

**JINGO BELLES, JINGO BELLES, DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW:
WHITE WOMEN AND EMPIRE ON CANADA'S ARCTIC FRONTIER**

BY

Barbara Eileen Kelcey

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of History
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba

(C) Copyright, June 1994



National Library
of Canada

Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services Branch

395 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0N4

Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada

Direction des acquisitions et
des services bibliographiques

395, rue Wellington
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0N4

Your file *Votre référence*

Our file *Notre référence*

The author has granted an irrevocable non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of his/her thesis by any means and in any form or format, making this thesis available to interested persons.

L'auteur a accordé une licence irrévocable et non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de sa thèse de quelque manière et sous quelque forme que ce soit pour mettre des exemplaires de cette thèse à la disposition des personnes intéressées.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in his/her thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without his/her permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège sa thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

ISBN 0-315-92295-8

Canada

Name Barbara Eileen Kelcey

Dissertation Abstracts International is arranged by broad, general subject categories. Please select the one subject which most nearly describes the content of your dissertation. Enter the corresponding four-digit code in the spaces provided.

Canadian History

0	3	3	4
---	---	---	---

U·M·I

SUBJECT TERM

SUBJECT CODE

Subject Categories

THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

COMMUNICATIONS AND THE ARTS

Architecture 0729
 Art History 0377
 Cinema 0900
 Dance 0378
 Fine Arts 0357
 Information Science 0723
 Journalism 0391
 Library Science 0399
 Mass Communications 0708
 Music 0413
 Speech Communication 0459
 Theater 0465

EDUCATION

General 0515
 Administration 0514
 Adult and Continuing 0516
 Agricultural 0517
 Art 0273
 Bilingual and Multicultural 0282
 Business 0688
 Community College 0275
 Curriculum and Instruction 0727
 Early Childhood 0518
 Elementary 0524
 Finance 0277
 Guidance and Counseling 0519
 Health 0680
 Higher 0745
 History of 0520
 Home Economics 0278
 Industrial 0521
 Language and Literature 0279
 Mathematics 0280
 Music 0522
 Philosophy of 0998
 Physical 0523

Psychology 0525
 Reading 0535
 Religious 0527
 Sciences 0714
 Secondary 0533
 Social Sciences 0534
 Sociology of 0340
 Special 0529
 Teacher Training 0530
 Technology 0710
 Tests and Measurements 0288
 Vocational 0747

LANGUAGE, LITERATURE AND LINGUISTICS

Language
 General 0679
 Ancient 0289
 Linguistics 0290
 Modern 0291

Literature
 General 0401
 Classical 0294
 Comparative 0295
 Medieval 0297
 Modern 0298
 African 0316
 American 0591
 Asian 0305
 Canadian (English) 0352
 Canadian (French) 0355
 English 0593
 Germanic 0311
 Latin American 0312
 Middle Eastern 0315
 Romance 0313
 Slavic and East European 0314

PHILOSOPHY, RELIGION AND THEOLOGY

Philosophy 0422
 Religion
 General 0318
 Biblical Studies 0321
 Clergy 0319
 History of 0320
 Philosophy of 0322
 Theology 0469

SOCIAL SCIENCES

American Studies 0323
 Anthropology
 Archaeology 0324
 Cultural 0326
 Physical 0327

Business Administration
 General 0310
 Accounting 0272
 Banking 0770
 Management 0454
 Marketing 0338
 Canadian Studies 0385

Economics
 General 0501
 Agricultural 0503
 Commerce-Business 0505
 Finance 0508
 History 0509
 Labor 0510
 Theory 0511
 Folklore 0358
 Geography 0366
 Gerontology 0351
 History
 General 0578

Ancient 0579
 Medieval 0581
 Modern 0582
 Black 0328
 African 0331
 Asia, Australia and Oceania 0332
 Canadian 0334
 European 0335
 Latin American 0336
 Middle Eastern 0333
 United States 0337
 History of Science 0585
 Law 0398
 Political Science
 General 0615
 International Law and Relations 0616
 Public Administration 0617
 Recreation 0814
 Social Work 0452

Sociology
 General 0626
 Criminology and Penology 0627
 Demography 0938
 Ethnic and Racial Studies 0631
 Individual and Family Studies 0628
 Industrial and Labor Relations 0629
 Public and Social Welfare 0630
 Social Structure and Development 0700
 Theory and Methods 0344
 Transportation 0709
 Urban and Regional Planning 0999
 Women's Studies 0453

THE SCIENCES AND ENGINEERING

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Agriculture
 General 0473
 Agronomy 0285
 Animal Culture and Nutrition 0475
 Animal Pathology 0476
 Food Science and Technology 0359
 Forestry and Wildlife 0478
 Plant Culture 0479
 Plant Pathology 0480
 Plant Physiology 0817
 Range Management 0777
 Wood Technology 0746

Biology
 General 0306
 Anatomy 0287
 Biostatistics 0308
 Botany 0309
 Cell 0379
 Ecology 0329
 Entomology 0353
 Genetics 0369
 Limnology 0793
 Microbiology 0410
 Molecular 0307
 Neuroscience 0317
 Oceanography 0416
 Physiology 0433
 Radiation 0821
 Veterinary Science 0778
 Zoology 0472

Biophysics
 General 0786
 Medical 0760

Geodesy 0370
 Geology 0372
 Geophysics 0373
 Hydrology 0388
 Mineralogy 0411
 Paleobotany 0345
 Paleocology 0426
 Paleontology 0418
 Paleozoology 0985
 Palynology 0427
 Physical Geography 0368
 Physical Oceanography 0415

HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

Environmental Sciences 0768
 Health Sciences
 General 0566
 Audiology 0300
 Chemotherapy 0992
 Dentistry 0567
 Education 0350
 Hospital Management 0769
 Human Development 0758
 Immunology 0982
 Medicine and Surgery 0564
 Mental Health 0347
 Nursing 0569
 Nutrition 0570
 Obstetrics and Gynecology 0380
 Occupational Health and Therapy 0354
 Ophthalmology 0381
 Pathology 0571
 Pharmacology 0419
 Pharmacy 0572
 Physical Therapy 0382
 Public Health 0573
 Radiology 0574
 Recreation 0575

Speech Pathology 0460
 Toxicology 0383
 Home Economics 0386

PHYSICAL SCIENCES

Pure Sciences
 Chemistry
 General 0485
 Agricultural 0749
 Analytical 0486
 Biochemistry 0487
 Inorganic 0488
 Nuclear 0738
 Organic 0490
 Pharmaceutical 0491
 Physical 0494
 Polymer 0495
 Radiation 0754
 Mathematics 0405

Physics
 General 0605
 Acoustics 0986
 Astronomy and Astrophysics 0606
 Atmospheric Science 0608
 Atomic 0748
 Electronics and Electricity 0607
 Elementary Particles and High Energy 0798
 Fluid and Plasma 0759
 Molecular 0609
 Nuclear 0610
 Optics 0752
 Radiation 0756
 Solid State 0611
 Statistics 0463

Engineering
 General 0537
 Aerospace 0538
 Agricultural 0539
 Automotive 0540
 Biomedical 0541
 Chemical 0542
 Civil 0543
 Electronics and Electrical 0544
 Heat and Thermodynamics 0348
 Hydraulic 0545
 Industrial 0546
 Marine 0547
 Materials Science 0794
 Mechanical 0548
 Metallurgy 0743
 Mining 0551
 Nuclear 0552
 Packaging 0549
 Petroleum 0765
 Sanitary and Municipal System Science 0554
 System Science 0790
 Geotechnology 0428
 Operations Research 0796
 Plastics Technology 0795
 Textile Technology 0994

PSYCHOLOGY

General 0621
 Behavioral 0384
 Clinical 0622
 Developmental 0620
 Experimental 0623
 Industrial 0624
 Personality 0625
 Physiological 0989
 Psychobiology 0349
 Psychometrics 0632
 Social 0451

EARTH SCIENCES

Biogeochemistry 0425
 Geochemistry 0996

Applied Sciences

Applied Mechanics 0346
 Computer Science 0984



Nom _____

Dissertation Abstracts International est organisé en catégories de sujets. Veuillez s.v.p. choisir le sujet qui décrit le mieux votre thèse et inscrivez le code numérique approprié dans l'espace réservé ci-dessous.



SUJET

CODE DE SUJET

Catégories par sujets

HUMANITÉS ET SCIENCES SOCIALES

COMMUNICATIONS ET LES ARTS

Architecture	0729
Beaux-arts	0357
Bibliothéconomie	0399
Cinéma	0900
Communication verbale	0459
Communications	0708
Danse	0378
Histoire de l'art	0377
Journalisme	0391
Musique	0413
Sciences de l'information	0723
Théâtre	0465

ÉDUCATION

Généralités	515
Administration	0514
Art	0273
Collèges communautaires	0275
Commerce	0688
Économie domestique	0278
Éducation permanente	0516
Éducation préscolaire	0518
Éducation sanitaire	0680
Enseignement agricole	0517
Enseignement bilingue et multiculturel	0282
Enseignement industriel	0521
Enseignement primaire	0524
Enseignement professionnel	0747
Enseignement religieux	0527
Enseignement secondaire	0533
Enseignement spécial	0529
Enseignement supérieur	0745
Évaluation	0288
Finances	0277
Formation des enseignants	0530
Histoire de l'éducation	0520
Langues et littérature	0279

Lecture	0535
Mathématiques	0280
Musique	0522
Oriental et consultation	0519
Philosophie de l'éducation	0998
Physique	0523
Programmes d'études et enseignement	0727
Psychologie	0525
Sciences	0714
Sciences sociales	0534
Sociologie de l'éducation	0340
Technologie	0710

LANGUE, LITTÉRATURE ET LINGUISTIQUE

Langues	
Généralités	0679
Anciennes	0289
Linguistique	0290
Modernes	0291
Littérature	
Généralités	0401
Anciennes	0294
Comparée	0295
Médiévale	0297
Moderne	0298
Africaine	0316
Américaine	0591
Anglaise	0593
Asiatique	0305
Canadienne (Anglaise)	0352
Canadienne (Française)	0355
Germanique	0311
Latino-américaine	0312
Moyen-orientale	0315
Romane	0313
Slave et est-européenne	0314

PHILOSOPHIE, RELIGION ET THÉOLOGIE

Philosophie	0422
Religion	
Généralités	0318
Clergé	0319
Études bibliques	0321
Histoire des religions	0320
Philosophie de la religion	0322
Théologie	0469

SCIENCES SOCIALES

Anthropologie	
Archéologie	0324
Culturelle	0326
Physique	0327
Droit	0398
Économie	
Généralités	0501
Commerce-Affaires	0505
Économie agricole	0503
Économie du travail	0510
Finances	0508
Histoire	0509
Théorie	0511
Études américaines	0323
Études canadiennes	0385
Études féministes	0453
Folklore	0358
Géographie	0366
Gérontologie	0351
Gestion des affaires	
Généralités	0310
Administration	0454
Banques	0770
Comptabilité	0272
Marketing	0338
Histoire	
Histoire générale	0578

Ancienne	0579
Médiévale	0581
Moderne	0582
Histoire des noirs	0328
Africaine	0331
Canadienne	0334
États-Unis	0337
Européenne	0335
Moyen-orientale	0333
Latino-américaine	0336
Asie, Australie et Océanie	0332
Histoire des sciences	0585
Loisirs	0814
Planification urbaine et régionale	0999
Science politique	
Généralités	0615
Administration publique	0617
Droit et relations internationales	0616
Sociologie	
Généralités	0626
Aide et bien-être social	0630
Criminologie et établissements pénitentiaires	0627
Démographie	0938
Études de l'individu et de la famille	0628
Études des relations interethniques et des relations raciales	0631
Structure et développement social	0700
Théorie et méthodes	0344
Travail et relations industrielles	0629
Transports	0709
Travail social	0452

SCIENCES ET INGÉNIERIE

SCIENCES BIOLOGIQUES

Agriculture	
Généralités	0473
Agronomie	0285
Alimentation et technologie alimentaire	0359
Culture	0479
Élevage et alimentation	0475
Exploitation des pâturages	0777
Pathologie animale	0476
Pathologie végétale	0480
Physiologie végétale	0817
Sylviculture et taune	0478
Technologie du bois	0746
Biologie	
Généralités	0306
Anatomie	0287
Biologie (Statistiques)	0308
Biologie moléculaire	0307
Botanique	0309
Cellule	0379
Écologie	0329
Entomologie	0353
Génétique	0369
Limnologie	0793
Microbiologie	0410
Neurologie	0317
Océanographie	0416
Physiologie	0433
Radiation	0821
Science vétérinaire	0778
Zoologie	0472
Biophysique	
Généralités	0786
Médicale	0760

Géologie	0372
Géophysique	0373
Hydrologie	0388
Minéralogie	0411
Océanographie physique	0415
Paléobotanique	0345
Paléocologie	0426
Paléontologie	0418
Paléozoologie	0985
Palynologie	0427

SCIENCES DE LA SANTÉ ET DE L'ENVIRONNEMENT

Économie domestique	0386
Sciences de l'environnement	0768
Sciences de la santé	
Généralités	0566
Administration des hôpitaux	0769
Alimentation et nutrition	0570
Audiologie	0300
Chimiothérapie	0992
Dentisterie	0567
Développement humain	0758
Enseignement	0350
Immunologie	0982
Loisirs	0575
Médecine du travail et thérapie	0354
Médecine et chirurgie	0564
Obstétrique et gynécologie	0380
Ophtalmologie	0381
Orthophonie	0460
Pathologie	0571
Pharmacie	0572
Pharmacologie	0419
Physiothérapie	0382
Radiologie	0574
Santé mentale	0347
Santé publique	0573
Soins infirmiers	0569
Toxicologie	0383

SCIENCES PHYSIQUES

Sciences Pures	
Chimie	
Généralités	0485
Biochimie	487
Chimie agricole	0749
Chimie analytique	0486
Chimie minérale	0488
Chimie nucléaire	0738
Chimie organique	0490
Chimie pharmaceutique	0491
Physique	0494
Polymères	0495
Radiation	0754
Mathématiques	0405
Physique	
Généralités	0605
Acoustique	0986
Astronomie et astrophysique	0606
Électromagnétique et électricité	0607
Fluides et plasma	0759
Météorologie	0608
Optique	0752
Particules (Physique nucléaire)	0798
Physique atomique	0748
Physique de l'état solide	0611
Physique moléculaire	0609
Physique nucléaire	0610
Radiation	0756
Statistiques	0463

Sciences Appliquées Et Technologie

Informatique	0984
Ingénierie	
Généralités	0537
Agricole	0539
Automobile	0540

Biomédicale	0541
Chaleur et thermodynamique	0348
Conditionnement (Emballage)	0549
Génie aérospatial	0538
Génie chimique	0542
Génie civil	0543
Génie électronique et électrique	0544
Génie industriel	0546
Génie mécanique	0548
Génie nucléaire	0552
Ingénierie des systèmes	0790
Mécanique navale	0547
Métallurgie	0743
Science des matériaux	0794
Technique du pétrole	0765
Technique minière	0551
Techniques sanitaires et municipales	0554
Technologie hydraulique	0545
Mécanique appliquée	0346
Géotechnologie	0428
Matériaux plastiques (Technologie)	0795
Recherche opérationnelle	0796
Textiles et tissus (Technologie)	0794

PSYCHOLOGIE

Généralités	0621
Personnalité	0625
Psychobiologie	0349
Psychologie clinique	0622
Psychologie du comportement	0384
Psychologie du développement	0620
Psychologie expérimentale	0623
Psychologie industrielle	0624
Psychologie physiologique	0989
Psychologie sociale	0451
Psychométrie	0632



JINGO BELLES, JINGO BELLES, DASHING THROUGH THE SNOW:
WHITE WOMEN AND EMPIRE ON CANADA'S ARCTIC FRONTIER

BY

BARBARA EILEEN KELCEY

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

© 1994

Permission has been granted to the LIBRARY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA
to lend or sell copies of this thesis, to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to
microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film, and LIBRARY
MICROFILMS to publish an abstract of this thesis.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive
extracts from it may be printed or other-wise reproduced without the author's written
permission.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iii
LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF MAPS	v
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	vi
1. INTRODUCTION. Jingo Belles, Jingo Belles, Dashing Through the Snow: White Women and Empire on Canada's Northern Frontier	1
2. CHAPTER ONE. A Long While Between Dog Teams: Climate, Communications and Isolation	35
3. CHAPTER TWO. More Chilling Than Thrilling: White Woman's Burden in the Arctic	71
4. CHAPTER THREE. Speaking of Me and Franklin: Women Travellers in the Arctic	110
5. CHAPTER FOUR. A Few Intrepid Women: Travellers With Professional Purpose in the 1930s	150
6. CHAPTER FIVE. Standing in the Gap: Anglican Women in the Northern Mission	181
7. CHAPTER SIX. Seems Strange To Us: Connections and Distinctions Between Cultures	229
8. CONCLUSION. White Women Have Strange Ways	273
9. APPENDICES.	281
1. Tables Showing Climatic Conditions in the NWT	282
2. Supporting Documents	286
3. Maps	297
BIBLIOGRAPHY	305

ABSTRACT

Previous histories about the Canadian North have been male-defined and dominated by hagiographic accounts of white men and exploration. This thesis identifies white women who immigrated or travelled into the NWT of Canada between 1892 and 1939 and illustrates and analyses their experience on the Northern frontier. Using ideas suggested by the literature on gender and imperialism, the following themes and topics are explored: isolation, supply, domestic economy, and social life, as well as Victorian and Edwardian travellers, racial interaction, and missionary activity.

