Canada System Plan went largely unheeded in the face of later budget reductions.

The absence of women's history from heritage place -- by absence here I mean its relegation to the background, or to the "scenery" of such places -- has so long been a fixture of historic sites that for many it passes without notice. Architectural historian Gail Lee Dubrow, in describing her family visits to historic places when she was a child, observed that "the historic

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[417] Parks Canada's policy on Commemorative Intent is explored earlier in this work. See Chapter 5.

places we toured so closely fit our shared belief that men were the agents of historical change and that the absence of women's history totally escaped notice".[418] Traditionally, it has been at the house museum, once ubiquitous throughout North America but rapidly disappearing because of low visitation and high maintenance costs, that women (though often nameless) were highlighted. As domestics or as upper class doyennes, their portrayal of women's history has tended to underscore the myth of women's confinement in the domestic sphere while passing up on opportunities to interpret the history of women in the more public arenas of the paid labour force and in the wider community.[419]

In Western Canada women's history has enjoyed a somewhat greater visibility in relation to heritage place at the restored historic homes of well-known women writers, artists, politicians, and community activists. While these particular house museums are useful for relating individual stories, they provide little contextual material about the larger social, cultural, economic, political, and religious stories of women in Western Canada. Here it is crucial to claim new space for women in the built environment, in cultural landscapes, in urban settings, and in rural locations. That history must be explored at places of work, at places of leisure, at places of religious belief, and at places of protest. A central Canadian example is the 1998 national designation of the Hersey Pavilion, an early nurses residence at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal where the themes of the professionalization of nursing and medical culture are commemorated and interpreted.[420] In Manitoba, similar themes are commemorated at the St. Boniface Hospital

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[418] Gail Lee Dubrow, "Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation: Recent Developments in Scholarship and Public Historical Practice" in Gail Lee Dubrow and Jennifer B. Goodman, *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, 2.

[419] Ibid, 7. See also Patricia West, "Uncovering and Interpreting Women's History at Historic House Museums", Ibid, 83-95.

Nurses Residence built in 1928 and commemorated in 1997 to mark the "growing recognition of

nursing as a profession and … to commemorate the contribution of nurses to medicine and the

role of women as health care professionals."[421] Other sites include Miss Davis School built in

1866 (and discussed in more detail in chapter 5), Maison Gabrielle-Roy, designated in 2008 to

commemorate the life and writings of the well-known St. Boniface author, and the Grey Nuns

Convent in St. Boniface, a large Red River frame mission house built in 1851 and now the St.

Boniface museum. The Ukrainian Labour Temple in Winnipeg, built in 1919 and commemorated

by the HSMBC in 2009, was a long time centre of Ukrainian culture in the city and a gathering

place for strikers and their families during the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919. In its

interpretive programming Riel House NHS in Winnipeg does mention the women in Louis Riel's

life, although again primarily within a domestic capacity. Aside from a focus on the political role

of Riel himself, much of the interpretation encourages visitors to "explore a traditional Metis

way of life in the mid-1880s".[422] In Saskatchewan, national historic sites that look at aspects of

women's history include a number of early farmsteads, places such as Seeger Wheeler's Maple

Grove Farm and Motherwell Homestead which is discussed in chapter 4.

For the most part, however, the places mentioned above, while commemorating aspects

of women's history in the West, offer little in the way of interactive interpretation and certainly

far less in interpretive resources than do the major (and older) historic sites, many of which are

discussed in the earlier chapters of this work. Settler colonial sites, for instance, might include a

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[420] Annmarie Adams, "Rooms of Their Own: The Nurses Residence at Montreal's Royal Victoria Hospital", Ibid, 131-144.

[421] See: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_National_Historic_Sites_of_ Canada_in_Manitoba. Accessed 5 June, 2018.

[422] See: https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/lhn-nhs/mb/riel. Accessed 20 August, 2018.

domesticized interpretation of women's lives, but the overarching theme at such sites is one of pioneer authenticity, claim to place, and the influence of founding father narratives. Along with settler sites, the commemorative emphasis in both provinces includes early fur trade and North West Resistance sites as well as heritage buildings commemorated for their architectural value. What these western provinces lack, for example, is a later industrial site that could commemorate and interpret the role of working class women in the work force in the 20th century, a site such as the Gulf of Georgia Cannery in B.C where women worked on the line processing and canning the products of the west coast fishery. In *Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women*, Lindsey McMaster describes how, in the early 20th century, "working girls" were seen as representative of the angst of modern life through sensitivities around the suffrage movement, the perceived disintegration of the family, and male anxieties around the independence of women.[423] Such themes – particularly themes around working women and urban life -- are little recognized in the western catalogue of historic places. Urban places rarely focus on such modernist topics, preferring instead those origin story sites that are related to the fur trade and settler colonialism.