White women carried ideas of Empire and imperialism with them into the Arctic, particularly as missionaries, but it is the finding of this research that the environment forced them to adapt their ideology and conduct to meet a unique situation. It is clear from the evidence that the experiences of women in the Canadian North are distinct from those in the tropical reaches of the Empire, despite the inherent and similar attitudes of these women. The climate and remoteness had profound effects on the lives of white women, as did the fact that the NWT in the decades before the second World War was an essentially static milieu and not a settlement frontier, constantly changing and developing.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Some time ago, I wrote in a Master's thesis about how grateful I was that my family had allowed a few thousand women to usurp the time which might otherwise have been spent with them. I find myself now thanking them for permitting only a few hundred women to become the excuse for what was a totally selfish, but nevertheless fascinating enterprise, although unfortunately for my family, this effort took more than twice the time of the first project. Their tolerance cannot be acknowledged with mere words. Despite the co-operation of my family, this thesis would never have been written, however, without the financial support provided by a University of Manitoba Graduate Fellowship, a Doctoral Fellowship from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and travel assistance from the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Scientific Training Program. As the documents for research were scattered across the land, funds for travel allowed me the opportunity to search them out and consolidate the records as much as possible. This meant that I found myself in so many archives, I can hardly remember them all. It would be impossible to thank everyone who assisted individually, but I would like to especially thank the archivists and assistants at the Northwest Territories Archives at the Prince of Wales Heritage Centre in Yellowknife, the Yukon Archives in Whitehorse, and at the General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church in Toronto. Like all the depositories I visited, my requests at the Provincial Archives of Manitoba, and the Hudson's Bay Company Archives were met

with humour and alacrity. I have special memories of working at the Provincial House of the Grey Nuns in Edmonton, and the staff at the Glenbow Archives were more than helpful. At the RCMP Centennial Museum in Regina, I appreciated the free rein with the backroom files. A special accolade is required for an unknown archivist at the Rhode Island Historical Society, and to the staff at the reference room at the National Archives and to those who expedited clearance for what must have been dozens of files, I offer sincere appreciation. Finally, the co-operation and assistance of the inter-library loan staff at the Dafoe Library of the University of Manitoba cannot go unheralded.

I would also like to express appreciation to a number of Graduate Students in the Department of History (they know who they are) for their moral support over the last five years, and for the academic stimulation that only fellow students can provide, and to those professors who have shared their wisdom and wit which made the experience worthwhile. Karen Morrow's assistance with the machinations of WordPerfect were almost heroic, and I wish to thank her and Mae Kawata for helping me with all those endless administrative enquiries I made during the last four and a half years. Finally, I must thank my supervisor Dr John Kendle for his good humour, his excellent advice, and his support when life interfered with writing the thesis. Not everyone can be so fortunate as to be able to work with an advisor who can provide advice on a multitude of topics, who edits with skill and tact, and above all, incredible turn around time.

LIST OF FIGURES

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Mhairi Fenton Di Castro's drawing of her <i>Artigi</i> or parka | 48 |
| 2. Elizabeth Taylor's drawing of an Eskimo dance at Peel River | 125 |

LIST OF MAPS

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Settlements in the Eastern Arctic | 298 |
| 2. Settlements in the Western Arctic | 299 |
| 3. Settlements in the Yukon and along the Arctic Coast | 300 |
| 4. The route taken by Agnes Deans Cameron and Jessie Cameron Brown 1908 | 301 |
| 5. Route taken by Elizabeth Taylor in 1892 | 302 |
| 6. Emma Colcleugh's journey North in 1894 | 303 |
| 7. Journey taken by Clara Vyvyan and Gwen Smith in 1926 | 304 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The following abbreviations have been used in the text and in the footnotes

ACC	Anglican Church of Canada
CMS	Church Missionary Society
DOA	Diocese of the Arctic
DOMR	Diocese of Mackenzie River
DOY	Diocese of Yukon
EAP	Eastern Arctic Patrol
GSA	General Synod Archives of the Anglican Church
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
HBCA	Hudson's Bay Company Archives
MHS	Minnesota Historical Society
MSCC	Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada
NAC	National Archives of Canada
NWT	Northwest Territories
NWTA	Northwest Territories Archives
ODHS	Old Dartmouth Historical Society
OMI	Oblates of Mary Immaculate
PAA	Provincial Archives of Alberta
PABC	Provincial Archives of British Columbia
PAM	Provincial Archives of Manitoba
RC	Roman Catholic
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
RNWMP	Royal Northwest Mounted Police
SGM	Soeurs Grises de Montreal
WA	Woman's Auxiliary
YTA	Yukon Territorial Archives

INTRODUCTION

Jingo Belles, Jingo Belles, Dashing Through the Snow: White Women and Empire on Canada's Arctic Frontier

Miss Florence Hirst, known to her friends as Flossie, was a seasoned Arctic veteran when she took up duties as a House Matron at the Anglican mission hospital at Pangnirtung in 1935. Flossie Hirst was perhaps acquainted with as many male heroes of the North as anyone,¹ for she had also been on the staff of the Shingle Point school between 1929 and 1933.² She was not new to the Arctic and its ways when she wrote in her journal about an unfortunate episode at the hospital. An Inuk had gone berserk.³ The local doctor and Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) had remanded the Inuk to the custody of the two women at the hospital. He was violent, insensible and uncontrollable,

¹It should be noted that while the terms North and Arctic are used throughout the text, the geographical parameters of this study are more specific. They include the Northwest Territories as they are presently defined with the addition of that part of the Yukon which is north of Old Crow. This allows for some leeway in using materials from women who lived in the border region, and at Shingle Point and Herschel Island. These were located in the Yukon but were administered as part of the NWT.

²"The Arctic," *The Living Message*, Formerly *The Letter Leaflet of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society for the Church of England in Canada*, referred to as *The Letter Leaflet* or *The Living Message*. January 1935.

³In order to maintain historical integrity, the term *Eskimo* will be the form in those direct quotations where it was originally used. Occasionally, the white women of this period also referred to the aboriginals along the Arctic coast as *Huskies*. This appears to have been a response to their understanding that these Native people were not comfortable with the use of the title Eskimo. In my own text, I refer to these aboriginals as *Inuit*, or in the case of a single man, *Inuk*. The Native peoples of the Mackenzie Valley are properly referred to as *Dene*. When the terms Native, Indigenous, or Aboriginal are used, it is intended to mean virtually all others except the white population.

and the women were decidedly unhappy at having to care for him in their small cottage hospital. "Of all places in Baffin Land to put a crazy man," she recorded, "this was the limit, to dump him in the **one** and **only** place on the whole of Baffin Isl where there was no man in residence and where the girls in charge had a hospital of sick people to care for. **Strong -- Brave -- Silent** (men?) of the North," she pondered about the white men in charge.⁴

Miss Hirst's question alluded to the image of the Arctic regions as a masculine domain; where European men fearlessly cracked whips across the backs of dog-teams as they and their Native guides rode carioles across the ice packs and through the scrub forests of the sub-arctic. It was recognition that to the world, the Arctic was where men were hardy trappers and shrewd fur traders who mingled with intrepid explorers, salty whalers, dauntless Mounties and long-suffering missionaries. The feats of these (white, European) men figure prominently among the legends of the North, but as Flossie Hirst and her female associates might attest, most of these men were pretty ordinary even while their circumstances were not, and like many of Canada's pioneers they were simply able to call on personal resources and a little courage when the situation demanded.

The masculine nature of the history of Canada's North is not unique in the historical tradition, and yet it seems almost redundant to suggest there are some other dimensions.

The most recent historiography makes significant attempts to stress the involvement of

⁴Florence Hirst, diaries, 1933-38, General Synod Archives (GSA), Diocese of the Arctic Collection, (DOA) M71-4. This does not mean Flossie Hirst was admitting the need for men in certain instances. It means Flossie Hirst was annoyed with men who could not handle the situation themselves and thoughtlessly transferred the responsibility to the nurses.

Aboriginals as actors in their own right. Historical research for these studies about the Native residents of the region is hampered by a lack of documents and traditional historical sources. Successful studies must resort to non-traditional methodology, but a growing body of work has served to restore some balance.

While traditional historians have attempted to shed their Eurocentric biases, they have clung to those which perceive women's lives as relatively unimportant to the greater political picture.⁵ The attitude can be attributed to a male misunderstanding about the domestic duties women performed, and the lack of importance that traditional male historians have attached to that work. It is also a reflection as well of a general understanding about how many white women there actually were in the North prior to 1939.

The neglect of women in the historiography leaves open a number of avenues for further study of northern history. A single attempt to integrate that history, however, might prove endless, and the use of traditional historical methods makes it difficult to find a focus for the study of Native women. Moreover, to enquire specifically about white, European women runs the risk of returning to the Eurocentric emphasis of the past. So what I propose is a framework which allows for a study of white, European women who have left documents and records which are revealing of gender roles, racial

⁵This omission is not evident in those studies which can be labelled anthropological. Social scientists of all kinds have long been fascinated by the "primitive" Inuit of the Arctic coasts and have studied to death the Natives of the Mackenzie Region -- to the degree that the Inuvik newspaper has issued warnings about anthropologists on the loose in the settlement. There is not, to my knowledge any such study about Non-native women, however.

domination and cultural attitudes. A similar framework is used in a growing body of scholarship which explores the relationship between gender, empire and imperialism. I intend to develop an analytic narrative based on those published and primary sources using the themes that occur in that literature.

Feminist scholars have begun to grapple with the complexities of the relationship between women, empire, and imperialism, although so far indigenous females have been the principal focus of researchers. Anthropologists and sociologists in particular are intrigued by the relationship between colonial oppression and the lives of indigenous women, partly because feminists see parallels between colonial oppression and women's position in a paternalistic society. To historians of women, however, the challenge goes beyond the restoration of women to history as objects of imperialist oppression, or the study of women as members of indigenous races caught up in the power relations implicit in imperialism itself. Some scholars have used a feminist framework to explain the relationship of white women to imperialist ideology and the empire of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,⁶ arguing that since European women were subordinate to men in their own culture, they were trapped inside that subordinate position and forced

⁶See, for example, Helen Callaway, *Gender Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*, (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987), Claudia Knapman, *White Women in Fiji 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire?* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1986), Joanna Trollope, *Britannia's Daughters: Women of the British Empire*, (London: Cresset Women's Voices, 1983), Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood" *History Workshop*, Vol 5, Spring, 1978, 9-61, Chilla Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages*, (Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992), Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second British Empire*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), and Frances Gouda, "Nyonyas on the Colonial Divide: White Women in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942," *Gender & History*, 5(3), Autumn, 1993, 318-342.

to perform a dominant cultural role in the colonial setting. Critics of this approach suggest it conceals the responsibility white women must share for the racist and imperialist attitudes they helped to foster,⁷ and a (white European) women-centred approach does so to the detriment of providing "relational dimension" to colonialism.⁸ Thus, any study which singles out white women does so at the expense of other groups. By definition, that must be true, but it is possible that some knowledge about the colonizer can be as enriching as an analysis of the "relational dimensions" of any situation. It may even illuminate some other dynamic in the process of imperialism, although it is more likely to show how some women were able to subvert the system through personal agency and for their own ends.

Two recent scholarly trends having some impact on this study have added to the confusion surrounding the historical debate about women and imperialism. The first is the abundance of literary criticism which attempts to apply textual analysis to published works in order to discern its imperialist content. The focus is on fiction written by and about women, as well as non-fiction such as travel writing.⁹ The ahistorical nature of

⁷E Frances White, Review of Callaway in *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 25(1), 1991, 130.

⁸Jane Haggis, "Gendering Colonialism or Colonizing Gender?" *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13 (1-2).

⁹Sara Mills, *Discourses and Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*, (London: Routledge, 1991,) and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Imperialism and Sexual Difference," *Oxford Literary Review*, Proceedings of the Sexual Difference Conference, 1986 are only two examples. An interesting mix is provided in Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, Eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992).

these analyses is frustrating at best, but it is the second direction which is more insidious. Feminist scholars are becoming preoccupied with the idea that the British and American paradigms are representative of any "European" middle class experience. Canada and Australia, for example, are either assumed to represent regional variations of those British and American norms or are ignored in the analysis of Empire because they are not viewed as Third World countries that suffered the indignities of colonization in the same way as India and Africa.

It should not be axiomatic that the American frontier experience was the same as in Canada, or Kenya, nor that the lives women lived in a log cabin at Fort Good Hope were subject to the same strains, stresses and political concerns of a women who lived in urban Britain. It is as impossible to make comparisons between wives of Colonial Service officers in Nigeria with those of RCMP officers at Chesterfield Inlet, as it is to compare muktuk and mangoes. Yet, white European women who lived in the Northwest Territories (NWT) before the Second World War brought with them the same ideological biases their counterparts carried with them elsewhere in the British Empire. Their cultural baggage was bulging with concepts of racial superiority, and they were indoctrinated into the ideological premises of a paternalistic society based on male dominance. Not all were overt agents of imperialism, but many of these women had a concept of "Empire" with all the expectations that term represented.

I will argue in this thesis, however, that the hostile environment and almost total isolation forced those women to repack their bales and bags. My underlying premise is that personal agency required because of the environment more fundamental to the daily

existence of these women, not the paternalistic institutions and imperialistic forces at work in Northern Canada or in their homeland, nor the political influences of feminism, suffrage, or woman's rights which provided impetus for feminist actions in other parts of the Empire. Agency is defined as an intervening action of a personal nature, and environment as the conditions of living, including the region and the general surroundings, including the influence of the Indigenous peoples. What this means, then, is that the focus must be on the *inside*, rather than the *outside*, and so presents a contrasting perspective to traditional northern history. There is some irony in this approach, especially when the climate will have some significance to the argument, but climatic conditions also provide a useful example of it. Everyone knows it is cold in the Arctic, but how cold did the women who lived there think it was? How did the cold affect their daily existence and their domestic role? From a traditional point of view, that may seem unimportant in the overall picture of "relational dimensions", but cold is such an integral part of living in the NWT, it cannot be ignored. It affected what women ate, what they drank, how they kept clean, and how women interacted with other people, which in turn affected the "politics" of their lives.

One of the first goals of this thesis must be to determine whether there is an imperial situation in evidence in the Northwest Territories between 1892 and 1939. Is this, after all, Empire? If it is, whose Empire is it? I am convinced after reading the sources that whether or not the NWT was truly part of the Empire, the women thought it was, and I suggest that *Empire* and *Imperialism* are as much a state of mind as they are a process. When Mena Orford wrote of her four years on Baffin Island she remembered "Baffin

Island had been the promised land. In the flesh it was something very different."¹⁰ She recalled how friends and family referred to the Orfords "pushing back the frontiers of Empire," but added, "whoever thought that one up had never seen the east coast of Baffin Island."¹¹ The *sense* of Empire mentioned by Mrs Orford lingered across the Canadian North long after Canada achieved political independence. Like Winifred Marsh who began her Christmas circular letter from Eskimo Point in 1935 as "continuing the Empire Broadcast,"¹² white European residents identified where they lived or visited with phrases such as "the most northerly post office in the British Empire,"¹³ or the "farthest north customs post in the British Empire."¹⁴ Some were sure their marriage represented the "most northern white wedding in the British Empire,"¹⁵ and others served at the "most isolated hospital in the British Empire."¹⁶ Artists labelled renderings of northern residents as "His Majesty's Most Northerly Subjects,"¹⁷ and an anonymous teacher at

¹⁰Mena Orford, *Journey North*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1957), 9.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 11.

¹²Winifred Marsh, GSA, DOA, M71-4, Box 16, Donald B Marsh Papers, Series 5-1, Circular Letters.

¹³Mhairi Fenton, NAC MG 29 C119, 26 August 1937.

¹⁴Walter Gilbert, as told to Kathleen Shackleton, *Arctic Pilot: Life and Work on Northern Canadian Air Routes*, (Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1942).

¹⁵Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Married Under the Midnight Sun," *North*, 21(4), 1974, 19.

¹⁶Gwen Ross, Glenbow Museum Archives, (GMA), M 4745, File 46, Frontier Nursing Project, 1937 Circular Letter.

¹⁷Kathleen Shackleton, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, (HBCA) A102.2217, Brooks to Shackleton, 24 February 1939. Hereafter HBCA/Shackleton.

Shingle Point entitled her article in a woman's journal as "The Most Northerly Residential School in the British Empire."¹⁸

"If only King Edward VIII could have known how concerned we, his northern subjects, were over his love life," remembered Anna Rokeby-Thomas after the abdication crisis.¹⁹ The *Chroniques* of the Grey Nuns at Chesterfield Inlet a year later recorded that the radio carried "l'écho fidèle des fêtes du couronnement de notre nouveau Roi Georges VI." It was "une rejouissance quais universalle. Pour notre part nous hissons les drapeaux et prions Dieubenir ce nouveau règne. Dieu sauvé le Roi."²⁰

It is not my intention to explore aspects of imperialism in the Canadian North in any political sense, and since imperialism is such a subjective term, I will use it only as a point of departure, eschewing some of the more traditional definitions in favour of a background presence to see if white, European women unfurled both the real and metaphorical flags of Empire. At the same time, I will employ some of the ideas implicit in a gender based study. Feminist scholars have referred to this as foregrounding women.

I have taken this approach with the understanding that imperialism is a problematic concept which defies definition while it presupposes an identifiable meaning.²¹ My impression is that imperialism is exploitative, signified by both the implication of

¹⁸"The Most Northerly School in the British Empire," *Echoes: The Official Organ of the IODE*, October 1931, No 124. This was probably Addie Butler because of the date.

¹⁹Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Darkness," *North*, 22(1), 1975, 17.

²⁰Chroniques de la Mission de Chesterfield Inlet, Hopital Ste Therese de l'enfant Jesus, 12 Mai 1937, L'Archives des Seours Grises de Montreal, St Boniface. (SGMSB).

²¹See Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant British Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, (Leicester: Apollos, 1990).

economic exploitation and an actual human power relationship of dominance and subordination. Historians have analyzed both the institutions of the dominant race as well as colonial encounters with indigenous peoples within a host of frameworks, from every political direction, and from without and within, maintaining a lively debate for over a century. But the essence of imperialism has meant that studies of its nature are often used as a "weapon for promoting the objectives beyond analysis itself,"²² enabling analysts to shift definitions to a "conceptual woolliness" dependent on the user and convenient to his cause. The arguments for internal colonialism in the NWT is just such a case.

Political responsibility for the northern regions of Canada was transferred from Britain in 1880, although a formal recognition did not take place until 1897. The Northwest Territories Act of 1875 was amended in 1905 to accommodate the new administrative districts of Mackenzie, Keewatin, Franklin and Ungava, and established a form of government which provided for both an appointed executive and legislative council, led by a Commissioner.²³ After 1920, the Commissioner was responsible to the Minister of the Interior at Ottawa, creating what some recent Northern historians have labelled *internal colonialism* in the Canadian North.

The term internal colonialism has its roots in sociological discourse about ethnic

²²Katherine West, "Theorising About Imperialism: A Methodological Note," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 1(2), January 1973, 149.

²³A general discussion about the political evolution of the NWT and the transfer of sovereignty is provided in Morris Zaslow, *The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914*, (Toronto, McClelland and Stewart, 1971), and a further useful explanation of government in the NWT can be found in Mark Dickerson, *Whose North? Political Change, Political Development and Self Government in the Northwest Territories*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992).

conflicts in Latin America, where it is used to provide a focus on social relations which are based on domination and subjection. One sociologist suggests internal colonialism refers to

structural arrangements typified by a relatively small dominant group which controls the allocation of resources, and a large subjected mass composed of various groups with unarticulated interests largely divorced from participation in the development process and blocked from means of social mobility.²⁴

The model in question involves wealthy Colombian land-owners who run their holdings like feudal fiefdoms and personal political realms. Like many analytical tools, this definition varies in order to fit the situation under study, and its authors suggest that in this instance, racial domination is not an element of their focus, unlike an earlier study of this nature which was. What they are concerned about is the dependency relationship.

Michael Hechter argues that a number of aspects which distinguish internal colonialism are the same as for any overseas colonial situation. Credit and commerce are monopolized by officials at the core, and the economy of the periphery is forced to develop according to the wishes of that core, so the periphery becomes dependent on external markets. The economy revolves around a single primary export, and there is a relative lack of services. Labour becomes migratory due to price fluctuations and the exportation of primary products, and there is a relative lack of services, a lower standard of living, and a higher level of frustration. Discrimination on the basis of language, religion and culture is also a factor. What this all means is that economic development

²⁴A Eugene Havens and William L Flinn, *Internal Colonialism and Structural Change in Colombia*, (New York: Praeger, 1970), 11.

and opportunity are linked to cultural differences.²⁵

Because the term itself has been invoked by contemporary northern historians, the issue of internal colonialism must be addressed. Kenneth Coates, for example, maintains that the northern territories are colonies of Ottawa in one case,²⁶ and in another, with Judith Powell²⁷ talks about the rejection of that colonialism, but there is almost a glib use of terms which go undefined. There is no referral to any of the sociological models from which the expression derives.

John O'Neil uses a similar concept in "The Politics of Health in the Fourth World: A Northern Canadian Example,"²⁸ but he has taken the time to explain that Fourth World peoples represent internal colonies within First World nations. These peoples were the original inhabitants of a region suggests O'Neil, and their lands have been expropriated by an immigrant population which exploits and subordinates them politically and economically. They generally live in geographic areas which are marginal to the central metropolis.²⁹ O'Neil posits that

an interpretation of northern history based on a model of internal colonialism

²⁵Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975), 33.

²⁶Kenneth Coates, *Canada's Colonies*, (Toronto: Lorimar, 1985).

²⁷Kenneth Coates and Judith Powell, *The Modern North: People, Politics and the Rejection of Colonialism*, (Toronto: Lorimar, 1989).

²⁸John O'Neill, "The Politics of Health in the Fourth World: A Northern Canadian Example," in *Interpreting Canada's North*, Kenneth Coates and William R Morrison, Eds, (Toronto: Copp Clark, 1989), 279-298.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 280.

argues that from the moment northern native people were first contacted by Europeans looking for cheap natural resources, their ability to determine their own livelihood was made problematic.³⁰

It is possible to envision Native Canadians as Nations unto themselves, and from that perspective it is easily concluded that one nation has subordinated another. In the Northern example the implication remains that decisions were made about northern communities without any regard for the priorities of those settlements or the people who lived there, in essence producing a colonial administration in Ottawa. The flaw in McNeil's argument as it relates to the North is in the dynamics. It is my contention that neglect and unsystematic development does not constitute domination, certainly not in the true imperial sense as illustrated by British expansion into India and the Middle East. O'Neil's premise is not flexible enough to allow for Native agency and presumes Aboriginal cultures to be passive and unable to discriminate in personal choices. Coates himself maintains that the only continuity in southern response to development in the North was neglect, yet it is my understanding that colonialism implies some form of policy-making which is enforced in some way. The development of the region has never been systematic, and with the exception of brief instances where northern resources were exploited for gains in the South, the North would not even have a place in the "National consciousness." It was "this sporadic attention which had wide-ranging implications for the revolution of the *northern colonies*."³¹

What is really wrong with the internal colonialism argument relative to this thesis

³⁰*Ibid.*, 283.

³¹Coates, *Canada's Colonies*, 12. My italics.

is the chronology. It can be clearly seen that resource exploration and government intervention in the economy, in the education and health systems, and in relocation of Native families from their indigenous environment were primarily post-war activities. The extended communications lines, difficulties in travel and the unwillingness and inability of southerners to "settle" the North, cast shadows on the assumption that internal colonialism was in effect before the Second World War. It is also significant that the concepts inherent to the argument for internal colonialism are political rather than social, and have little consequence for the white women whose lives are described in this study. This does not mean that there is no foundation for the imperialism context.

Northern settlements grew where trading posts were built, and were later expanded by the creation of mission schools and hospitals, and RCMP Posts. The "Bay", the Church, and the RCMP became known in northern folklore as the "Holy Trinity" of the North, and were representative of what were probably the most imperialist of institutions in the Empire, even while demonstrating a peculiarly Canadian ambience. Their presence provides a more secure foundation for the argument of an imperial context than does that of internal colonialism.

The HBC had controlled a vast network of fur trading posts across the North since the early nineteenth century, hence the northerner's assertion that the HBC was "Here Before Christ". The HBC exerted an economic hold that included a head office which in London, and a retail management centre in Winnipeg controlled both the fur trade *and* the supply system in a newly created cash economy which meant the HBC exercised

profound economic authority.³²

In the North, cultural imperialism, by which I mean the imposition of the values and customs of a dominant group on another, was more the domain of Church of England (Anglican) and Roman Catholic Missionaries who had been in the North since the middle 1850s. The principal charge of the missionaries was to spread the gospel, an activity which often resulted in open competition for souls. Despite this apparently singular goal, by building schools and hospitals attached to their missions the missionaries created a cultural milieu which was inconsistent with the Native way of life. The missions provided both an alternate religion, as well as social and economic options.³³ Nevertheless, it should not be assumed that indigenous populations were simply pawns suffering the imposition of southern lifestyles because of these social and economic changes, or that the Natives in the North did not welcome those choices or make considered decisions on their own behalf.

Government agents in the NWT included Indian Agents and officers of the RCMP, which by 1903 had posts at Fort McPherson and Herschel Island. Indian Agents were nominally responsible for Native welfare, but often acted as post-masters, medical officers and general government representatives. It was the RCMP who upheld the white man's law and carried the flag. Both represented southern administration, governing in

³²Arthur J Ray even argues for a credit cum welfare system which controlled and changed the economic and social base in "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1930," in Shepard Krech, Ed., *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*, (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984).

³³See Kerry Abel, "Of Two Minds: Dene Response to the Mackenzie Missions, 1858-1902," in *Interpreting Canada's North*, 81.

a remote region so isolated, that bureaucrats could not contact them more than once or twice a year until the advent of regular air service and the installation of radio in the early thirties. This afforded some opportunity for paternalism at a very personal level.

The historiography of the North has long focussed on exploration, economic development, and political evolution with an emphasis on the role of the missionaries, the RCMP and the HBC. At present, northern histories tend to be concerned with the political agendas of the present such as Native Land Claims, environmental issues, and Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, and until recently, history about the north was not only male-defined, but featured hagiographic accounts of those few men who have become part of the Arctic legend. The same trend is evident in imperial histories which included women³⁴ only in order to condemn their presence for the fall of the British Empire itself because of their petty social activities and sexual jealousies.³⁵

Those historians who treat white women as intruders in a male empire because their place was not well-defined are guilty of a "conceptual woolliness" of another kind. They ignore the fact that before the Second World War, women's roles in imperial settings were in keeping with the social conventions of the time. In European societies, women's roles were *very* well defined and were not substantially changed by residence in a foreign land, or in isolated areas where there were only fragmented attempts at middle class

³⁴It is always understood here that Native and indigenous women had a role in all colonial settings, either as producers or reproducers, and were exploited both economically and sexually by both colonizing and colonized men.

³⁵Claudia Knapman develops the argument against such conclusions in *White Women in Fiji 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire?*

society. "Place" presumes women should fit into convenient slots in the imperial purpose like soldiers, mill owners and members of cabinet. But race and class, religion and social position, location and language all have an impact on how women as well as men play out their roles within any society.

Set within the contexts outlined above, the goal of this thesis is to furnish some sense of the experience of white women in the Arctic through a narrative guided by themes suggested in the comparative literature about gender and imperialism. These are only themes, however, as the opportunity for comparison is narrow. While parallels can be established with other parts of the Empire, the northern experience is unique.

That the NWT was a Canadian frontier is important, for the Canadian North has characteristics peculiar unto itself, and is different in quality, scale and sociology from the frontiers to the South and in the American West.³⁶ "To some degree a northern community resembles a human outpost on the moon or Mars more than one in the south," explained WL Morton, but "they will be as like those in the south as they can be."³⁷ The "can be" offered an element of surprise. Despite the struggle to maintain the ways to which they were socialized or their intention to change northern society, white women were thwarted in the attempt by the exigencies of geography.

Chapter one describes the problems of supply, climate and isolation which these women had to overcome. Until the arrival of regular air service, dog teams were the

³⁶WL Morton, "The North in Canadian Historiography," AB McKillop, Ed, *Selected Essays of WL Morton*, (Toronto: MacMillan, 1982), 230.

³⁷*Ibid.*

essential means of communication during the winter months. Supplies were ordered on an annual basis and everyone lived with the fervent hope they would arrive aboard next year's ship in the Eastern Arctic, or on the HBC paddlewheeler along the Mackenzie River. These conditions set the stage for some understanding of the domestic life of white women, which is the focus of chapter two.

Domestic economy and the structures of northern society were necessarily different because of geography, and because this was not a settlement frontier. Viable female networks did not develop in many communities because there was never enough people in the white population to allow any remotely resembling a "group". That did not mean white women did not attempt some effort to create their own social expectations, but these did not include the more formal entertaining obvious in other parts of the Empire. It is this chapter which describes the effect that Christmas had upon the North, an important feature for two reasons. First, judging from the extensive comments, Christmas was of vital significance in the life of northerners, and second, and perhaps more important, Christmas represents an essential Christian and "southern" festival.

Chapter three presents a look at Victorian and Edwardian travellers in the region. The emphasis is on four women who published their work. In the comparative literature, travellers represent the single most studied female imperialist phenomenon, probably because they have left behind the most literate, and most accessible evidence. In this chapter, I essentially dismiss that form of analysis in favour of using the works of the northern travellers as a means of illustrating the lack of change over time in the North.

Chapter four details three individual accounts of professional women who travelled

into the North in the 1930s. Available documents allow for some detailed study of their personal encounters with men in the north and with those in the south who made decisions, and erected barriers against the women's pursuits.

The fifth chapter relates how female Anglican missionaries in the North were recruited, and how the circumstances influenced their mission. There are elements from the other chapters incorporated into this assessment of women working for the Church. Employment conditions are an important feature, as Anglican missionary women were the only group consistently employed in the North.

The final chapter addresses the issues of race and cultural arrogance, and some attempt has been made to place this work in relation to the historiography, although a lack of material from the Indigenous perspective makes for some difficulties. Principally, this chapter argues that racism offers an anachronistic framework, and the focus is more on cultural distinctions and noticeable connections.

Sources for the research are noted at some length in the bibliography which reflects the diversity of the material collected. While some rich sources have been located, most represent what can best be described as snippets. There is no continuous or extensive manuscript base available for this study. It has therefore been necessary to construct a narrative and analysis from a plethora of unconnected threads. This has resulted in gaps, yet these glimpses identify what was important to the women in the North. Significantly, the same themes continually recur. Perhaps even more notably, they consistently address the cross-cultural encounters and domestic issues that figured prominently in a white woman's daily existence.

Church journals such as the *Letter Leaflet of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada*, and its successor *The Living Message* have been used extensively even though it is understood that the mission report had specific value and was addressed to an audience primed to read the message of mission. What is evident from other sources, however, is that these were often generic letters, many of which were sent as circulars to friends and family as well as to the WA sponsors. Time was very important in producing letters in the North, so single letters were often reproduced for general mailings. Often it was possible to verify information in these letters by using other sources. I have pursued my research with the assumption that these women had no need to prevaricate, except to exaggerate to make a point. I believe those points are discernible in the documents. I have also assumed from the outset that no matter how historians assess their presence in the North, their experience cannot now be changed, and I have no intention of casting any blame.

It was inevitable that successful research about white, European women in the Northwest Territories prior to the Second World War would result in a confirmation of the anonymity of the subjects in question. Yet the remoteness of the region, and the controlled access that such isolation presented has made it possible to identify individually a significant number of the women who are the subject of this study by name and location, releasing them from that anonymity. The process was necessary, in part, because census data is problematic.³⁸

³⁸ The 1901 census included the Yukon, but combined the results for both territories. The 1911 census apparently presents the NWT as a separate entity, yet lists the total population as 18,481, a figure which reflects the inclusion of the northern regions of the

It can be confirmed that between 1867 and 1939,³⁹ at least 470 white, European women resided in the NWT of Canada, or passed through as travellers for a long enough period to make some impact on the North, or for the North to have had some impact on them. While it is not possible to determine exactly how many white, European women resided in the NWT for any period of time, more than 135 Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns), and about 70 wives of Anglican missionaries or Anglican mission workers have been identified. There were also wives of traders, women who acted as independent traders alongside their husbands, and wives of government agents and RCMP officers. There were women who attempted to settle the inhospitable region, or worked with their husbands on trap lines. Entrepreneurial women opened businesses. Others were employed by the Hudson's Bay Company as stewardesses on their northern supply vessels.⁴⁰ A few women were scientists in their own right, while a significant number travelled into the North on excursions which were recorded and published for posterity.

Traditionally, lists and tables have appeared at the end of theses, banished to an Appendix where only the most interested pursue the details. What follows is a serious

provinces. The NWT Government notes in a 1991 data sheet that the 1911 population was 6,507, but offers no breakdown by sex or race. In 1921, The Canada Census offered that of 3,830 females in the NWT, 2,595 were of Native or Eskimo race; it does not identify any mixed-bloods. By 1931, there were 4,509 females in the NWT, of which 4,277 were recorded as Indian and Eskimo.

³⁹These dates do not coincide with those of the study itself primarily because of the Grey Nuns who entered the North in 1867. Since many of these Sisters stayed in the region for twenty or more years, they have been included in the list, as are early HBC and ACC women who were also in the region. Transiency is a recurring problem in recording any aspect of Northern history.

⁴⁰See Appendix I, Employment Contracts.

attempt to repudiate the prevailing myth that there can only be a relatively few women worth worrying about. There were, after all, relatively few white men. The list represents, for the most part, a homogenous group that can be described as white, European women who immigrated into Canada's North before the Second World War. A few were born in the region and remained there after reaching adulthood.⁴¹ The list is alphabetical. The date provided is the earliest date that research could locate the individual in the NWT.

Some women can only be described by a surname and designated as "Mrs" -- ultimately to suffer the ignoble fate of being remembered only as some man's wife. This may be because the women may simply have been named in a single passage left by a more self-assured (and assuredly more important) male. It is also a reflection of Victorian and Edwardian practices of formal address which are used in official documents, personal correspondence, and even published memoirs. It should be noted that this form of address will be continued throughout the text, as the narrative dictates. The women named in this survey would be offended by the use of only their surname, and would be as equally appalled at some unknown researcher using their Christian names. The use of *Mrs* or *Miss* does not mean the woman is being identified through her relationship to a man, or is being singled out because of marital status. It is simply a reflection of how she would prefer to be addressed. Where a given name is not available for the woman herself, her husband's has been included, if it is known, just for the purposes of identification.

⁴¹Considerable care has been taken to exclude any women who may have had mixed blood, even though they may have been raised or educated outside of the NWT.

Considerable care has been made to identify as many women as possible but it is understood the list is not complete, and serves only as an introduction to the subjects of the study. Nevertheless, the extent of the record suggests that a substantial body of "northern explorers" has been neglected in the history.