If in Western Canada there have been difficulties with relating women's stories beyond the superficial, preservationists in the United States have looked to urban landscapes to explore issues around the history of working women, especially women of colour. The Power of Place project in Los Angeles, for instance, has, since the 1980s, established three sites that interpret the experiences of African-American, Latina, and Japanese-American women in a variety of commercial enterprises from the late 19th and early 20th centuries. These include the establishment of interpretive public art at an African-American midwife's home from the

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[423] Lindsey McMaster*, Working Girls in the West: Representations of Wage-Earning Women* (Vancouver: UBC Press)*,* 2008.

19[th]century, the interpretation of a surviving union hall where Latina women helped organize female garment workers in the 1930s, and the preservation of commercial flowerfields run by Japanese-American families in the 1890s.[424] As Dolores Hayden, a professor of American Studies at Yale University, and the founder of the Power of Place project, has written: "Finding the stories of diverse working women, and inscribing them in public space, is one small part of creating a public, political culture that can carry the North American city into the next century."[425]

Finding Her Indigenous Place

Critical to an analysis of women and place in the heritage of Western Canada is the inclusion of Indigenous women and their stories at historic places. In chapters 3, 4 and 5 of this work I touch on the topics of women situated in pre-contact and early post-contact Indigenous cultural landscapes, women at fur trade sites, and women at settler sites. In the West, however, initiatives to recognize Indigenous women's history in the public realm (with the exception of Wanuskewin) have been minimal, again because such programs have been pursued within the current limited commemorations at historic places. At Lower Fort Garry, the site's 'Native Encampment' is staffed predominantly by female interpreters. The camp has been allotted limited resources over the years – one or two canvas tipis remain the focal point; the Anishinaabe bark-covered structures that were historically common in that region and time period are

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[424] Dolores Hayden, "The Power of Place: Claiming Women's History in the Urban Landscape" in Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada, *The Place of History: Commemorating Canada's Past. Proceedings of the National Symposium held on the Occasion of the 75[th]Anniversary of the HSMBC* (Ottawa: The Royal Society of Canada, 1997), 67-78.

[425] Ibid, 76.

considered too expensive to construct. While the mostly young university age interpreters impart

some information to visitors about the 19th century lives of Indigenous women in southern

Manitoba, their interpretation focuses largely upon material culture. Historian Laura Peers, who

conducted extensive research on the interpretation of Indigenous peoples at fur trade sites in both

Canada and the U.S, describes the encampment at Lower Fort Garry:

> Interpreters sit on low folding camp chairs that are covered by trade
> blankets, and engage in beadwork and other crafts. A *tikinagan*
> (baby carrier), a wooden trunk with cooking and domestic items,
> and some obviously Aboriginal objects … are laid out for
> visitors to see and touch…. Interpreters greet visitors in the
> cooking area outside, and then after initial discussion explain
> the contents of the trunk, and then invite the visitors to come
> into the [canvas] tipi with them … [A]ll the interpreters were
> young adults. Most were women from the Winnipeg area …
> [and] one of the female interpreters was Filipino.[426]

Although the interpretation of Indigenous life at the Lower Fort Garry encampment emphasizes

the material culture of women's domestic lives in the mid-19th century (beadwork and crafts),

this "outside the palisades" interpretation, an approach common to most fur trade restorations or

reconstructions, reinforces the view of Indigenous people, especially women, as apart, as almost

foreigners in their own land. And, as Peers points out, the "administrative burden" at Lower Fort

Garry is so cumbersome that little or no interpretive instruction is provided, their one week of

training taken up, for the most part, by talks related to fire drills, transportation to the site, and

pensions.[427] (I can add from personal experience, the week also included much time devoted to

how to wear one's costume, and the time and location of the end of training week party.) Though

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[426] Laura Peers, *Playing Ourselves: Interpreting Native Histories at Historic Reconstructions* (New York: Altamira Press, 2007), 6-7.

[427] Ibid, 7-8.

historical manuals have been prepared, site supervisors spent little time encouraging summer

staff to actually read these manuals.[428]

Moving beyond the staged, prop-centered interpretation of some historic sites, I turn

attention to the more recent sources that might assist in incorporating Indigenous women's

history into historic places. Because of the scarcity of written records pertaining to the early

history of Indigenous women, most especially women outside of the domestic life of 19th century

fur trade posts, their commemoration, whether individually or as a community, has relied

increasingly upon oral history. When available, the oral record allows for a direct voice that

presents the social and cultural history of life experiences and everyday events. Oral history can

reveal how historical reality – where Indigenous women lived, worked, and made sense of the

world around them – is multivocal. The work of Julie Cruikshank whose *Life Lived Like a Story*

explores the lives of three women elders from southern Yukon, Freda Ahenakew and H.C.