Mrs (George) Adams, Arctic Red River, 1933; **Mrs Alexander**, Panguitung, 1931; **Mrs Anderson**, RNWNP, traveller, Mackenzie, 1908; **Mrs Margaret Anderson**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Sister Thecla Andruchow**, SGM, Providence, Smith 1928; **Miss Lillian Armstrong**, Mackenzie River Transport, 1930; **Mrs Dorcas Atkinson**, Lake Harbour, 1923; **Sister Albertine Aubertin**, SGM, Smith, Aklavik, Providence, Simpson, 1925; **Sister MJ Audet-Lapointe**, SGM, Providence, 1867; **Miss MR Austin**, ACC, Hay River, Fort McPherson, 1921; **Mrs (Cpl) Baker**, RCMP, Resolution, 1920; **Anne Bauer**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Mrs Nellie Bailey**, Lake Harbour, ACC, 1932; **Miss Lucy Ball**, Aklavik, ACC, 1932; **Helen Barrett**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Sister Denise Beaudin**, SGM, Providence, 1899; **Sister Bernadette Beaupre-StElizear**, SGM, Providence, 1900; **Sister Maria Louise Beliveau-StGregoire**, SGM, Providence, 1906; **Sister Eglantine SteVictoire**, SGM, Providence, 1908; **Meyer-Marguerit Benoit**, Rae, 1929; **Anna Berquist**, Simpson, 1935; **Miss E Bertram**, Hay River, 1927; **Sister Anna Beauchamp-Nantel**, SGM, Providence, 1933; **Miss Irene Biss**, Great Slave Lake, 1935; **Sister Obeline Bisson**, SGM, Aklavik, Smith, Resolution, Providence, 1932; **Mrs Blake**, Shingle Point, 1925; **Sister ML Christine Blanchette**, SGM, Providence, 1867; **Sister Hermine Blondin-Doucet**, SGM, Providence, 1896;

Mrs (J Carr) Blow, Norman, 1919; Mrs Alix Bode, Great Bear Lake, 1933; Sister Marie Virginie Boisvert, SGM, Providence, 1882; Mrs (George) Bonshor, HBC, Aklavik, 1933; Miss Gladys Booy, McPherson, Hay River, ACC, 1921; Sister Eva Bouchard, SGM, Smith, 1939; Sister Albina Boucher, SGM, Smith, 1919; Sister Rosa Boulet, SGM, Smith/Aklavik, 1930; Sister Olivine Bourbonniere, SGM, Resolution, 1936; Sister Albina Bourcier, SGM, Providence, Simpson, 1884; Sr Bourcier, SGM, Simpson, 1929; Mrs (Dr) Bourget, Resolution, 1935; Margaret Bourke-White, American photographer, Cambridge Bay, 1936; Sr Marguerite Bourlai, SGM, Providence, Simpson, Smith, 1929; Sr Alice Bourque, SGM, Aklavik, 1935; Miss Dorothy Bradford, Aklavik, ACC, 1932; Mrs Braund, McPherson, Klondike traveller, 1898; Mrs Lillian Bretzlaff, Yellowknife, 1938; Miss Alice Brown, Aklavik, ACC, 1934; Miss Jessie Cameron Brown, traveller, Mackenzie, 1908; Sister Rosalie Brunelle, SGM, Providence, 1867; Mrs Bulland, Aklavik, RCMP, 1938; Miss Helen Bushell, Hay River, ACC, 1925; Mrs Addie Butler, Shingle Point, ACC, 1934; Mrs (Dr) Byrnes, Simpson, 1935; Mrs Monica Cadzow, Rampart House, trader, 1905; Mrs Ralph Cameron, Smith, 1938; Miss Agnes Deans Cameron, traveller, Mackenzie, 1908; Mrs (FC) Campbell, Hay River, 1923; Miss Louise Camsell (Mills), Simpson, 1900; Mrs Annie Card, Norman, Indian Agent, 1922; Sister Alberta Cardin; Resolution, 1929; Mrs Carl, passed in a canoe, Mackenzie, 1908, Sister Cecille Caron, SGM, Providence and Aklavik, 1929; Mrs Carrol, Good Hope, 1921, Miss Castonguay, Resolution, 1931, Miss Ethel Catt (McLean), Aklavik, ACC, 1926; Mrs (Insp) Caulkin, Herschel Island, RCMP, 1926; Mrs Champagne, Cameron Bay, 1935;

Sister Marie Louise Champeau, SGM, Resolution, Simpson, 1922; **Sister Antoinette Charbonneau**, SGM, Resolution, 1936; **Sister Zoe Chartier-Girouard**, SGM, Smith, Providence, 1921; **Sister Rose Anna Chartier-Adelard**, SGM, Smith, 1923; **Mrs (JGM) Christie**, Traveller, Mackenzie, HBC, 1922; **Mrs Gladys Patterson Clarke**, Norman, ACC; **Mrs Margaret Clay**, Chesterfield Inlet, RCMP, 1924; **Jean Clayton**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Mrs (Dr) Coates**, Panguitung, 1934; **Mlle Marie Anne Coignard**, Providence, 1884, **Mrs Emma Shaw Colcleugh**, traveller, Mackenzie, 1894; **Sister Catherine Colombine**, SGM, Providence, 1884; **Mrs Connibear**, trader, Smith, 1925; **Miss Mabel Connibear**, Smith, 1925; **Mrs Cook**, Herschel Island, whaler, 1905; **Mrs Opal Cook**, Simpson, ACC, 1935; **Mrs (Rev) Cooke**, Aklavik, ACC, 1937; **Mrs P Ashley-Cooper**, HBC Governor, Eastern Arctic, 1934; **Sister Annie Cooper**, SGM, Resolution, 1933; **Mrs Elizabeth Copland**, Aklavik, HBC, 1936; **Sister Jeanne Corformat-Didace**, SGM, Providence, 1897; **Mrs Kathleen Cormack**, Arctic Bay, 1936; **Mrs Cory**, Chesterfield Inlet, RCMP, 1938; **Mrs (Elmire) Couture**, Smith, 1933; **Mrs Craig**, *Arctic*, 1923; **Mrs Emily Romig Craig**, Mackenzie River, Klondike, 1898; **Mrs Crisall**, McPherson, ACC, 1924; **Miss Mary Crocker (Peters)**, Aklavik, ACC, 1925; **Dorothy Cunningham**, Aklavik, 1930; **Mrs (Insp) Curleigh**, Aklavik, RCMP, 1936; **Bunny Cuthbertson**, Smith, 1922; **Sr Marie Philomene Daigle**, SGM, Providence, 1872; **Sr Helene Evariste Danic**, SGM, Ft Smith, Resolution, 1926; **Sr Cecile Dansereau**, Providence 1936; **Sr Mary Madeline Davy**, SGM, Smith, Providence, Resolution, 1908; **Mrs (H) Day**, Fort Simpson, ACC, 1908; **Sr Corinne Delormier**, SGM, Providence, 1900; **Mrs (H) Desrosier**, Norman, 1933; **Sr Anna Deshaies**, SGM,

Providence, Smith, 1936; **Sr Marie-Joseph Desrochers**, SGM, Aklavik, Providence, Simpson, 1921; **Mrs Lileotta DeStaffany**, *Kindersley*, 1930; **Mrs Dewdney**, Resolution, 1937; **Mrs Dedie Dodds**, Arctic Bay, HBC, 1936; **Mrs (SG) Douglas**, Norman, 1932; **Mrs (Dr) Doyle**, Herschel, 1922; **Sr Genevieve Duclos**, SGM, Smith, Simpson, Aklavik, 1928; **Miss Dunn**, Hay River, ACC, 1927; **Sr Louisa Duport**, SGM, Smith, Providence, Simpson, 1926; **Sr Adele Maria Dupuis**, SGM, Smith, 1936; **Sr Hermine Dusalve-Levesque**, SGM, Smith, 1921; **Ruth Dusseault**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Sr Josephine Dusseault**, SGM, Aklavik, 1935; **Mrs Eames**, RCMP, Herschel, 1932; **Mrs Earnshaw**, Cameron Bay, 1935; **Mrs Edgerton**, Mackenzie River, 1916; **Mrs Susan Edmonds**, Eskimo Point, 1933; **Mrs Edwards**, Mistake Bay, 1936; **Mrs Marion Ellis**, Mackenzie traveller, 1922; **Helen Engels**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Lillian Farrow**, Aklavik, ACC, 1937; **Miss Mhairi Fenton (DiCastro)**, EAP, 1937; **Mrs Mary Ferguson**, trapper, Providence, 1928; **Frances Fielding**, Aklavik, 1933; **Mrs (R) Finnie**, EAP, 1937; **Mrs Fletcher**, EAP, 1937; **Mrs (Harry) Ford**, Chesterfield, HBC, 1923; **Mrs Mary Edmunds Ford**, Coral Harbour, HBC, 1923; **Mrs Edna Ford**, Thompson Lake, 1939; **Miss CI Forrest**, EAP, 1936; **Sr Paulette Fortier**, SGM, Smith, 938; **Sr Celine Fortin**, SGM, Resolution, Smith, 1914; **Miss Gladys Fosterjohn (Grant)**, Aklavik, ACC, 1921; **Mrs (AB) Fraser**, Chesterfield, 1937; **Mrs Laura Frazeur**, Mackenzie River, traveller, 1922; **Mrs Christina Fry**, Herschel, ACC, 1916; **Sr Adrienne Gadbois**, SGM, Simpson, Resolution, Smith, 1914; **Mrs (HR) Gagnon**, Smith, 1933; **Sr Edna Gagnon**, SGM, Aklavik, Resolution, 1936; **Mrs Ann Gall**, *Aklavik* engineer, Arctic coast, 1936; **Sr Antoinette Garceau**, SGM, Providence, 1937;

Miss Ethel Garton, Hay River, ACC, 1925; **Mrs (Rev) Garton**, Resolution, 1895; **Sr Marie Louise Gauthier**, SGM, Providence, 1872; **Catherine Geigerich**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Mrs Lodema George**, Simpson, trapper, 1933; **lydia Gerhard**, Cameron Bay, 1933; **Mrs Gibson**, Simpson, ACC, 1928; **Mrs (Jack) Clarke Gifford**, Simpson, 1928; **Sr Clara Gilbert**, SGM, Aklavik, Providence, 1926; **Miss Florence Giles**, Pangnirtung, ACC, 1933; **Sr Elizabeth Girard-Ste Eugenie**, SGM, Smith Providence, 1915; **Sr Girouard**, SGM, Simpson, 1916; **Sr Delphine Giroux-Pinsonneault**, SGM, Smith, 1919; **Miss Edith Goddard (Craig)**, Hay River, ACC, 1937; **Mrs Jean Godsell**, Simpson, HBC, 1921; **Mrs Jane Goodall**, Simpson, 1927; **Mrs Marilyn Grange**, EAP, historian, 1937; **Sr Georgiana Gratton-Galipeau**, Providence, 1893; **Mrs (FM) Green**, Hershel, whaler, 1894; **Dr Isobel Greenwood**, McPherson, ACC, 1934, **Mrs Grey**, Chesterfield, 1937; **Sr Yvonne Guerette**, SGM, Resolution, Smith, 1933; **Mrs Ed Groot**, theatre, YK, 1939; **Miss Minnie Hackett**, Aklavik, ACC, 1928; **Mrs Hall**, canoeist, Mackenzie, 1908; **Sr Marie-Claire Hamelin**, SGM, Providence, 1937; **Sr Isabelle Hameline**, SGM, Smith, Aklavik, 1932; **Miss Margaret Ruth Hamilton**, Aklavik, ACC, 1935; **Mrs (Gerald) Hansen**, Simpson, Northern Traders, 1934; **Sr Helene Harboc**, SGM, Smith, 1935, **Mrs Harcourt**, Aklavik, ACC, 1929; **Mrs Harris**, Resolution, 1935; **Miss Marion Harvey**, Hay Rover, ACC, 1928; **Miss Francis M Harvie**, Hay River, ACC, 1919; **Mrs Hawkes**, Chesterfield, 1936; **Miss Joyce Head**, Good Hope, 1936; **Margaret Heeney**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Mrs Herron**, Rae, 1908; **Sr Marie Heurtebize-Grandin**, SGM, Providence, 1909; **Miss Ethel Hewer**, Herschel, ACC, 1934; **Miss Florence Hirst**, Shingle Point, ACC, 1933; **Mrs Catherine Hoare**,

Aklavik, 1921; **Miss Rosina Hobbs**, Hay River, ACC, 1936; **Miss Prudence Hockin**, Pagnirtung, ACC, 1931; **Mrs Hodgson**, Good Hope, 1898; **Mrs Minnie Hoglund**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Mrs (John) Hope**, Providence, 1890; **Sr Jeanne Houde**, SGM, Providence, Simpson, 1930; **Miss Elizabeth Howard**, Hay River, ACC, 1916; **Miss Dorothy Howie**, Hay River, ACC, 1925; **Mrs Hunter**, Hay River, ACC, 1917; **Dr Isobal Hutchison**, Arctic Coast, 1933; **Mrs Hutton**, EAP, 1933; **Charlotte Innes**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Mrs Irvine**, Norman, 1895; **Miss Jackson**, Hay River, ACC, 1916; **Mrs Jennings**, Norman, 1937; **Mrs (AB) Jewell**, Smith, 1933; **Mrs (Cpl) Johnson**, Resolution, 1935; **Mrs Johnston**, Herschel, HBC, 1937; **Mrs (Sgt) Johnston**, McPherson, Aklavik, 1921; **Miss Mabel Jones**, Shingle Point, ACC, 1934; **Mrs (Trevor) Jones**, Aklavik, ACC, 1938; **Mrs (Sgt) Joyce**, Chesterfield, RCMP, 1935; **Sr Marie Kahppexonne-Donatien**, SGM, Providence, 1930; **Miss Gwen Keary**, Pagnirtung, 1937; **Miss Daphne Kemp**, Herschel, RCMP (daughter), 1927; **Mrs Nance Kemp**, Herschel, RCMP, 1927; **Mrs (Cpl) Kerr**, Chesterfield, RCMP, 1935; **Miss Keyes**, Aklavik, ACC, 1937; **Poppy Kidston**, Coppermine, tourist, 1935; **Ida Kolkind**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Sr Elizabeth Kristoff**, SGM, Resolution, 1938; **Sr Marie-Anne Lacasse**, SGM, Providence, Resolution, 1934; **Sr Marguerite Lachambre**, SGM, Aklavik, Smith, 1930; **Sr Elantine Lacompte**, Resolution, 1939; **Sr G Lambert**, SGM, Simpson, 1938; **Sr Felexina Lamoreaux**, SGM, Resolution, Simpson, Aklavik, 1929; **Mlle Mederise Lapalme**, SGM Auxillary, Simpson, 1939; **Sr Celina Lapierre**, SGM, Smith, Resolution, 1933; **Sr Adele Lapointe**, SGM, Providence, 1867; **Sr Rose Alma Laroche**, SGM, Smith, Resolution, 1934; **Miss Reita Latham**, Shingle Point, ACC,

1930; **Sr Antoinette Latremouille**, SGM, Simpson, Smith, Providence, 1916; **Sr Oliva Lavoie**, SGM, Smith, 1931; **Mrs (Austin) Law**, McPherson, Northern Traders, 1934; **Miss Lawrence**, ACC, Fort Resolution, 1890; **Miss LeRoy**, Hay River, ACC, 1916; **Sr C Catherine LeBrise**, SGM, Smith, 1939; **Sr Marie Anne LeDreau**, SGM, Smith, 1915; **Sr Delia Leblond**, SGM, Providence, Smith, Simpson, 1927; **Sr Antoinette Leduc**, SGM, Aklavik, 1932; **Mlle Mathurine Legal**, Providence, SGM Auxillary, 1884; **Vicki Lepine**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Mlle Domithilde Letendre**, SGM Auxillary, Providence, 1867; **Sr Gabrielle Letourneau**, SGM, Providence, 1933; **Sr Marie Louise Leveille**, SGM, Smith, 1914; **Sr Vitaline Levesque**, SGM, Smith, Resolution, 1928; **Mrs Anna Linberg**, trapper, Simpson, 1931; **Mrs Ann Lindbergh**, avator, 1931; **Mrs Ling**, Smith, ACC, 1938; **Mrs (Dr LD) Livinstone**, Chesterfield, 1935; **Mrs (Bishop) Lucas**, Herschel, 1917; **Sr AC Anne Lusignan**, SGM, Aklavik, Smith, 1931; **Sr Beatrice Lussier**, SGM, Smith, 1929; **Sr Marguerite Lussier**, Smith, Providence, Simpson, 1922; **Mrs Mary Lyman (Kost)**, Aklavik, Herschel, 1931; **Mrs (Dr) MacKinnon**, Pangnirtung, 1936; **Sr Mary Mack**, SGM, Providence, 1934; **Miss Mary Louise Mackay (Harley)**, Resolution, HBC, 1881; **Sr Josephine Mahe-Augustinne**, SGM, Providence, 1896; **Miss Ellen Wallace Scott (Manning)**, Cape Dorset, 1938; **Miss Anna B Marsh**, Hay River, ACC, 1892; **Mrs Winifred Marsh**, Eskimo Point, ACC, 1932; **Mrs (Rev) Martin**, McPherson, ACC, 1929; **Sr Emeretienne Martin**, SGM, Smith, Providence, Resolution, 1927; **Sr Marie Masse**, SGM, Providence, 1880; **Tessie Matthews**, Cameron Bay, 1935; **Miss Mildred McCabe**, Aklavik, ACC, 1935; **Mrs (Canon) McCullum**, Simpson, ACC, 1930; **Reita McDevitt**, Yellowknife, 1938;

Mary McDougal, Smith, 1933; Mrs McGibbon, Lake Harbour, 1937; Mrs (Cpl) McGillicuddy, Good Hope, RCMP, 1934; Sr Ellem McGuirck, SGM, Simpson, Providence, 1912; Miss Lucie McGuire, Herschel, whaler, 1896; Wilhelmina McGurran, Yellowknife, 1938; Mrs Cunie McKinnon, Pangnirtung, 1934; Mrs McLennan, Hay River, ACC, 1928; Miss Mildred Hall (McMeekan), Yellowknife, 1939; Sr Alice McQuillan, SGM, Aklavik, 1925; Mrs Meickle, Cameron Bay, 1935; Sr Mathurine Meliner-Denise, SGM, Providence, 1897; Mrs Carthena Melling, Chesterfield, EAP, 1937; Miss Evelyn Roberts (Merritt), ACC, Aklavik, 1922; Sr Valerie Metivier, SGM, Providence, Resolution, Aklavik, 1927; Sr Emilie Michon, SGM, Providence, 1867; Mrs Hazel Midgely, Yellowknife, 1938; Mrs Jean Miller, Yellowknife, 1939; Mrs Mills, Rae, 1908; Mrs Alice Milne, Cambridge, 1935; Mrs (Frank) Milne, *Bayeskimo*, 1925; Sr Monastesse, SGM, Simpson, 1939; Sr Rose Anna Montpetit, SGM, Resolution, Smith, 1930; Mrs Geraldine Moodie, *Arctic*, RCMP, 1906; Miss Augusta Morris, Norman, ACC, 1885, Mrs (Ollie) Morris, *Baychimo*, teacher, 1930; Ruth Mullin, Yellowknife, 1939; Mrs Luta Munday, Chesterfield, RCMP, 1922; Mrs (Rev) Murray, Herschel, 1926; Sr Marie Nadeau, SGM, Smith, 1935; Miss Winifred Neville, Herschel, 1933; Mrs (JW) Nichols, Bathurst Inlet, 1936; Sr Ann Marie Nicol, SGM, Simpson, Providence, 1917; Sr Pauline Noiln-Sylvan, SGM, Providence, 1923; Mrs Rose Norgaard, Simpson, trapper, 1936; Mrs (A) Norris, Aklavik, 1933; Miss Mildred Maher (O'Callahan), Smith, 1938; Mrs Grace O'Kelly, *Kindersley*, HBC, 1921; Miss Oke, Aklavik, 1938; Miss Winona Orr, Hay River, ACC, 1915; Sr (Superieure) Olivier, SGM, Simpson,

1919; **Miss Valenis Ottoway**, Hay River, ACC, 1925; **Mrs Minnie Oulton**, Smith, 1925; **Sr Eva Paert**, SGM, Smith, Resolution, Simpson, 1930; **Miss June Paisley**, Cambridge, daughter, Canalaska Traders, 1935; **Mrs Ada Paisley**, Canalaska, Cambridge, 1935; **Miss Mary Palmer**, Hay River, 1937; **Mrs (E) Parsons**, Aklavik, 1933; **Mrs (JA) Parsons**, *Distributor*, 1934; **Mrs Pearce**, Smith, 1911; **Margaret Peck**, Aklavik, ACC, 1935; **Mrs May Pederson**, Herschel, 1930; **Sr Louise Pellant**, SGM, Providence, Smith, 1919; **Mrs Helen Perkins**, lawyer, YK, 1939; **Sr Laura Perreault**, SGM, Smith, Providence, 1925; **Irene Petrie**, Yellowknife, 1938; **Miss G Pevin**, EAP, 1936; **Mrs Jane Philips**, Bernard Harbour, HBC, 1918; **Mere Marie Piche**, SGM, Mackenzie Inspection, 1912; **Sr Marie Adele Pigeon**, SGM, Providence, 1896; **Mrs Pirie**, Aklavik, ACC, 1923; **Miss Platt**, Aklavik, 1938; **Sr Alice Plourde**, Smith, 1937; **Miss Elly Rothe Hansen (Porsild)**, Aklavik, 1930; **Mrs Sophie Porter**, whaler, Herschel, 1894; **Sr Obeline Pothier**, SGM, Simpson, Aklavik, Providence, 1911; **Miss Potts**, Hay River, ACC, 1907; **Sr Marie Rose Poulin**, SGM, Aklavik, Providence, Simpson, 1926; **Miss Susan Elizabeth Quirt**, Shingle Point, ACC, 1930; **Mrs (AF) Redfern**, *Distributor*, 1937; **Mrs Edna Reed**, Cameron Bay, 1933; **Miss Hazel Scourfield (Reiach)**, Tuktoyuktuk, HBC, 1938; **Mrs Helen Reid**, McPherson, 1918; **Sr Alice Rheault**, SGM, Providence, Resolution, 1928; **Mrs (Rev) Richards**, Hay River, ACC, 1938; **Miss P Rickard**, Smith, Rae, 1936; **Sr Elvire Rivard**, SGM, Providence, Aklavik, 1921; **Mrs Mary Rivett-Carnac**, RCMP, Aklavik, 1935; **Sr Aldea Roberge**, SGM, Smith, 1939; **Sr L Anna Robinet**, SGM, Aklavik, 1931; **Lady Clara Rogers (Vyvyan)**, traveller, 1926; **Miss Gwen Rogers**, Aklavik, ACC, 1937; **Mrs**

Anna Rokeby-Thomas, Cambridge, ACC, 1935; **Miss Gwen Ross**, Pangnirtung, ACC, 1937; **Mrs (Ray) Ross**, Read Island, HBC, 1936; **Sr Alma Rouleau**, SGM, Providence, 1916; **Sr Eva Roy**, SGM, Providence, 1916; **Miss Mildred Rundle**, Aklavik, ACC, 1935; **Miss EV Russell**, Hay River, ACC, 1925; **Mrs (ML) Ryan**, Smith, 1934; **Miss Mary Samwell**, McPherson, Hay River, ACC, 1921; **Sr Marie Olive Sarrasin**, SGM, Providence, 1927; **Carol Saucier**, Pangnirtung, ACC, 1935; **Mrs AL Scholes**, Hay River, ACC, 1932; **Miss Scourfield (Bowring)**, Simpson, 1916; **Sr Rose de Lima Seguin**, SGM, Providence, 1892; **Miss Kathleen Shackleton**, artist, 1937; **Miss Priscilla Shepherd**, Shingle Point, ACC, 1931; **Mrs (Rev) Shepherd**, Shingle Point, ACC, 1935; **Mrs (Albert) Sherman**, Herschel, whaler, 1896; **Mrs (Rev) Singleton**, Hay River, ACC, 1924; **Mrs (WMI) Skinner**, Norman, HBC, 1936; **Miss Florence Smith**, EAP, scientist, 1931; **Miss Gwen Dorrien Smith**, traveller, 1926; **Miss Margaret Solomon**, Aklavik, ACC, 1937; **Miss Grace Somers**, Aklavik, ACC, 1936; **Mrs Carolyn Soper**, Bernard Harbour, 1930; **Inez Sorenson**, Yellowknife, 1939; **Miss Helen Sowden**, Aklavik, ACC, 1921; **Mrs Rose Spendlove**, Great Slave Lake, ACC, 1903; **Loreen Squire**, journalist, Yellowknife, 1938; **Sr St Adelard**, SGM, Simpson, Aklavik, 1925; **Sr (Superieure) St Adjutor**, SGM, Simpson, 1928; **Sr St Doithee**, SGM, Simpson, 1917; **Sr Corrine St Germain**, SGM, Simpson, Providence, Smith, 1914; **Sr Lydia St Hilaire**, SGM, Resolution, 1939; **Sr Marie Louise St Michel**, SGM, Providence, 1867; **Sr Rosa St Pierre**, SGM, Providence, 1886; **Sr Marie Anne St Pierre**, SGM, Smith, 1916; **Sr Melanie St Vincent de Paul**, SGM, Providence, Simpson, 1914; **Mrs Ruth Stanton**, Yellowknife, 1937; **Sr Albina Ferland Ste Albine**,

SGM, Simpson, Providence, 1914; Miss G Strang, EAP, 1936; Mrs Sarah Elizabeth (Sadie) Stringer, ACC, Peel River, 1896; Miss Sulston, Resolution, 1904; Miss R Swift, Hay River, ACC, 1932, Sr Sylvain, SGM, Simpson, 1937; Mrs GK Tallman, EAP, 1936; Miss Elizabeth Taylor, traveller, 1892; Mrs Tedcastle, Smith, 1922; Miss Beatrice Terry, Aklavik, ACC, 1927; Sr Malvina Thilbert, SGM, Aklavik, 1927; Mrs Muriel Thom, Pangnirtung, HBC, 1937; Mrs Thompson, Chesterfield, 1935; Mrs (Cpl) Thorne, Smith, RCMP, 1933; Miss Timms (Johnson), Hay River, ACC, 1898; The Misses Traynor, HBC Stewardesses, 1924; Mrs (Rev) Tremain, Hay River, ACC, 1915; Mrs Georgie Tresbach, Providence, trapper, 1934; Sr Regina Trottier, SGM, Aklavik, 1937; Mrs (Dr) Truesdale, Aklavik, 1937; Sr M Zoella Turcotte, SGM, Smith, Providence, 1914; Miss Donata Turner, traveller, 1937; Mrs Vera Turner, Simpson, 1933; Mrs Jean Turner, Pangnirtung, ACC, 1932; Mrs Kay Turner, trapper, Simpson, 1938; Marie Unret, Yellowknife, 1938; Mrs (Dr) Urquhart, Aklavik, 1937; Mrs (Rev JS) Vale, Hay River, ACC, 1925; Miss Lillian McDermitt (Van Velsen), Yellowknife, 1939; Miss Veitch, Hay River, ACC, 1897; Sr Marcelline Vermette, Providence, 1931; Alice Verville, Aklavik, 1933; Sr Noella Voedz Jen, SGM, Smith, Providence, 1912; Mrs Nancy Voisey, Chesterfield, 1933; Pat Wall, Yellowknife, 1939; Mrs Clara Wallis, Rampart, ACC, 1892; Sr Elizabeth Ward, Providence, 1867; Mrs Tahoe Washburn, Herschel, 1936; Mrs Edie Webster, Coppermine, ACC, 1936; Mrs (Charles) Weeks, Herschel whaler, 1894; Norah West, ACC Pangnirtung, 1938; Mrs Alix Westhead, Great Bear Lake, 1899; Mrs (Cpl) Weston, RCMP, Chesterfield, 1938; Beulah White, Yellowknife, 1939; Mrs (Capt) Whiteside, Herschel, whaler,

1895; Mrs Emma Whittaker, Rampart, ACC, 1915; Mrs (Sgt) Wight, Chesterfield, RCMP, 1935; Miss Wilgress, Hay River, ACC, 1911; Mrs (Cpl) Williams, Resolution, RCMP, 1931; Mrs Woodrow, Chesterfield, 1936; Mrs (Insp) Woods, Aklavik, RCMP, 1923; Mrs Wylie, Mackenzie, ACC, 1929.

Chapter One

A Long While Between Dog Teams: Climate, Communications and Isolation

Canada's Northwest Territories stretch northward to the Pole across 1,304,904 square miles of some of the most inhospitable geography on the planet.¹ The NWT constitutes 34% of the area of Canada, yet in 1988, it was estimated that there were only 57,298 residents -- one person for each 22.7 square miles. In 1911, when the population was 6,507, the density was one person for each 200 square miles. It is a vast and empty land, described by one Bishop of the Arctic as so remote that there was an "un-get-atibleness"² to the place, a condition emphasized by the letterhead of one of the Anglican missions which read:

ANGLICAN MISSION
Lake Harbour, Baffin Island
c/o The Hudson's Bay Co., 100 McGill Street
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
(One Mail a Year, Leaves About July 1st)³

The NWT is not a land of eternal ice and snow, although freezing temperatures can

¹*Northwest Territories Data Book*, (Yellowknife: Outcrop, 1991). The same statistics are available in the NWT Data Sheets published by the Government of the NWT, and which are essentially copies of the material in that book. Interestingly, the *Data Book* states the area is 1,304,903 square miles, where the GNWT has added an extra unit.

²National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 85, Records of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Volume 1883, File 630, Part 219-2, Secretary of the Diocese of the Arctic to Foster, 8 April 1935.

³NAC, RG 85, Volume 630, File 214-2. (No date but probably 1930s).

occur in any month in the Arctic region, and it is indisputable that the winters are cold. In the Mackenzie River Valley temperatures fall below zero degrees Celsius for at least seven months of the year, and temperatures of minus fifty-seven degrees Celsius have been recorded. In the Eastern Arctic, where some of the Islands are covered by a permanent ice cap, there are more variable temperatures, often related to the proximity of Hudson Bay and the Arctic Ocean. Thermometer readings in January are usually between minus twenty-five degrees Celsius and minus fifty degrees, but not only the interminable cold figures in the climate, and contributes to the bleak image of the North. At the summer solstice the sun never sets across much of the region. In the depth of winter, it does not shine at all. (See Tables Appendix 1)

It was winter, coupled with the effects of isolation and the remoteness that distinguished life for European women in the Arctic, and which added an additional strain to already extended communication lines. If a woman's health deteriorated, or a difficult birth was anticipated, it was not simply a matter of waiting for the next boat to travel to civilization and medical care. In the Eastern Arctic, there was only one boat to wait for, and it arrived only if conditions allowed. In the Western Arctic along the Mackenzie River, the HBC supply ship took two trips if ice conditions permitted, and although having gone "down North", the vessel had to return south, so there was some chance to visit between communities.

Residents at Shingle Point and Herschel Island were dependent on ice conditions to allow a schooner to supply them from Aklavik, or from the west around Cape Barrow, Alaska. On this coast there is one long winter and a short summer, and it is significant

that according to one observer, the local Inuit saw the four seasons as "time of ice, ice going, no ice, and ice coming."⁴ Lack of contact with the outside world left residents feeling "like a colony of Robinson Crusoes,"⁵ and Addie Butler wrote from Shingle Point about how the women there watched their visitors leave on the last supply boat of the season. They felt stranded and "forlorn -- standing in the mud and rain, waving wet handkerchiefs." It was, after all, "a long while between dog teams."⁶

On Easter Sunday, 1921, the women at Hay River saw their first aeroplane land at their settlement, but it would be some time yet before regular air service was initiated in the Mackenzie, and before aeroplanes became reliable, if expensive, ways to travel in the North. Even after aeroplanes could be counted on for occasional visits, communication and travel throughout the region was slow. Before the Mackenzie River Air Mail Service was instituted in December of 1929, mail was delivered regularly once a year. Before that time in that region, and until later in the Eastern Arctic, mail delivery was otherwise sporadic and dependent on the RCMP patrol or other official visitors.

It was the supply ship which moved the goods and brought the news in the North, and *shiptime* played such an important part in the lives of Arctic residents that many viewed the boat's arrival as the beginning of their year. The supply boat brought the food and supplies for the next year's physical sustenance, but was also a time of spiritual renewal,

⁴Christina Fry, Herschel Island, *The Letter Leaflet of the Woman's Auxiliary of the Board of Missions of the Church of England in Canada*, hereafter the *Letter Leaflet*, or its later version, the *Living Message*, October 1918, 376.

⁵Addie Butler, *Living Message*, April 1935.

⁶Addie Butler, Letters 1932-1935, Private Collection, 6 September 1932.

whether it be in the form of personal mail, the Bishop (both RC and Anglican), or the alcohol ration. "The impact of the supply ship on Arctic dwellers had to be experienced," explained Anna Rokeby-Thomas, for it was not only the security of another year's supply and fuel that the ship brought, it was "the tangible link with civilization" that came with it. Arctic residents "became intoxicated with happy excitement and talked with the crew like many magpies."⁷

While the supply ship represented a tangible link with the outside, the annual visit was symbolic of transiency in the North even if it was only a once a year event. Many white residents, and certainly white women, were just sojourners in the North, so the boat contributed to a condition described by Richard Finnie as "psychologically camping out."⁸ Once a year, the constant flux and impermanence was figuratively tied up at the dock, or waiting out in the harbour, whether the women of the settlement were about to embark or not. Shiptime was crucial, and it was fleeting, leaving those along the route exhausted, first from the waiting, then from the visit itself.

Along the coast of Hudson Bay and Baffin Island, supplies arrived on the HBC supply ship out of Montreal, and after the ice started to move out of harbours in early summer, anxious European residents would daily scan the horizon for signs of a steamer moving slowly through the ice floes. Flossie Hirst at Panguituk wrote that she could not explain her feelings at the moment the boat was seen.

⁷Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Christmas, 1938," *North*, 22(6), 1976, 54.

⁸Richard Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, (New York: MacMillan Company, 1944), 188.

It is one thing to expect the boat but when expectations are finally realized, the feeling is altogether *awful*. It is both joyous and frightening for us because we know that mail and news are actually within sight - and frightening because we wonder what news is contained in our mail after such a long silence.⁹

Decisions of some importance to one's life came with the boat, and who was aboard could signal the need for some speedy packing. As it appeared on the horizon, the hospital staff at "Pang" would run up the flag, then watch through field glasses for signs of the Bishop, and more significantly, for a mission uniform at the ship's railings.

A uniform might mean a replacement; that someone was leaving; perhaps even an additional nurse. By 1932, nurses travelling under the auspices of the Woman's Auxiliary (WA) of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC) were required to wear a blue Grenfell cloth coat lined with red, with red shoulder straps and lining in the hood. This was topped off with a blue felt hat with a "dash" of red, making the nurses easily distinguishable from a teacher, whose uniform was the same, but with pale blue decorations.¹⁰ In her 1933 diary, Flossie Hirst confessed she was glad there was no missionary uniform sighted on the deck of the *Nascopie* because *she was afraid that she or her companion might be replaced*.¹¹ Later, they knew their new nurse had arrived because they "discerned the familiar garb of an Arctic Missionary, trimmed with red,"¹² lending a special Arctic accent to the receipt of new orders.

⁹Hirst, Diaries, GSA, IV.

¹⁰Fleming to Arctic workers, Archibald Fleming Papers, GSA, DOA, M71-4, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 18, 27 May 1932.

¹¹Hirst, Diaries, GSA, I.

¹²Hirst, Diaries, GSA, IV.

The procedure at shiptime followed a similar pattern at all the outposts in the Eastern Arctic. After the ship was sighted, everyone started running, for it was summer, and the ship could be seen at any time of the day or night. White residents and Inuit alike would visit the supply ship in small craft and swarm over the decks, shaking hands with everybody and looking for mail.¹³ Long newsy letters from home contained a whole year's news, but it was not possible to sit back and read them leisurely. First of all one just *had* to know what had happened. Who had married or given birth, or the unhappy notice of illness or death in the family, were important items of news, but there was the possibility something might need a reply, and the letter had to go on the ship about to leave. Some women attempted to keep annual diaries so they would be prepared to write their letters when the ship arrived, although some simply sent the journals home intact. More than one noted it was easy to put off recording daily events, knowing the ship would not arrive for months, so there was almost a universal scramble to write letters before the ship left. "Why we had not done all this before?" asked E Wallace Manning. "I cannot very well explain, but if you were to live in the Arctic a few years, doubtless you would understand. We always made good resolutions about *next* year,"¹⁴ when the next mail arrived. Like Christina Fry at Herschel Island, some women who had the equipment resorted to the mimeograph, apologizing for the use of the machine. They had

¹³This description is Richard Finnie's, but it is surprising how often the word "swarm" is used to describe the visits to the ships on either side of the Arctic. There is a certain visual quality to that word which suggests that those on board were overwhelmed.

¹⁴E Wallace Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, (London: Hodder & Stoughton Limited, 1943), 79.

to say the same thing over and over again, and had only a few days to do it.¹⁵ This use of the mimeograph was a remarkable breach of etiquette for some, yet represented an example of adaptation and initiative to suit what both correspondents would have viewed as remarkable conditions.

The panic to get the latest on the returning ship was also a reaction to the conditions of isolation. While the only white woman at Chesterfield Inlet in the early twenties, Luta Munday associated the arrival of the mail with a feeling of "utter aloofness" for she had been cut

off from everyone and everything with the realization that letters were months old, most of them as much as five months, and that almost anything could have happened since. Those feelings [she] never could describe, it seemed almost that [she] had died and all the world was left behind.¹⁶

In one sense, no communication with the outside stressed the independent nature of their lives in the North for white women. In another, it signified their loneliness and the way they had been cut off from the comfort traditionally supplied by the support systems of friends and family. This created a paradoxical existence, and just facing the ensuing tensions were an important part of living in the North for European women. With the first supply ship that came to Pang after she had arrived the year before, Mena Orford remembered her reaction at hearing of its sighting. "I stayed where I was, cold shivers running up and down my spine. For the first time since the ship had sailed away, I was

¹⁵Christina Fry to Bishop Lucas, Herschel Island, 5 January 1917. Fry explained that the mail had to be ready for the tenth. GSA, DOA, M71-4 Series 5-3, Box 19.