Wolfart's *Our Grandmothers Lives As Told in Their Own Words* that describes the daily lives

and beliefs of Cree women in the West, and Regina Flannery's, *Ellen Smallboy: Glimpses of a*

Cree Woman's Life which tells about one person's life in a Cree community, all centre the daily

lives and stories of Indigenous women in place and its importance to the individual and to the

community.[429] My own involvement in collecting and editing the early 20th century stories of

Indigenous women from the York Factory region with Muskego Cree historian Flora Beardy

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[428] Over the years that I participated in guide training at Lower Fort Garry my contribution
as a historian was usually restricted to a couple of hours with the interpretive staff. On the
other hand, the full week of training included up to a half day of information regarding fire
drills.

[429] Julie Cruikshank, *Life Lived Like a Story* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press), 1990;
Freda Ahenakew and H.C.Wolfart, Our Grandmothers' Lives (Regina: University of Regina
Press),1998; and Regina Flannery, *Ellen Smallboy: Glimpses of a Cree Woman's Life*(Montreal:
McGill-Queen's University Press), 1995.

revealed (for me anyway) the strong role of place for women as part of lives lived, steeped in

tradition and culture. As daughters, wives, mothers, grandmothers, hunters, country provision

processers, and post workers they were critical to the strength and survival of Cree culture and

society in the north.[430] These are historic places of meaning. They will not have plaques or

interpretive centres, and their boundaries will remain indistinct, but they are as much a part of the

heritage of their regions as those places chosen by the HSMBC or by the Historic Sites Advisory

Board of Manitoba, or by Tourism, Parks, Culture, and Sport in Saskatchewan.

Yet, too often our awareness of Indigenous women's heritage, and indeed the heritage of

all Indigenous peoples in the West, converges on older landscapes and remote traditional

communities considered in historical terms as pre-modern. More recent scholarship has moved

away from some of these older representations and has repositioned heritage place within the

urban landscape. Post-war examples of Indigenous women working as nurses and in other areas

of community health, as service industry workers, and in education, bring concepts of First

Nations and Metis women and place into modern landscapes or cityscapes, their everyday lives

as much a part of their community's history as their grandmothers'.[431] And like Dolores

Hayden's The Power of Place initiatives, the physical recognition of these stories of adaptation,

perseverance, and activism in the face of prejudice can expand our awareness of Indigenous

heritage, and in fact all of heritage.

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[430] Flora Beardy and Robert Coutts, *Voices from Hudson Bay: Cree Stories from York Factory*, 44-48.

[431] See Mary Jane Logan McCallum, *Indigenous Women, Work and History, 1940-1980* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press), 2014.

A Queer-Eye View of Heritage Place[432]

Recognizing and commemorating women's history in relation to place on a broad scale can help bring heritage into the 21st century. Critical as well to modernizing heritage designation, as well as helping to promote a greater sense of inclusion within the wider community, is the recognition of sites related to gay and lesbian history. For those customarily involved in heritage advocacy there has been a reluctance to support such themes with protection and commemoration of place usually reserved for traditional themes related to nation building and what I have earlier called founding father narratives. Of course, concepts that we define as nation building are not restricted to the 18th and 19th century themes of Indigenous history, fur trade life, exploration, settler colonialism, and struggles over land and corporate rights related to language and custom. Yet, for the most part, governments have stayed away from gay and lesbian commemorations as part of the history of community formation. Bureaucracies, traditionally conservative in their approaches, have feared alienating the mainstream, especially those groups that have been the most vocal supporters of heritage conservation. Commemorating those places associated with gay and lesbian history in Western Canada is not an initiative that comes readily to mind for historical societies and other preservationist groups.

But there is a need to write the LGBTQ population into our collective history and into the preservation movement, as individuals, as communities, and as part of those places that have helped shape the social fabric of this country. Such initiatives will not happen without

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[432] This subtitle, particularly the term "Queer-Eye", comes from Valerie Korinek's article, "A Queer-Eye View of the Prairies: Reorienting Western Canadian Histories", in Alvin Finkel, Sarah Carter and Peter Fortna (eds.), *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2010), 239-253.

individuals, groups, and governments taking an active role. It is a generalization, and perhaps a

sweeping one, but there will be push back as heritage advocates tend to be conservative as

mentioned above.[433] However, the kind of change that might see existing landmarks reinterpreted

and new ones selected will not come about without strong advocacy. The heritage movement of

the 21st century deserves nothing less.