¹⁶Luta Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, (London: Sheldon Press, 1930), 156.

admitting to myself that I had never really believed it would come back again."¹⁷

The supply ship and receipt of the mail is one of the recurring themes in all Arctic memoirs, so it has some significance to the white women who were in the North. Keeping in touch from places a thousand miles from anywhere was crucial for day to day existence and maintaining an identity with their own culture. Trying to comprehend both the excitement and the accompanying tension is difficult and might lead to a temptation to dismiss comments such as those of one Anglican missionary's wife at Aklavik in 1928 who wrote: "life is just full of thrills and interest here. I was never so thrilled in my life, I think, as getting the winter's mail."¹⁸ Yet consider the impact of the mail's arrival for Sophie Porter and the other whaler's wives at Herschel Island in 1895. "Those who each morning impatiently listen for the postman's ring can scarcely picture the eagerness and anxiety with which we receive our one solitary yearly delivery," wrote Mrs Porter from the Arctic coast, "where the conditions of life and environment are utterly opposed to all that makes existence comfortable to us within the bounds of civilization, culture and modern improvement."¹⁹

By 1918 at Herschel Island, Christina Fry received two yearly mails -- a number considered the "height of modernism" by one trader's wife at Fort Good Hope.²⁰ One

¹⁷Orford, *Journey North*, 122.

¹⁸Mrs Harcourt at Aklavik, *Living Message*, June 1928.

¹⁹Sophie Porter, "An Arctic Winter: A Woman's Life in Polar Seas," *Overland*, Vol 29, n.d., 353-358.

²⁰Agnes Deans Cameron, David R Richeson, Ed. *The New North: An Account of a Woman's 1908 Journey through Canada to the Arctic*, (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1986), 162

of those deliveries came overland by dog team, and probably via the west coast and the Yukon. Of the intervals, Mrs Fry suggested it was like living in "Wonderland. Then it is we wonder - how you are, where you are, what you are doing, and when good news of Peake will come. However, we never allow our wonder to drift into worry, for that isn't worthwhile."²¹

Acceptance of the situation was a necessary requisite for white women in the North; there really was no other alternative until the next vessel appeared. When the ship came, women who lived along the route knew no contact could be made with the outside with the exception of an occasional mail delivery by dog-team. They knew if anything was forgotten in a letter ordering supplies, for example, it might be some time before they could even re-order it. When the supply ship came, "it would be a strenuous day indeed, hard to keep cool and collected" when there were so many things to think of.²² Staying "cool and collected" at any time while living in the Arctic was a challenge, for anxieties were exacerbated by environmental conditions as well as difficult communication. Maintaining mental equilibrium required some effort, so it is no wonder ships bringing visitors, supplies and mail made such an impact.

In addition to comments about the mail, all Arctic memoirs recall the winter climate, for describing the climatic conditions in their letters was a way of portraying hardships in terms which relatives and friends could understand, and without actually whining.

²¹Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of the Yukon, Yukon Territorial Archives, (YTA), COR 251, Christina Fry to Sarah Stringer, 2 December 1912.

²²Miss Wilgress at Hay River, *Letter Leaflet*, May 1911.

Descriptions like those of Dorothy Page at Hay River in 1914 are commonplace.

Half of our winter is past now and it has not been nearly so severe as last year. It has registered forty-six degrees below zero at two different times, but lasted only a few hours. Of course, it is below zero nearly all the time, but we do not call that severe here.²³

From Fort Norman in 1903, Rose Spendlove told *Letter Leaflet* readers that "the thermometer had read between fifty and sixty degrees below zero for some time. Please excuse my scribble, my fingers are cold and the ink has frozen."²⁴ Earlier, Mrs Spendlove had thanked the WA for their supply bale, and added "the tea cozy is so very pretty and will keep our tea from freezing which is frequently the case during the winter."²⁵

Winter required proper clothing, and some women were reluctant to wear the Native costume which was the most suitable garment for the climate. In the era when women still wore long, heavy skirts, white women in the North probably eschewed Native garb for reasons of practicality and Victorian modesty. The skirts and petticoats underneath gave some protection from the elements with the addition of a fur wrap or coat. This costume would have served well the women in the settlements and missions along the Mackenzie River. The styles would also distinguish these women from their Native neighbours, providing a visible racial and class distinction, lending in their minds some authoritative air.

Along the Arctic coasts, it was more crucial to accept that keeping warm was more

²³Dorothy Page, *Letter Leaflet*, April 1914. These are Fahrenheit readings.

²⁴Rose Spendlove, *Letter Leaflet*, August 1903.

²⁵*Ibid.*, January 1903.

important than looking like a respectable European lady. Luta Munday recognized only Native clothing was suitable for the outdoors, but the garments were a nuisance because all the "house clothes" had to be removed before the "deerskins" could go on, even for a fifteen minute walk. "The hauling, pushing, and shoving to get into the *kool-le-tang* (coat) and out of it again was maddening, and oh, the condition of my hair," she complained.²⁶

Now, if Luta Munday lived in a snow-house, she would not remove her furs until she retired for the night, before she crawled onto the fur-lined sleeping platform with the entire family. But Mrs Munday lived in a heated cabin which separated her culturally from the Inuit women at Chesterfield Inlet. While she realized that outside the cabin her life depended on Native dress, inside her cabin she needed to retain her own cultural and feminine identity. Luta Munday described the Native dress as being almost the same for men and women, although a women's *kool-le-tang* or *atigi* had a large hood in which to carry infants. It was tied at the waist to provide a safe seat. Fawn skins made the best clothing, but summer skins also had the necessary short, fine hairs. This clothing was worn without underclothing; there was no irritation because the fur was soft. The suit was doubled: one with the hair next to the skin, the other with the hair facing out. The coat slipped over the head, and was worn with wide short trousers, deerskin stockings, and sealskin boots. Some white women added bearskin mittens. The clothing was sewn

²⁶Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 140. Deerskins refers to caribou. This may have been an *atigi*, an *artegee*, or even a *parka*. The terminology and spelling changes from era to era, and place to place. With exceptions for regional variations in style, the women mean the same thing.

together with sinew and was very windproof.

Boots, or mukluks, were made with a layer of fur inside to keep the feet warm, but there was hair on the outside sole to prevent slipping. This hair wore away quickly and the soles had to be constantly replaced. In contrast to the principal role of Native women, which was to prepare skins and sew clothing for her family, it was the constant maintenance of these skins that proved to be a nuisance for white women. The cold weather had taught the Inuit "that it did not pay to allow holes in their clothing,"²⁷ observed Sadie Stringer with some understatement. Centuries of tradition provided the Inuit women with the skills and the impetus to chew skins until they were soft and malleable enough to use for clothes, but this was a domestic art unfamiliar to white women. It was also a profound cultural difference. Gladys O'Kelly recalled how Inuit women had looked into her mouth with interest. They decided she was a very lazy woman who obviously had done little sewing since the edges of her teeth were still intact.²⁸

Wallace Manning learned to prepare and sew the skins she and her husband needed to perform their scientific work in the Cape Dorset region, but there were some Native methods at which she drew the line. Sinew was used to sew sealskin boots because when wet, it swelled and filled the needle holes. Caribou sinew was preferred, and after it was

²⁷Sadie Stringer, Address to the American Women's Club, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 24 October 1934. GSA, DOA, Isaac Stringer Papers, GSA, M74-3, Series 2-B, #28, Box 13.

²⁸Gladys O'Kelly, "A Woman's Log of an Arctic Adventure," Typescript, Provincial Archives of British Columbia (PABC), Add Mss 2636, 33.

stripped from the long backs of the beasts, it was cleaned of large pieces of meat, soaked, scraped, and allowed to dry. The Native women "removed the meat by sucking it," Mrs Manning recalled, "but I found a knife was quite as effective."²⁹

The constant repair to native clothing posed problems to European women culturally conditioned to the virtues of cleanliness. Winifred Marsh at Eskimo Point remembered the white sealskin boots made for her son by a Native woman, which Mrs Marsh washed in warm soapy water to keep them clean. She then hung them up to dry. After the treatment, not surprisingly, the boots always became stiff!³⁰ Mrs Marsh learned to chew the boots to soften the skins, and to replace new ones as needed, leaving the impression that facing the alternative was easier than breaking old habits.

Just because these women were a long way from fashion centres does not mean they were not concerned with their appearance. Winter, and the intense cold forced them to accept what they perceived as an unorthodox and unfeminine appearance, and to forget the custom that dictated one "dressed to suffocation" to keep warm. These women had heard such "fabulous tales of the northern climate that one does not wonder at their doing so," wrote Selina Bompas. A parka, she noted, "made of deerskin with hood and mittens all in one, is the finest garment ever invented for the purpose."³¹

Even though an *ategee* made her ready for the worst weather, Susan Quirt pointed

²⁹Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 46.

³⁰Donald B Marsh, Winifred Marsh, Ed, *Echoes from a Frozen Land*, (Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987), 16.

³¹Charlotte Selina Bompas, "Our Women in the North," *Imperial Colonist*, November, 1908, 5.

out it was "dreadfully long and sloppy," and felt precisely as if she were outside in her nightdress and bedroom slippers. Miss Quirt resigned herself that she would get used to it like everything else.³² Mhairi Fenton described the parka made for her at Lake Harbour in 1937 as an "Eskimo garment like a dress (with a hood), but comes down to the hip only and has no waist, and no allowance for the bust as it is very full."³³ (See Fig. 1.)

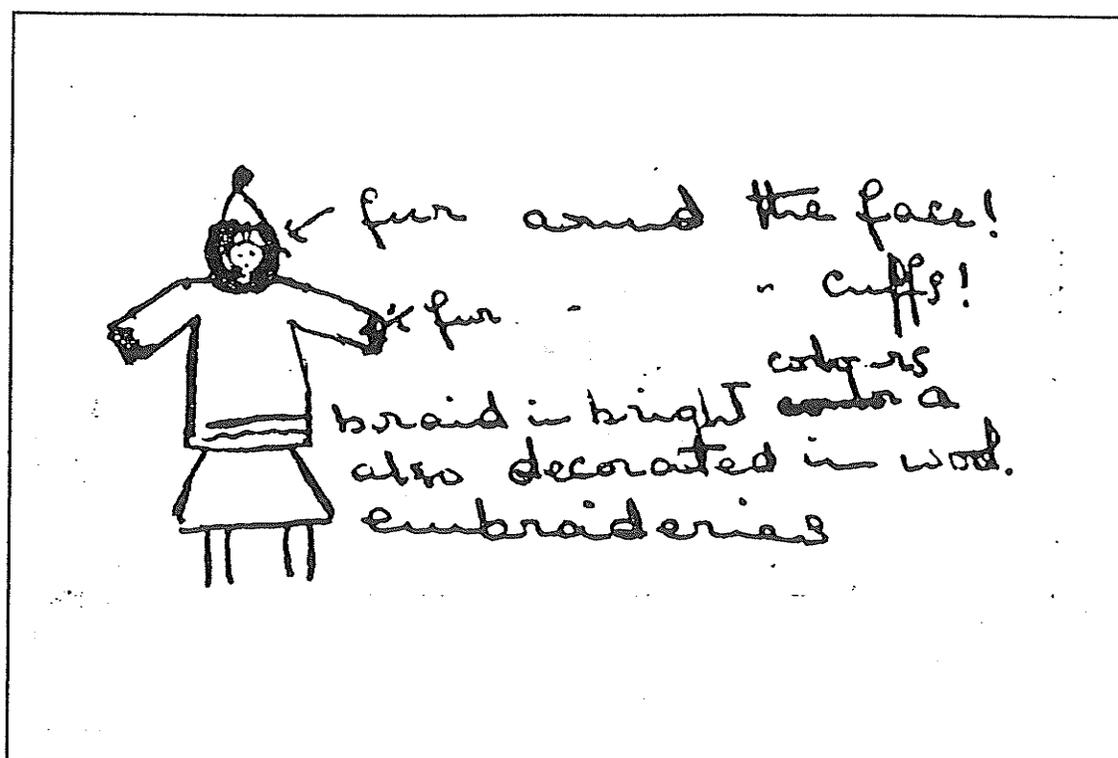


Fig. 1. Mhairi Fenton Di Castro's drawing of her *Artigi* or parka. (NAC, MG29 C119).

Mhairi Fenton's comment that the parka was made by an Inuit woman who was

³²Susan Quirt, Personal Diary, Shingle Point, 1929-32, GSA, DOA, M71-4, 17.

³³The captions around Miss Fenton's drawing indicate that this was likely a duffel parka covered with an outer shell, as opposed to one fashioned from furs.

"sweet and much cleaner than the rest" reveals another reason for white women's reluctance toward the garments.³⁴ European women, confessed Sophie Porter, had to "overcome" their "disgust" at the sickening odour of deerskins and if her "wholly elegant outfit, decorated in the most approved style," had developed the same smell, heated cabins would have been unendurable for European noses.³⁵ Because of the intense cold and primitive heating systems, it was not easy to air out stuffy cabins.

One missionary remembered he asked Mrs Fred Jackson at Inman Harbour whether her home was warm in winter, and alleged she replied: "cold as hell! cold as hell! cold as hell!"³⁶ It is unfortunate that the reply cannot be substantiated, but it is indicative of how the cold permeated even well-built cabins. One woman explained she and her husband had to sleep with the blanket over their heads. Another recalled how every night the bedroom fire went out, so she was always frozen when she was alone. Her nose was numb, her eyelashes were frozen together, and she dared not move because there was only one warmed spot in the bed.³⁷ It was possible to heat homes with a good stove, and in the Mackenzie Valley, wood was available. On the coast, coal was imported as wood was scarce. Heat generated in cozy cabins could also cause a nightmarish predicament for anyone already suffering from claustrophobic conditions. "The heat of the room, meeting the cold air from outside, froze the condensed vapour all around the door," explained

³⁴DiCastro, Papers, NAC, Lake Harbour, 20 September 1937.

³⁵Porter, "An Arctic Winter," 355.

³⁶Edna Craven and The Reverend J Harold Webster, *Arctic Adventure*, (Ridgetown, Ontario: GC and HC Enterprises, 1987), 84.

³⁷Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 155.

Addie Butler, so in addition to freezing to death outside, it was possible to be frozen *in* as well.³⁸

Selina Bompas, a missionary wife of long-standing in the North, maintained that Arctic winters were healthful and invigorating

even while you shiver you enjoy, while feeling that you have a strange resemblance to a bear with your shaggy coat, and eye-lashes thickly laced with icicles, you cannot help laughing and are ready, in spite of all to thank God that you are alive.³⁹

Well, perhaps. Mrs Bompas probably wrote those observations with missionary recruitment in mind. She might have added Christina Fry's portrayal of forty-six degrees below zero to enhance the picture: "To experience something similar you will have to stand on a bridge as a train is passing underneath puffing up smoke and steam, blinding you. Freeze that steam, put a big wind behind it," and you might be able to imagine it. Mrs Fry added "still, I suppose it might be worse,"⁴⁰ and she was right, for it was not so much the interminable cold of winter that was the biggest environmental problem in the North. It was the climate together with the "Season of No Light" as Mena Orford called it, which produced the living conditions that led to "cabin fever."

Winter did not mean total darkness in most of the Arctic, for there was a dull twilight of about two hours duration at the noon hour. The lack of sunlight and no fresh food meant everyone was "languid," and the physical effects translated into psychological

³⁸Butler letters, 20 January 1934.

³⁹Bompas, "Our Women in the North," November, 1908, 6.

⁴⁰Christina Fry, from Herschel Island, *Letter Leaflet*, October 1918.

ones.⁴¹ Women became irritable and edgy, often succumbing to what one labelled as a fit of grumps. Even "candles or other lighting did little to dispel the winter shroud that had folded over us," explained Anna Rokeby-Thomas; the darkness "held the strange power of quenching the human spirit."⁴²

Even the anticipation of the dark period caused some anxiety. When Addie Butler described the incessant sound of ocean waves pounding the spit at Shingle Point, it reflected her concern about the impending winter. The "break, break, break, lulled us to sleep, but when freeze-up comes, it will be us who will break," she wrote, "from the silence and the cold."⁴³ "The awful silence" was not easy to describe. Luta Munday recorded that her pen was inadequate for the task.

It seemed to descend upon us and enfold us, the grave itself could not be more quiet. Very occasionally there came the howl of a wolf or the bark of a fox. I would say sometimes to [my husband] Walter, I must scream. It was to avoid the sensation of being buried alive.⁴⁴

It was a silence you could almost feel, "a silence not only physical, but often one that became a silence within their minds."⁴⁵ The silence provided a metaphor for the isolation, of course, for few women who lived there would admit, like traveller Clara Vyvyan did, that "to a certain extent, the North" was a prison, where one "may not easily get out, being held there by some individual weakness or by the grip of a force too

⁴¹Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Darkness," *North*, 22(1), 1975,16.

⁴²*Ibid*, 15.

⁴³Butler Letters, 6 September 1932.

⁴⁴Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 166.

⁴⁵Marsh, *Echoes from a Frozen Land*, 35.

great for definition and defiance."⁴⁶

This force suggested by Clara Vyvyan had two dimensions. The first was the simple inability to go anywhere else during the winter. The second was more complex: a package of acceptance, all tied up with the ribbons of duty and the women's own understanding of their role. It was unlikely any white, European woman travelled into the Arctic unless she had a specific goal in mind, or she had convinced herself that she could at least make an effort. Wallace Manning "shrugged mentally and said good-bye to clean white sheets. After all, it wasn't the end of clean white sheets. There would still be clean sheets," when she went outside.⁴⁷ "I wasn't a bit in a hurry to get to Aklavik," divulged one woman who, in fact,

rather dreaded it; didn't expect to like it much [and] my hunch was right -- I didn't like it, and I don't like it yet, and I'm sure I won't, at least until winter is here. But all that doesn't matter really; we didn't expect to come here to enjoy the scenery, nor the social life. There are other things to take our time and interest.⁴⁸

Keeping busy was important. Constant occupation was a cure for faint-heartedness in women in the North insisted Selina Bompas. What with "helping the school, caring for the sick, and playing the organ for our little services and caring for my babies I did not have time to sit and pine," recalled Sadie Stringer,⁴⁹ whose situation at Peel River and

⁴⁶Clara Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, (London: Peter Owen, 1961), 66.