In the U.S, author Gail Lee Dubrow has discussed initiatives such as the Queer Spaces

project in New York that identifies nine sites related to gay and lesbian history throughout the

city, and gay sites in San Francisco, the first gay-related historic sites to be mentioned in the

National Trust's *Preservation* magazine.[434] Dubrow also discusses those places that have already

been designated as landmarks as the first place to begin correcting the omissions and

misrepresentations in the presentation of gay and lesbian history. Beyond the many historic

houses associated with famous individuals who were gay[435], Dubrow goes on to discuss the

"pressing need to preserve and interpret places associated with the emergence of homosexual

community and identity" such as early gay bars and bath houses, public open spaces where gay

men met, parts of public beaches, and even the early havens of the homophile movement such as

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[433] I base this assertion upon my 32 year-career in heritage, my extensive and ongoing involvement with groups such as the Manitoba Historical Society, and my time serving on heritage boards such as the Manitoba Historic Sites Advisory Board and the City of Winnipeg's Heritage Buildings Committee.

[434] Gail Lee Dubrow, "Blazing Trails with Pink Triangles and Rainbow Flags: Improving the Preservation of Gay and Lesbian History", in Dubrow and Goodman (eds.), *Restoring Women's History Through Historic Preservation*, 284-285.

[435] In re-interpreting the houses of famous people who were gay, Dubrow concedes that such an initiative raises ethical questions around private lives and public accomplishments, "outing" historical figures who may have wished to remain "closeted", and what she labels as "the fluidity of people's sexuality over a lifetime". Ibid, 287.

the First Universalist Church in Los Angeles.[436] One could add the later establishment of gay

bookstores and newspapers, as well as clubs to this list. More currently, in June of 2013 former

president Barack Obama proclaimed the Stonewall Inn, an early gay bar in New York, to be a

national monument.[437]

In Canada there have been similar attempts, although on the federal level these initiatives

have been less than successful. Earlier in this work (see Chapter 1) I describe the 1981 raid on a

group of Toronto bathhouses that culminated in a massive demonstration against police that was

held the next day, a demonstration that, according to author Ed Jackson "marked a seismic

eruption of queer visibility into public space in Toronto, and launched a new chapter in the

LGBTQ community's relationship with the police."[438] Some have portrayed these events as the

beginning of the gay liberation movement in the country. However, commemoration of gay

history in Toronto began prior to the 1981 raids with the establishment in the 1970s of gay and

lesbian newspapers, bookstores, support organizations, churches, communes, and protest

demonstrations.[439]

Queer places and communities, or "an imagined gay geography" have been mapped in

some cities, identifying the enclaves and sanctuaries where gay people could historically escape

examination by the police.[440]As noted earlier, Patriza Gentile has looked at similar geographies

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[436] Ibid, 291.

[437] See http://spacing.ca/toronto/2017/06/15/making-places-torontos-queer-history/. Accessed 18 June, 2018.

[438] See "Making Spaces for Toronto's Queer History", Ibid.

[439] Ibid.

in Cold War Ottawa, noting that gay sanctuaries in the 1950s and 1960s in a government town

like Ottawa were less secure. Yet, as Gentile suggests, the stories and memories of Ottawa's

queer spaces provide a "critical archives" of where place and memory interconnect and where

queer pasts are documented.[441] Researching and mapping such places and such history can be

more than an archive however. Recognizing these spaces as part of the socio-cultural history of

the community and the country brings queer history into the mainstream, enlarging our

conception of heritage beyond the conventional and the long-established themes of

commemoration.

Turning to Western Canada, historian Valerie Korinek, in her article "A Queer-Eye view

of the Prairies: Reorienting Western Canadian Histories", begins to historicize the later

emergence of gay and lesbian communities in the West.[442] Although much has been written in

more recent times on gender and sexuality in the West during the fur trade and settlement eras,[443]

Korinek's work studies what it was like to be gay and lesbian on the prairies in the post-war era;

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[440]   See David Churchill, "Mother Goose's Map: Tabloid Geographies and Gay Male Experiences in 1950s Toronto", *Journal of Urban History*, vol. 30, no. 6, September 2004, 830, as quoted in Patriza Gentile, "Capital Queers: Social Memory and Queer Places in Cold War Ottawa, in James Opp and John C. Walsh (eds.)*, Placing Memory and Remembering Place in Canada*, 188.

[441] Ibid, 209.

[442] Valerie Korinek, "A Queer-Eye View of the Prairies: Reorienting Western Canadian Histories", 239-253. Korinek's most recent work on the subject is: *Prairie Fairies: A History of Queer Communities and Peoples in Western Canada, 1930-1985.* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press), 2018.

[443]   See for instance Lyle Dick's articles "Heterohegemonic Discourse and Homosexual Acts: The case of Saskatchewan in the Settlement Era," presented at the *Sex and State History Conference*, Toronto, July 1985, and "Male Homosexuality in Saskatchewan's Settlement Era: the 1895 Case of Regina's 'Oscar Wilde'", presented at the *Canadian Historical Association Conference*, York University, Toronto, 30 May 2006. See also Cameron Duder, *Awfully Devoted Women" Lesbian Lives in Canada, 1900-1965* (Vancouver: UBC Press), 2011.

how queer people came to form political and cultural organizations, and whether there was in fact, what American anthropologist Kath Weston, called the "great gay migration of the seventies and eighties" to cities, a migration that in the case of the prairie west, according to Korinek, is a mythology.

But have queer histories been integrated into the commemoration of private and public space in the West? For the most part no, although it is worth noting the growing collection of these histories at prairie universities and at such repositories as the Saskatchewan Archives Board, and the 2013 launch of the Manitoba Gay and Lesbian Society Archives at the University of Manitoba Archives and Special Collections.[444] But while gay and lesbian histories have found their way into mainstream historical and archival collections in the West and are emerging as a vital part of prairie historiography, their individual and collective histories have a ways to go to be completely integrated into public heritage and the language of place.[445]

Yet, just as gay and lesbian history in Canada has increasingly become a part of historical research in the Academy, it can become as well a part of public history and how governments approach the topics of commemoration. Advocacy can start outside the typical heritage circles,

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[444] According to its archival website the Manitoba Gay and Lesbian Archives is "a symbolic culmination of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered, Two-spirited, and Queer individuals and organizations recording people's history… dating back to the 1920s". See: http://umanitoba.ca/libraries/units/archives/digital/gay_lesbian/. Accessed 18 June, 2018. The fact that the launch of the archival website was announced on the Manitoba Historical Society's *Historical News* website in 2013 might indicate some progress within traditional heritage communities. See: http://www.mhs.mb.ca/news/archive05.shtml. Accessed 18 June, 2018.

[445] In 2005 Parks Canada and the Department of Canadian Heritage put out a brochure entitled: *Out and About: Towards a Better Understanding of Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgendered Persons in the Workplace*. However, as the title suggests the booklet is not about sexuality and heritage but rather a 28-page guide for LGBTQ individuals in the workplace. See: http://hrcouncil.ca/hr-toolkit/documents/CH37-4-9-2005E.pdf. Accessed 19 June, 2018.

the usual groups that lobby governments for the recognition and protection of this settler site, or that community forefather. LGBTQ groups have much to concern themselves with gaining cultural and political acceptance within modern societies so traditionally have had little time to look at the past as a reification of present realities. Yet, to help establish a past that brings out the realities of sexuality and gender, from places associated with the gay rights movement, to broader interpretations of social and intimate interactions in commemorated venues, to the historical figures who were lesbian, gay, or two-spirited, would enlarge our cultural concept of heritage and its role in shaping the present and future. Within public history advocacy can start with the researchers and planners who often craft the look of heritage from the ground up. More than some might realize, it is at these levels that new ideas and new ways of thinking often emerge. Ultimately, however, it is at the senior levels of the heritage bureaucracy, in particular the HSMBC and provincial heritage boards, that such initiatives can be brought forward and acted upon. Just as heritage commemoration moved away from older colonial themes to such topics as Indigenous history, the history of women, and the history of immigration, so too can the history of sexuality become an integral part of the heritage vocabulary.

Like fur trade or settler colonial sites, the historic places that deal with women's history or the history of sexuality in prairie Canada are not based upon a significance that is innate; they are in fact cultural processes that provide a perspective on history and history-making. If such themes and indeed places are often part of an imagined past they take on a meaning that is defined by modern perceptions, and in terms of place, a landscape of aestheticized space. Like all heritage, charting the evolution of interpretation and changing versions of the past, how narratives are developed and how they come to be challenged and defended, helps us to think about and define how issues around gender and sexuality can bring the past into the present.

Conclusion: History, Memory and the Heritage Discourse

> "*Identity is local and regional, rooted in the imagination and in works of culture.*"
>
> Northrop Frye, *Bush Garden: Essays on the Canadian Imagination*

To the above quote from Northrop Frye one might add that identity and imagination are found not only in the "works of culture" but also in the works of nature and how each intersects with the other. A particular landscape can represent not only the form of nature but also the imagined pasts of the viewer, its places rendered authentic by meanings that are both subjective and elemental. Place can have a broad language which imprints our imagination with a meaning to which we readily respond. As the 19th century English novelist Thomas Hardy once wrote of Egdon Heath in Wessex, "It was a spot which returned upon the memory of those who loved it with an aspect of peculiar and kindly congruity."[446]

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[446] Thomas Hardy, *The Return of the Native* (Mineola, New York, 2003), 2.

This broad language of place, whether familiar or foreign, is much influenced by modern cultural processes that often express contemporary and changing views of heritage. At the places we have labeled as heritage we can often see an imagined past, a heritage we might view through the lens of modern perception, and a cultural landscape created as aestheticized space. Although interpreting the past in the present can promote a dominant heritage discourse, at the same time challenges to that discourse can gain traction as modern issues are re-examined through the lens of historical interpretation. Contemporary views around such things as class, gender, sexuality, and race can function outside hegemonic authority. More importantly, they can come to influence that authority, bringing new ideas and new interpretations to the table.