⁴⁷Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 24.

⁴⁸Mrs Trevor Jones, Typescript, "Journey to Aklavik," GSA, DOA, Archibald Fleming Papers, M70-1, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 18.

⁴⁹Sarah Stringer, Address, 6 November 1931, Isaac Stringer Papers, DAC, GSA, M74-3, Series 2-B, No 10, Box 13.

Herschel Island was not unique. This was reiterated by Gladys Clarke from Fort Norman. "We are kept so busy that time goes -- well I can't describe how quickly."⁵⁰ Those with specific employment such as nurses and teachers often remark on how little time they had for themselves, and seldom comment on loneliness, except in the sense of being homesick.

Many of these women held a common conviction that prayer was an active, and powerful force in their lives, and if there is one strong influence which is in evidence throughout the records, it is the unwavering faith these women had in God to protect them, and that He would provide. Rose Spendlove wrote that it was "through God's mercy we have endured nearly a quarter of a century,"⁵¹ and Reita Latham declared

this is a great adventure, and we're glad we're on it. All the world over, Jesus is revered, is the King, imagine the great joy of being one of His apprentices, so we do rejoice and daily strive to show him in our life -- preaching is necessary, but living Christ is essential to make a success of what we are trying to do.⁵²

"During my term of office in that northerly hospital oftentimes the unseen world seemed very near, and I was reminded of the presence of the risen Lord,"⁵³ noted Mildred McCabe from Shingle Point, who like Christina Fry *knew* she had been "watched over, guarded and safely brought through many perils known and unknown."⁵⁴ Even those

⁵⁰Gladys Clarke, *Letter Leaflet*, July 1922.

⁵¹Spendlove, *Letter Leaflet*, August 1903.

⁵²Reita Latham, Shingle Point, *Living Message*, 1932.

⁵³Mildred McCabe, *Living Message*, July 1933.

⁵⁴Christina Fry to Sadie Stringer, Herschel Island, YTA, ACC, COR 251, 2 December 1918.

who were not missionaries were guided by the same hand. Isobel Hutchison was a Scottish botanist who travelled along the Arctic coast during the winter of 1933. She was not in the Arctic to proselytize or preach, but maintained she never took chances because God always blazed her trail.⁵⁵

The trials of isolation were made easier to endure with God's help, but it was critical for European women to develop strategies with which to deal with obstacles and problems posed by the environment. Some used their imagination, like Flossie Hirst who fantasized "Oh to be in England now that April's here, but with the warm sunshine pouring through the window it isn't hard to imagine that England is not far away."⁵⁶

For some it was an endurance test just not to have another white woman in the vicinity. "I have no white women to speak to, the nearest being 300 miles away," wrote Rose Spendlove. "The loneliness is extreme."⁵⁷ In her diary, Mrs Spendlove recorded "I am a woman alone but I have been for so many years that I am used to it,"⁵⁸ The diary and her letters to the WA acknowledge encounters with Dene and mixed blood women, so it is important to recognize that being the only white woman was what being alone meant. This does not suggest a bigoted attitude as much as it does the understanding there was a bond shared by women of common cultures, and that white women believed they would be a comfort to each other in the isolation of the North.

⁵⁵Isobel Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun: Being the Record of an Alaska-Canadian Journey Made in 1933-34*, (London: Blackie, 1934), 153.

⁵⁶Hirst, Diaries, GSA, No II.

⁵⁷Rose Spendlove, Fort Norman, *Letter Leaflet*, August 1902.

⁵⁸PA Thomas, "Kindly Dispatch Miss Gadsby," *North*, 17 (2), 13.

Sadie Stringer once stated in an address that for five years she had no company of another white woman,⁵⁹ so she "learned to understand men during that time," and the men around her were very appreciative of what she did for them.⁶⁰ Her presence provided the men she came into contact with in the North with a "soft" aspect to their harsh environment, and a visible link with the wives and families they had left in the South. She nursed them when they were sick, and she entertained them when they came to visit. She also taught shorthand to sailors wintering at Herschel in the mission school. What Sadie Stringer did for these men was domestic and feminine in nature, which does not belittle her contribution, but it was what the men would have expected, and what she would have expected of herself. Sadie Stringer once wrote she had heard people say it was cruel to ask a white woman to go North, but she would have thought it more cruel to leave her behind.⁶¹ She saw her place as beside her husband; he was already an Arctic missionary when she married him, and they shared a mutual vocation.

Luta Munday just learned to get along without other white women, although she noted those who questioned her about being lonely without that companionship always had difficulty with the idea. "When I explain why I do not miss them, questioners always say aren't you funny or aren't you queer until now I am sure I must be," she wrote,

⁵⁹I am not sure if this is entirely true. While at Herschel Island, for example, there were wives of whaling captains at the island during Mrs Stringer's stay.

⁶⁰Sarah Stringer, Address, 6 November 1931, GSA, DOA, Isaac Stringer Papers, M74-3, Series 2-B#10, Box 13.

⁶¹"A Woman in the Wilderness," *Letter Leaflet*, October 1914, 378.

adding it was a plus the men she encountered were all interesting.⁶²

Mary Ferguson, a trapper's wife living near Fort Providence petitioned the government in 1933 for a hunting license, explaining

my husband runs a long trapline and is away from home for eight to fourteen days each trip. During this time it is necessary that I remain alone. It is common knowledge that but few persons accustomed to life on the outside can for so long maintain their mental equilibrium amid the solitary silence and loneliness of the far North without they have something with which to keep the mind occupied and the body busy. It is just that which I seek! The legal right to get out in the open with some definite incentive designed to furnish both the body and the mind with the necessary exercise which is also a relaxation -- a lessening of the nervous system's high tension -- a counter-irritant for long days and weeks spent alone in comparative idleness during the cold months of winter.⁶³

Shooting and trapping small game probably had limited entertainment value for Mrs Ferguson, but she did recognize that she had to get out of that cabin, for her husband noted she worried about staying alone and what might happen to her while he was away.⁶⁴

In some way or another, white women alone learned to live without the presence of other white women. It would be easy to put this down to "the stuff of which pioneer women were made," but that explanation is too general, ignores realities, and damns those who could not bear the strain -- and there were certainly some who could not. Annie Card allowed that even though her husband was fascinated with his job as Indian

⁶²Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 138.

⁶³Mary Ferguson to HH Rowatt, Commissioner, NWT Branch, 12 July 1933, NAC, RG 85, Volume 847, File F7774. Hereafter RG85/Ferguson. The legal situation and the bureaucratic progress of the actual request is be explored in another chapter.

⁶⁴Chick Ferguson, *Mink, Mary and Me: The Story of a Wilderness Trapline*, (New York: MS Mill Company, 1946), 95.

Agent, she felt she could not tolerate the isolation. The nearest doctor was 700 miles away and she was afraid her young daughter might succumb to any of the diseases prevalent among the Indians. After two years she left the North; one year after the farming instructor's wife who arrived at Fort Simpson at the same time as she did.⁶⁵

Mrs Card's concerns about health and the availability of care were magnified by the remoteness, but no more so than it might have been for women on the settlement frontier, or even for working class and poor women in the city. Put into perspective, white women may have been denied access to modern facilities and technologies as they developed, but there never seemed to be a shortage of trained or experienced nurses in early Northern settlements to assist during epidemics of influenza, measles or those diseases for which little treatment besides competent nursing was obtainable wherever one lived.

The threat of emergencies was more likely responsible for the fear generated about lack of medical facilities and doctors, and the sad experience of Margaret Clay only reinforced those anxieties. It was a particularly Northern tragedy: on the 21st of September 1924, Mrs Clay died from wounds sustained two days earlier when she was viciously attacked by sled dogs in the community of Chesterfield Inlet. The circumstances "of this misadventure, which emphasized the degrees attending life in [those] inhospitable latitudes, were distressing in every particular," declared the RCMP Commissioner in his 1925 report. The RCMP statement provided to the press, in order to stave off undue publicity, described how Mrs Clay was walking alone near houses at the post when she was set upon by the dogs. It was surmised that one of the dogs had snapped at her in play

⁶⁵Annie Card, Interview, Philip Godsell Papers, GMA File 311, Box 23.

and accidentally drew blood, prompting the other dogs to attack. Two members of the police post were alerted by the commotion and beat the dogs off, but one of Mrs Clay's legs had been so badly lacerated it was amputated at her request the day after the accident. The surgery was performed by an Oblate priest at the settlement. The closest surgeon was at The Pas. There were four men in attendance to treat Mrs Clay, the two Mounties, the priest and the HBC man. There were anaesthetics and morphine available, and the operation itself was successful. Mrs Clay apparently died of shock due to blood loss.

The RCMP report noted Mrs Clay was familiar with Northern conditions, implying she had accepted the risks, and therefore presumably, absolved the Force of any blame. "She had gone North to be with her husband, but in her darkest hour she was deprived of his presence," pointed out one story, for her husband was out on a long patrol.⁶⁶ Sargeant Clay's absence prompted the men who rendered the first aid to put their signatures to a statement outlining the desperate situation, and their intentions. It is difficult to determine if this was standard practice at Northern posts since no similar files could be located, however, the document appears to be singular. The Corporal in charge assumed all responsibility and assured Father Duplain that under the Criminal Code, no responsibility would rest with him.

There were probably two reasons for this action. Since it was the practice at the time for the husband to grant consent for surgery on his wife, it might be that the men felt

⁶⁶Editorial for January, 1948 *RCMP Quarterly*, entitled "The Detachment Man's Wife," Typescript. NAC, RG 18, Vol 3301, 1924-HQ-660-G-1.

compelled to record the circumstances since Sargeant Clay was not available. It may also be because Mrs Clay was the only white woman at Chesterfield and the four men saw their position as tenuous after administering medical treatment under anaesthesia, and without chaperones. Whatever the case, the declaration is a striking document because it exemplifies the kind of issues which arose in the North due to isolation. It reads:

In the case of Mrs Clay:

- 1. We do not see any chance that the leg of Mrs Clay can be saved*
- 2. We seriously fear that gangrene will start in, the whole leg from the knee to ankle being chewed up*
- 3. Mrs Clay is under intolerable pains*
- 4. We seriously think that we can succeed, and we see in the amputation the only way to save the woman's life*
- 5. The person is quite willing to have her leg amputated knowing perfectly well the existing conditions*

Signed: OG Petty Cpl; HW Stallworthy Cst; NW Snow; E Duplain OMI⁶⁷

Margaret Clay's death provoked some action on the part of the RCMP administrators in Ottawa. It was recommended by one officer that in settlements, all dogs that were not working should be kept tied up. A new Dog Ordinance was drafted to provide the authority to compel owners to keep dogs tethered. There was some dissenting opinion about the ordinance, undoubtedly because it would have been difficult to enforce among the Inuit along the coast.

⁶⁷NAC, RG 18, Vol 3301, 1924-HQ-660-G-1-Clay. All sources quoted here are available in this file.

Dogs represented one of the hazards which white women mention regularly. This was, in part, because the Natives did not treat their dogs the way white people did. If the dogs were not working during the summer, owners tended to ignore them. While she trusted and was fond of her own dogs, Luta Munday recognized the dangers of dogs reared by both Inuit and Dene whom she believed were cruel to their animals, and never proffered them any affection. As a consequence "their dogs never expected anything but a blow, from which they were ever trying to escape."⁶⁸ Northern dogs were also dangerous because they were territorial in nature. "If the company's dogs passed within half a mile all our dogs would fly at them," Mrs Munday remembered, and "then such a battle royal." The dogs were all strong and willing workers, but Luta Munday was forced to temper the fond memories with those of the attack on Mrs Clay. The Clays had replaced the Mundays at Chesterfield Inlet, and Mrs Munday recalled how Margaret Clay had told her how much she had disliked the idea of going to Chesterfield. Mrs Clay told Mrs Munday how she disliked the settlement and the Inuit. "I could hardly bear to leave her behind feeling as she did, and the whole of the following winter she seemed to haunt me. I think we both must have had a premonition."⁶⁹

Wallace Manning and her husband depended on their dogs and understood the Natives could not afford to keep dogs which were unable or unwilling to work. But rather than shoot them with a cartridge that could be saved to kill a caribou, she explained, the Inuk would leave the dog to starve, believing if he shot the dog, he would have bad luck. If

⁶⁸Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 195.

⁶⁹*Ibid*, 192.

the animal just died from starvation, the owner could not be blamed.⁷⁰ The treatment and behaviour of Northern dogs shocked observers like Isobel Hutchison, who made the absurd suggestion that there should be a Northern equivalent of the SPCA,⁷¹ but like most situations, the women learned to deal with them.

Valenis Ottaway, a nurse at Hay River would carry her little brown bag when sick visiting, as well as a big stick to ward off any trouble with the dogs.⁷² Native dogs were "awfully fierce and chew strangers," suggested Addie Butler without further example. Sometimes they got loose and fought furiously, "and if we know of it, we don't go out unless we are armed with a thick stick," she added.⁷³ Dogs were one of the necessary evils that made Northern existence bearable. They pulled the *komatik* which carried the mail, the law, the sick, and the visitor. Dogs made communication possible across the frozen wastes, so it was generally understood that one put up with them. The experience of Mrs Clay is exceptional not because of the dogs, but because of the medical implications which ensued because of her location at Chesterfield Inlet.

While they were not unique to the region, there were three physical ailments that were common, and for which the symptoms were often aggravated by residence in the North. Addie Butler's description of how her eyes were being overworked because of the

⁷⁰Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 117.

⁷¹Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 76.

⁷²Valenis Ottawa, *Living Message*, February 1926, 34.

⁷³Butler letters, 6 September 1932.

continual use of oil lamps during the winter was a typical complaint.⁷⁴ In the winter, reading and letter writing were favourite activities. In addition, vitamin deficiencies caused by a lack of fresh fruits and vegetables left the body without resistance to those diseases which effect the eyes. The prolonged glare of the sun's rays in the summer months often produced snow blindness, adding distress to eyes already at risk.⁷⁵

The medical investigations undertaken on the Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1937 determined that dental decay was the "most prevalent objective disturbance to be found in white women in the area." This was due, in part, because dental disorders were commonplace among white residents anyway, but since pregnancy trebled the rate of tooth decay, women were more at risk. Dental caries was a deficiency disease, and delaying treatment just made the condition more severe.

Gladys O'Kelly recorded during her 1922 trip along the Arctic coast that dental problems were a serious drawback to living in the North, and astutely noticed the Inuit had splendid teeth and white men invariably lost all of theirs. "This may be due to the use of ice for drinking water," she wondered, for she had noticed that "civilized Eskimos who follow this practise have not so good teeth as those who use more animal blood than water."⁷⁶ What concerned the government doctor, was not so much the tooth decay itself. It was that deterioration of the teeth led to muscle and joint manifestations such as

⁷⁴Butler letters, 8 January, 1933.

⁷⁵Thomas Melling, "A Study of the General Health of the White Residents of the West Coast of Hudson's Bay," (sic), GMA, M832, 1937.

⁷⁶O'Kelly. "A Woman's Log," 47.

neuralgia, myalgia, neuritis, and perhaps even arthritis.⁷⁷ Toothaches could be taken care of with the supply of instruments available in medicine chests supplied by the government.

The study determined the "most common complaint heard subjectively, was that of 'bad stomach' which included hyper and hypo acidity brought on by the continuous consumption of food prepared in tins, and gastritis caused by overeating and a sedentary life. It pointed out that some digestive ailments originated with nervous disorders and emotional upsets. Emotional stresses and strains were intensified in the Eastern Arctic concluded the report, and which was the view shared by Flossie Hirst. Based on her experience in both regions, she felt the isolation of the east required more determination than the west.⁷⁸ Strangely, this contention is not supported by available evidence for the period.

In 1906, the RNWMP reported one woman had become insane, "three years in the Arctic being an important contributory factor in bringing about her present condition."⁷⁹ There is no name mentioned in the report, and no further explanation. Indeed, there is apparently only one set of official records that have survived which relate to what might be considered the stresses and strains of isolation.

⁷⁷While I was not able to substantiate the comment with the Grey Nuns records, or indeed from some who had worked as nurses in the region at the time, Clara Vyvyan insisted she met the Mother Superior en route to Northern posts who told her the nuns had the true solution to the tooth decay problem. They had all their teeth drawn before they went North. *Arctic Adventure*, 44.

⁷⁸Hirst diaries, GSA, II.

⁷⁹Canada. Reports of the Royal Northwest Mounted Police, Sessional Papers, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1906).

Minerva Sophia Oulton lived in a cabin at Point Brule on the Slave River near Fort Smith in April of 1925 when she shot her sixteen month old baby with a ten gauge shotgun. The RCMP report understated the carnage at the Oulton home: Mrs Oulton had shot up the house, killed the cat and dog, and had fired on her ten year old son, Cecil. She had also attempted to kill herself with an axe, for she was determined the world was coming to an end. In his deposition to the inquest, the doctor who examined Mrs Oulton disclosed how she "complained of being kept alone last fall with the baby for nine weeks at Great Falls, when she thought she would go crazy with loneliness." Cecil Oulton stated in his evidence it was the first time he had noticed his mother "that way; she was worrying the day before about my two brothers whom she had not seen lately; it was a week since my father had left. She said she thought they had all drowned."⁸⁰ Minnie Oulton was thirty-five years of age at the time, and had five children. The police report listed her as Presbyterian, born in Minnesota, imbecilic, and most importantly, as poor. Poverty meant she was unable to escape her situation like Annie Card who could leave the north before she felt her world was coming to an end -- which is notable in Minnie Oulton's case because she resided close to what some considered to be the ends of the earth during the long winter months.⁸¹

⁸⁰NAC, Records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, "G" Division, RG 18, 1925, HQ681-G-1-Oulton.