For some writers the classification of what is heritage and what is not, or more generally how we think about heritage, is the result of the victory of history over memory, a viewpoint put forward by the French historian Pierre Nora. Canadian historian Cecilia Morgan agrees with Nora's argument, suggesting that "the forces of modernization -- urbanization, industrialization, the rise of secularism and the nation state, all modernist characteristics -- have replaced memory with history, a form of knowledge that differs from memory by its reliance on written texts, linear chronology, rationality, logic, and above all its insistence that the present and past constitute different worlds."[447] With memory and history however we are not trapped between Scylla and Charybdis with dangers on both sides. In fact, some historians do not see memory and history as mutually exclusive, or that history has triumphed over memory. The increasing use of oral history, for example, rather than written documents, or the object, or the place itself -- as with cultural landscapes -- would suggest otherwise. Once considered unreliable and a poor

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[447]   Cecilia Morgan, *Commemorating Canada,* 9.

substitute for the historical record, oral history has found new purchase as a record of the past (including in legal and academic forums) and if memory is sometimes selective, as critics of oral history might suggest, so too are written documents where issues around their production, who produces them and what material survives, can often be contested. Rather than oppositional, over time memory and history have become complementary and while an authorized heritage discourse still predominates in the macro sense, it is often in memory that history survives at the community and family level.

By examining heritage place as it is presented at a variety of historic sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan the theme of Indigenous roles and rights and the interpretation of Indigenous histories are critical to how heritage agencies and community groups present the past, or at least their version of the past. In Chapter 2, I explore Indigenous cultural landscapes and in Chapter 5 I look at those sites in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, traditionally viewed as places of early settlement, as sites of resistance in the colonialist story. If largely considered as the extension of the Canadian nation state in the West, in a postcolonial world such places also provide the means to challenge hegemonic views of the past. These narratives can underscore the distinctions between traditional government narratives and those of non-governmental groups such as some community organizations, academics, and Indigenous publics. It is at such contested spaces that Indigenous perceptions of the past can confront the conventions of settler colonial history, and where fluid cultural perspectives and historiographies can help define the shifting ground of heritage place.

The commemoration of Indigenous cultural landscapes such as Wanuskewin, Seahorse Gully, Linear Mounds, and the sacred petroforms of Whiteshell Provincial Park tell the story of

ancient land use, including the economic, cultural, and religious themes that give them their resonance and character. Today, these places are not simply relics but living landscapes that demonstrate an old, continuous, and complex relationship with the land. Traditional Indigenous knowledge locates these associations through narratives, place names, sacred sites, rituals, and long-established resource use. Just as these sites reveal an ancient language of place, the contested places of a more modern era – the 19th century -- provide a new language, the language of contentious and claimed space and the exposure of the colonial discourse. By looking at these historic sites and how they were commemorated and interpreted from a new perspective has challenged the traditional heritage messages found at many sites throughout the prairies, particularly the Northwest Resistance sites of Batoche and Fort Battleford in Saskatchewan. Changing this heritage discourse can change modern cultural relations and power structures and, as discussed earlier, reshape modern perceptions around land, space, sovereignty, and economic rights.

This study has also dealt extensively with the early themes behind the creation of various fur trade sites in the West, as well as the designation and interpretation of selected settler sites. I go into considerable detail about the history of Lower Fort Garry as a national historic site, its research and physical development and the way its interpretation has evolved over the years. I refer to the lower fort as an "attraction", using that word in a mostly pejorative sense, and describe its living history program as a largely contrived portrayal of the past. While sites such as York Factory, and to a lesser degree Prince of Wales Fort at Churchill, retain integrity as heritage resources, I describe how their interpretation puts the focus on specific time periods or specific geographical places. In these instances I ask whose voice dictates the preferred narratives of history, the prominence of European stories over Indigenous voices and why the

impoverishment of the York Factory Muskego people in the latter decades of the 19th century is

not a central part of that post's interpretation as a national historic site. It does, after all,

characterize colonialism and the consequences for those who are colonized. For Indigenous

history being "outside the palisades" describes more than trade protocol, it represents much of

the heritage legacy of the fur trade.

In "Constructing Authenticity" I focus on how the commemoration of settler colonialism

in the West has built upon the celebration of nation building and how with "pioneer" places

history quickly became heritage. The historic sites I examine, from River Road Provincial Park,

to ethno-religious settlements, to Motherwell Homestead NHS, are examples of the

commemorated settlement heritage of Western Canada. As heritage sites they demonstrate how

land and the real and imagined histories of community are celebrated, and how memory is both

cherished and invented. Whether it is the Motherwell Homestead, River Road, Veregin,

Mennonite Heritage Village, or Neubergthal Street Village, they commemorate how landscapes

were re-formed as colonial topographies and how founding father narratives came to define place

as cultural legacy.

In the last chapter I move away from the commemorative history and interpretation of

specific sites and touch on how modernity has impacted an emerging preservationist movement,

most particularly in regards to gender and sexuality. While all human cultures have had some

form of relationship to places, objects, and rituals that carry importance within particular

communities for understanding the past, modern societies, especially western cultures, have

developed characteristic ways of experiencing that past. As a more or less recent idea, heritage

over the last few centuries has developed ever more complex methods of collection, organization,

classification, and prioritization to commemorate the past and protect its representations, especially the representation of place.

Place and public space have always been part of a culture's view of itself. In more recent times, however, we have created more comprehensive public spheres, assigning a superior value to those stories that have formed the nucleus of "official" history. But in Western Canada many historic sites continue to reflect the illiberalism of past perspectives, still interpreting the oftentimes tired stories that come with colonial history, founding narratives, and the fanciful descriptions of history as we have imagined it or wished it to be. For instance, the traditional dearth of women's history, especially the histories of Indigenous women, and the absence of the stories relating to sexuality, has skewed our understanding of the past. It is these stories – individual and collective –that must be inscribed in heritage space to create a public, political culture that reflects the past in a 21st century reality.

Throughout this study I have attempted to show how the authenticity of place in Western Canada is not intrinsic or elemental, but cultural. In doing so I have illustrated how memory, modern cultural processes, contemporary perspectives, and bureaucratic objectives have defined or redefined the heritage of many historic sites. At a number of the places in Western Canada discussed in this study we see examples of an imagined past, a heritage that is often prejudiced by modern experiences, and a landscape fashioned as aestheticized space. The idea of collective memory is critical to how heritage is understood, or perhaps misunderstood. Some like Rodney Harrison believe that collective memory in the 21st century faces a "crisis of accumulation" of the past in the present, a crisis, he claims, that will undermine the role of collective memory "overwhelming societies with disparate traces of heterogeneous pasts and distracting us from the

active process of forming collective memories in the present"[448] Although Harrison's perspective

might have value, one can also make the argument that the commemoration of pasts is not in fact

heterogeneous. With the role of the state and the hegemony of a largely homogeneous collective

memory there will be no crisis of accumulation when one looks at recent trends in the

commemoration of places, objects, architecture, and intangible cultural heritage. (Harrison's

'crisis of accumulation' might be fictional, at least in Canada, as an examination of recent

statistics on historic site commemorations in Canada and Manitoba might show. See fig. 38.)

Though government has been the key driver in heritage commemoration, it has not come without

the support and participation (though perhaps uneven) of community organizations. As Bruce

Dawson, the director of cultural policy for the Saskatchewan government noted in 2010,

governments, including provincial governments, have become what he calls "the key author[s] of

heritage with a diverse range of support from regional and community groups."[449] Writing in the

late 1990s, historian, university director, and former heritage manager Frits Pannekoek suggested

that the rise of state controlled heritage policy and development has been due in large part to

what he referred to as "the rise of the heritage priesthood", or that period between roughly 1965

and 1990 which witnessed the growth of heritage agencies and their bureaucracies of heritage

managers, policy specialists, and public professionals such as historians, archaeologists, and

curators.[450] The "priesthood" also came to include the professional interpreter, a trained

communicator whose job was to re-package professional work for public consumption.[451]

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[448] Harrison, *Heritage: Critical Approaches*, 166.

[449] Bruce Dawson, "'It's a Landmark in the Community': The Conservation of Historic Places in Saskatchewan, 1911-2009", in Alvin Finkel, Sarah Carter and Peter Fortna (eds.), *The West and Beyond: New Perspectives on an Imagined Region* (Edmonton: AU Press, 2010), 407.

This study has looked at heritage as it relates to place in Western Canada, examining how heritage value is established, how commemoration reflects social and cultural perspectives and how and why perceptions of a public past are often modified over time. The specific places studied, including built heritage, settler colonial sites, cultural and ethno-religious topographies, and Indigenous spiritual and contested landscapes, illustrate the process of commemoration of some critical themes in western Canadian history. By balancing official themes with alternative community-based views of the past we might find a middle way. If some form of authorized heritage has come to dominate the way we see past and place we might also see community values and perceptions echoed in the official histories of the state. National and regional identities are historical constructions that are regularly challenged, modified, and re-formed.[452] The cultural pluralism that can come from the diversity of histories and the perceptions of those histories by others, while often butting up against the comforting narratives of a national mythology, does allow for emerging and diverse discourses. For the Indigenous elders who visited York Factory in 2002 the larger colonial and economic history of that place was far less a

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[450] Frits Pannekoek, "The Rise of the Heritage Priesthood or the Decline of Community Based Heritage", *Historic Preservation Forum*, vol. 12, no. 3, Spring, 1998, 4-10. It is perhaps odd that Pannekoek, a former and long time heritage manager for both Parks Canada and the Government of Alberta, warns of the increased influence of the professional heritage manager as much of his career was devoted to hiring heritage professionals and making sure that their work was considered authoritative in historic site preservation and interpretation.

[451] Many interpretive specialists are members of Interpretation Canada, an organization founded in 1977 to represent and promote the work of interpretive specialists across the country. According to its website, the organization's members "enrich the experience of visitors to museums, historic sites, parks, farms, nature centres, Indigenous cultural sites, zoos, aquaria, botanical gardens, and a host of other heritage sites and wilderness locations". See: https://interpretationcanada.wildapricot.org/. Accessed 3 July, 2018.

[452] Brian S. Osborne, "Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in Its Place", *Canadian Ethnic Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, 77.

part of the collective and individual memories that make that former community such a critical part of Muskego heritage.

Heritage can play a vital role in the health of the state yet it need not be one that is regressive in the sense that a country must be reliant upon homogeneous and conformist national traditions. Incorporating new stories, alternative meanings, and new ways of looking at the past can bring vitality to the wellbeing of the body politic. The language of place can be confident and progressive and with new commemorations and new stories we can advocate for the replacement of "rear-window" nationalism with forward-looking narratives.

Appendix 1

National, Manitoba Provincial, and Manitoba Municipal Historic Site Commemorations, 2018.

The graph over charts historic site commemorations in Manitoba and across Canada between the 1940s and the 2010s. The national and provincial profiles are fairly similar except that federal historic place designations began to rise in the 1970s. While the provincial Historic Sites Advisory Board was created in Manitoba in 1946, few sites were commemorated until the 1980s when approximately 40 designations were made. The 1980s and 1990s were the most active for the provincial Board, especially after the passage of the Manitoba Historic Resources Act in 1985. National designations of place by the HSMBC reached 11 in that same decade. Both jurisdictions peaked in the 1990s (15 federally and 65 provincially). During the 1980s and for part of the 1990s the federal designation of place often involved acquisition, investment in site protection, conservation, and the development of interpretive infrastructure. Provincially, however, designation invariable meant the installation of a plaque.

Both Canada and Manitoba experienced a steep decline in the 2000s and a further decline in the 2010s.
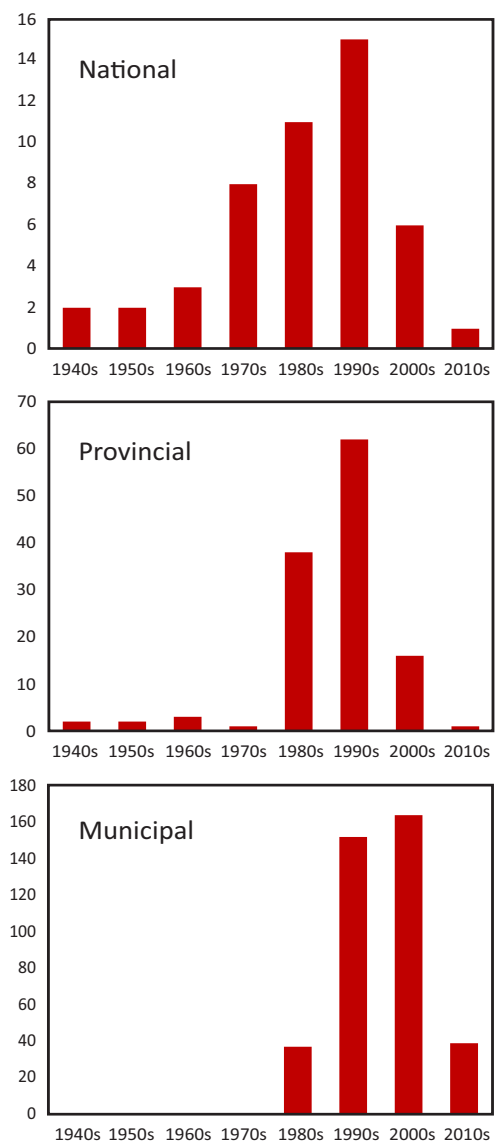
Only municipal site designations in Manitoba saw an increase during the 2000s, although they too dropped off dramatically after 2010.

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Sources: Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada: http://www.pc.gc.ca/apps/dfhd/default_eng.aspx,

Government of Manitoba, Historic Resources Branch:

https://www.gov.mb.ca/chc/hrb/prov/index.html (Historic Resources Branch, Government of Manitoba), Accessed 3 and 4 July, 2018.

National

| 1940s | 1950s | 1960s | 1970s | 1980s | 1990s | 2000s | 2010s |

Provincial

Municipal

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"My argument is that history is made by men and women, just as it can also be unmade and rewritten, always with various silences and elisions, always with shapes imposed and disfigurements tolerated…"

Edward Said*, Orientalism, 1978*

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