⁸¹There is an intriguing footnote to this incident. Mrs Oulton was committed to the Alberta hospital at Ponoka. Her incarceration generated considerable paperwork because of the costs involved to the administration at Ottawa. In 1945, RA Gibson wrote to the hospital to ask why current accounts had not been rendered. He wondered if Mrs Oulton had died. The hospital wrote back with the astonishing revelation that she had eloped on December 1, 1944, and had not been seen since. I understand that eloped is a euphemism

Lest it be forgotten in this account of the frost and gloom of Northern winter, it must be remembered the short Arctic summer was also characterized by distinctive situations. Imagine the emotion after three months of darkness when the Grey Nuns at Aklavik could record in their *Chroniques* that they "saw the sun, rather his eye only, for the first time since November. What a pleasant wink he did give us, and then disappeared again, assuring us he would remain longer with us tomorrow."⁸² As the summer solstice approached, night turned into day, and in the far North, the sun just rested on the horizon, and never set. During the summer, the long hours of daylight curtailed sleep and produced a strange kind of lethargy caused by the exhaustion brought on by the temptation to keep going as if the nights were, in fact, days. It seems it was hard to go to bed, and life carried on like it was one long afternoon. With little to distinguish day from night, women became disoriented, and even unaware of the date as well as the time. Reita Latham wrote of a holiday at Herschel Island in 1932, where she and her companions visited the HBC post for tea. They had a "ripping good time" she remembered, but also noted they had not the slightest idea of the time of day, which turned out to be quite late.⁸³ Travellers like Elizabeth Taylor remarked how it "hardly seemed the thing to do to go botanizing at one o'clock AM," and it was quite an experience for her to attend a midnight mass at Peel River while the sun streamed through

commonly used in facilities which treat the insane, and simply means she escaped.

⁸²*Chroniques*, Aklavik, 13 January 1926, SGME. Translation as provided by the archivist.

⁸³Reita Latham, *Living Message*, 1932.

the windows.⁸⁴

When the sun returned, all felt healthier and had renewed vigour, evoking positive comments unlike those of dread and foreboding which were used to describe winter. Gladys O'Kelly's description illustrates the sense of restoration that summer produced.

The short Arctic nights cast an enchantment over this land where the atmosphere of the long brilliant days, like champagne, makes laughter and song the easiest thing in the world. At midnight the sun sinks regretfully to rest and a band of molten red rims the world.⁸⁵

Nature in her own way provided the perfect cure for all the winter blues, but the unlimited sunshine was enervating, especially when matched with the business of shiptime, which began the yearly cycle for women in the North.

With all the problems posed by isolation, climate and weak communication links, it is understandable how the radio and the aeroplane changed the lives of women in the region. Radio transmission was established across the Arctic by the mid 1930s, but ironically, while it speeded up communication with the south, it also emphasized the isolation and added to the sense of loneliness. For British women on the shores of Hudson Bay, and even as far west as Shingle Point, the nightly sound of Big Ben evoked intense nostalgia, because "through the frosty starlight of this Arctic Region his chime rang with the uncanny sound, bringing sudden visions of wet streets and umbrellas, emptying theatres and the hoot of the taxi."⁸⁶ Apparently the London news was usually

⁸⁴Elizabeth Taylor, "A Women Explorer in the Mackenzie Delta," *Outing*, December, 1895, 229.

⁸⁵O'Kelly, "A Woman's Log," 30.

⁸⁶Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 199.

easier to tune in because of fog and Atlantic depressions. According to Winifred Marsh they were often able to hear ten different stations at Eskimo Point,⁸⁷ but the radio was not a panacea for the communication ills of the North. As one Cambridge Bay resident acknowledged, "troubles can get out," by radio, "but in no way could help get in."⁸⁸ Nevertheless, when transmission radio came to Pangnirtung on Baffin Island, Mena Orford was thrilled, and for the first few months, words costing forty cents each "poured over the air like water,"⁸⁹ lifting spirits and providing one of the real changes to Northern life.

The atmosphere which carried those radio waves, and the location of the NWT also afforded residents the opportunity to view one of Nature's outstanding displays. The Aurora Borealis was one of the small, yet exciting pleasures of living in the North. "One would feel sorry for the man or woman who could not watch the flickering movements of its magic radiance without emotion," suggested Selina Bompas,⁹⁰ about the phenomena caused by an electrical discharge produced by a generator of solar wind and the earth's magnetosphere. This charge creates a current carried mainly by electrons. The lights most frequently appear in the shape of a curtain, 80 kilometres above the earth, and are the result of emissions caused when atoms and molecules in the upper atmosphere

⁸⁷Winifred Marsh, Circular Letters, GSA, DOA, DB Marsh Papers, Series 5-1, M71-4 Box 16, 1935.

⁸⁸Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Anna's Diary: Arctic Honeymoon," *North*, 21(5), 1974, 31.

⁸⁹Orford, *Journey North*, 136.

⁹⁰Bompas, "Our Women in the North," November, 1908, 6.

collide with the current.⁹¹

Christina Fry's description of the curtain is far more poetic, and certainly less intimidating than the scientific one. The Aurora Borealis was "simply grand. They dance and swing and flutter, drop so low you could take a handful. Some people think they can hear a rustling," recorded Mrs Fry. One can almost feel her disappointment as she concluded "as yet I cannot."⁹² In an article entitled "The Beauty of the Arctic," Luta Munday illustrated some of the natural wonders of the NWT, with an emphasis on the "growing community" and the rewards Nature dispensed to those who found the strength to persevere through the trials of Arctic winters and its isolation. She wrote:

Then there were the Northern Lights. A single silvery shaft shoots across the heavens and changes to a riot of brilliant colour. I have seen one half of the sky dyed blood red, no other shade mingled with it at all while at the same instant the opposite arch of the heavens showed every colour of the rainbow. Sometimes those swift dancers of the air seem to advance and recede to a lilting measure then suddenly disappear, and as we draw a breath of wonderment thinking the spectacle is over, they burst on us again in all their radiance. At times I have laid myself flat on the snow in my deerskins to watch the full arc of their ghostly dance braving the intensity of the cold rather than lose a moment of that vision.⁹³

In her work about white women isolated on an island in the Pacific Ocean, Claudia Knpaman cautions that any examination which focusses on hardships and self-sacrifice can place women on a pedestal. What becomes important is the heroic ideal, and overlooks that these women were merely human beings devising strategies to help them

⁹¹This is a paraphrase of the pseudo-scientific explanation provided by the *NWT Data Book*, page 17. I do not presume to have any real understanding of this, I only know they are one of the most fantastic sights I have ever seen.

⁹²Christina Fry, at Herschel Island, *Letter Leaflet*. October 1918.

⁹³Luta Munday, "The Beauty of the Arctic," *National Review*, February 1934, 242.

live with a harsh environment. There is no reason here to assume these white women were heroic, but as WL Morton suggested, "in the North, environment is a fact of life, and a factor in historiography. Life is possible in the North, but depends ever and always on the conditions imposed by it."⁹⁴

Despite the conditions which controlled the very essence of their lives, for many women, there were elements of the Northern climate and its isolation which vitalized and inspired. The Aurora provides but one example. Many of the women expressed a sense of being closer to God amidst the vastness of the Territories. This was often their salvation, and Isobel Hutchison wrote a poem which provides some sense of that feeling. It appears in *North to the Rime Ringed Sun*. The verse is not a masterpiece of literature, but the words paint a vivid picture of what is, in essence, a portrait of sound and space, of frigid cold, and of nature's grip on the Arctic wastes which were those elements which controlled the lives of white women in the North for nine months of each year. She wrote:

In the Grip of the Ice

The sea is frozen now, her voice
Is hushed in deadly calm.
There is no sound along the shore,
Save cold's unearthly psalm.
The crackle of the burning frost,
The whisper of the snow,
And on the sea, the lonely creak
Of ghostly berg and floe.

⁹⁴Morton, "The North in Canadian Historiography," 229.

We are alone in silence here,
Her ample footsteps throng --
The peace of God breathes all around
And fills this place with song.⁹⁵

⁹⁵Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 118.

Chapter Two

More Chilling Than Thrilling: White Woman's Burden in the Arctic

Isolation and the severe climate had significant effects on the physical and mental well-being of white, European women who lived in the Arctic, but the remoteness, and extremes of climate meant both daily and special activity was dominated by the environment, and shaped by the continual effort to adapt to the exigencies of life in the North. Since even women engaged as teachers and nurses in the schools and hospitals were occupied with household chores for much of their time, it was the domestic role which was intensified, and despite the romantic illusions of the Arctic situation, life for most white women was simply "more chilling than thrilling."¹

The domestic situation provides a focus for women's daily activity, and for some examination of how women reconstructed what passed for a southern "society" in the North, for it is in their homes that white women perpetuated the social customs they brought with them from the South. They bore the responsibility of introducing "civilization" into the North, and there was the expectation they would introduce a softer edge into an otherwise bleak world. This domestic role was the white woman's burden in the Arctic. Critics view this re-creation of white society in other imperial outposts as

¹"Woman Gives Vivid Picture," *Quebec Chronicle*, 18 September 1934, 4. The article is about Leota deSteffany, wife of the Captain of the *Kindersley*. These were the words she used to describe her prospects during Arctic travel.

a destructive force. They argue the establishment of European social customs became the foundation for discrimination and for preserving civilization in the Empire,² although what alternatives were available to white women is unclear. Indeed, what else could be expected?

Analysts of imperialism and gender have posited that European women sustained familiar customs on imperial frontiers because women needed to remember who they were, where they came from, and what standards they needed to maintain³ after they arrived at their destination. There is a subtle distinction between that perspective and the understanding that women ventured into the Canadian North with the knowledge there would be difficulties. The former view suggests powerlessness and a reaction to it. The latter indicates adaptation and allows for versatility and agency. Personal goals and guidelines were well established before the northern visitors left the South; they were simply altered to meet the situation.

Conventional imperial history, and subsequent feminist analysis has focused on the assumption that the advent of white, European women into a region contributed to the distance between the community and the white men who controlled it, principally because of the ensuing development of a social hierarchy closely aligned to the political order of the ruling elite; because of the type of activities in which women engaged as a group; and

²See the discussion in Claudia Knapman, *White Women in Fiji: Ruin of Empire?*. Knapman addresses the assumption by traditional colonial and imperial historians that white women actually were responsible for the demise of the Empire because of their insistence in keeping the social practices of their home.

³Strobel, *European Women*, 10.

because of the use of servants in most of their homes.⁴ In the North, the reality was that despite the outward signs of an imperialist hierarchy manifest in the institutions of the Bay, the Church and the RCMP, women's lives were contained within a circle of annual ordering, feeding their families and traveller guests, storing and preserving for the following winter, and adapting to available local provisions, as well as cleaning their homes, washing their clothes, and bathing their babies and their mission charges. There were northern variations on all those themes, but it is noteworthy there is no indication from any of the women that they saw this domestic role as changed or changing in any way, whatever their function in the community.⁵ Among those themes which do dominate the letters and memoirs are food and food supply, obtaining water, and household chores. Although essential to every person's existence, food and water perhaps remain trivial to the overall comprehension of empires, and to the understanding of the relationship between gender and imperialism. Household chores probably fall somewhere short of trivial.

To correct this impression, feminist writers have begun to explore colonialism and the appropriation of the cultural aspects of cuisine. The premise is that cooking and indigenous recipes serve as an indicator of domestic economy; a recipe becomes a story

⁴See Strobel, *European Women*, and Claudia Knapman, *White Women in Fiji 1835-1930*.

⁵One point of clarification is needed. This refers to women who lived in the North, were employed by missions, or who were married to traders and policemen. This does not necessarily include transients, but it is not meant to exclude them either.

which reveals cultural practice.⁶ In the same vein, since isolation and environment had some impact upon the supplies available in northern kitchens, household management was a critical factor in the northern experience. More importantly, because of the domestic nature of women's work, ideas about food and home economics engender the experience, and when white women write about the food they cook, and the food they must consume of necessity, they write something of their *self*.

It is not possible to state that men cared less about their food when they lived in the North. It can only be confirmed that the women expressed their concerns, and wrote about the food they cooked and ate. This was in part because these women were psychologically kitchen-bound, as well as ice-bound. Activities associated with meals were closely tied to their daily schedules and domestic occupation. The challenge here is not to launch a northern cookbook and describe one hundred and one historical ways to prepare seal meat and fog berries,⁷ but deprivation has always been part of the northern folklore, so a knowledge of how housewives coped, and what they thought about their domestic circumstances should be part of the historical record. The North was not always a land of plenty and it would be wrong to cling to any illusion of abundant game in the woods, or fish in the lakes and seas. Grand banquets and social events with

⁶See, for example, Anne Goldman, "I Yam What I Yam: Cooking, Culture and Colonialism," in Sidonie Smith and Julia Watson, Eds., *Decolonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.)

⁷Addie Butler described fog berries as similar to a blackberry, but orange coloured with larger drupes. They were watery and had a smoky sour gooseberry flavour. I have no idea how they might taste eaten with seal meat.

elaborate gastronomic menus were not common, although not surprisingly, hospitality and celebrations were characterized by the consumption of food, which is a reflection of the conditions imposed on white society by the supply system, as much as it was custom and culture.

Women described food and food supplies to their friends and family because they knew the women to whom they wrote could visualize the difficulties of supply and preparation, and sympathize with the monotony. It was part of the sacrifice, and describing the problems associated with food preparation subtly conveyed that message south. When Christina Fry wrote from Herschel Island in 1918 and explained the lack of variety in the family's diet, she remarked that fresh fruit and green vegetables were out of the question, but her description of the "meatless, wheatless, and sweetless" days, summed up the extent of Arctic victuals in terms any housekeeper could understand.⁸ Northern tables required one to keep what Sister Elizabeth Ward at Fort Providence recorded as "lent by anticipation" for there was often only fish and potatoes to eat -- when there were fish and potatoes.⁹

Fish provided a staple protein supplement, and as Minnie Hackett explained, during "open water season" near Aklavik, fresh fish was usually available daily. Even fish frozen in the fall and kept all winter tasted better than canned food,¹⁰ but for those who

⁸Christina Fry to Sadie Stringer (who certainly would have understood), Herschel Island, 2 December, 1918, YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 215.

⁹Sister Elizabeth Ward, Fort Providence, 1885. Quoted in Rev Father P Duchaussois, OMI, *The Grey Nuns in the Far North*, (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919), 132.

¹⁰Miss M Hackett, Aklavik, *Living Message*, October, 1928. This means about three months of the year.

relied on dried fish, it was not necessarily the most palatable alternative. Louisa Camsell Mills was born at Fort Simpson. She recalled that as a child, fish was the main course for most meals, and if one did not like fish, one went hungry. Since the dogs were fed fish exclusively as well, and there were five or six dog trains in Simpson at the time, the men of the community spent three weeks each autumn fishing in Great Slave Lake. Twelve thousand whitefish represented a good catch. To preserve the harvest, the whitefish were hung ten to a stick on a fish stage. "If the weather had been warm, these fish got rather 'high', and after coming all the distance from Great Slave Lake in two scows, uncovered and tramped on by men and dogs, one can imagine what they would be like."¹¹ It is not difficult to envision why Annie Card recorded they always hoped for cold weather when the boats returned from fishing.¹²

Country foods like seal meat, polar bear, walrus and muktuk, which is the inner layer of whale skin, provided fresh meat in coastal settlements, as did caribou when available. Moose, caribou, deer, bear, mountain sheep and rabbits augmented the diet further inland "on rare occasions" wrote Minnie Hackett. Any shortages were due, in part, because the men who worked at missions and posts considered their occupations as their principal responsibility and were often not hunters in the traditional sense. Traders, missionaries, government officials and policemen had other things to do which were only neglected under conditions of dire need. Natives were often hired to hunt and fish, but then could

¹¹Louisa Camsell Mills, Typescript, Interview, PAA 74.1/88.

¹²Annie Card, with Helen Rutherford, "An Indian Agent's Wife," *Beaver*, September 1939, 22.

only do so if the game was present in the area. This explains why Miss Hackett suggested St Peter's Mission was very fortunate the previous winter to have a good supply of caribou. The legs were hung in the storehouse, but froze so hard, "they would take one or two days to thaw out when brought into the hot kitchen."¹³

Obtaining and preparing country meats was often less of a challenge, however, than actually eating them. Sadie Stringer recalled how Inuit had killed two polar bears at Peel River, and at the mission the next morning they had bear steaks for breakfast. They "all felt like polar bears after it," and decided they wanted no more polar bear meat.¹⁴ Traveller Clara Vyvyan described a scene after her guides had killed a bear. It was the only fresh meat they had eaten for some days. "As we sat there, close to the reeking corpse, consuming fried bear steaks and rice and treacle," she confessed, "we tried to regard this revolting scene as a matter of course."¹⁵ Luta Munday remembered that she thought seal and walrus very good eating, but liked the walrus best. She explained walrus was a dark meat, and very fat, but it was really quite good, especially the flippers of a young animal. She disclosed that not all white people in the community were enthusiastic about eating either.¹⁶ Mena Orford described how her husband and children liked seal meat, but she could only manage to eat the liver, and then only because it tasted a bit like calf's liver if fried with bacon. Mrs Orford's dislike of the dark, fatty, seal meat became

¹³Hackett, *Living Message*, October 1928.

¹⁴Sadie Stringer, Peel River, 12 July 1897. GSA, DOA, Isaac O Stringer Collection, GSA, M74-3 DOA.

¹⁵Clara Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, (London: Peter Owen, 1961), 129.

¹⁶Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 174.

so strong that eventually she could neither cook it or even touch it, and she confessed "at the first sight of the black flesh, [she would] have to go and lie down."¹⁷ But, unfamiliar tastes and smells were often the means to survival, and as Clara Vyvyan reminded herself as she sat and ate fresh bear meat, "sometimes life catches you up and whirls you into the strangest experience from which there is no escape, and you just bow your head and wait until its over."¹⁸

Harvesting eggs, geese and ducks in the spring allowed for fresh meat when supplies of all kinds were running low, but strict regulations about shooting waterfowl out of season evolved over time, and this presented some social embarrassments in small communities where everyone was just short of starving, and geese and ducks were the only available food. At Cambridge Bay, the RCMP felt it necessary to inform the residents of the law, and Anna Rokeby-Thomas related how these visits from the local constabulary created an uncomfortable situation for her because every time the Mounties appeared at her home to deliver their stern warning, she had a duck in the oven.¹⁹

Mrs Rokeby-Thomas claimed there "were ways of disguising the monotonous food," supplied to them in the Arctic, but she "considered it a real victory when a day passed without having to use army beans for either the noon or evening meal."²⁰ Even with fresh meat available, the mainstay of the northern kitchen was beans, often referred to

¹⁷Orford, *Journey North*, 109.

¹⁸Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, 129.

¹⁹Rokeby-Thomas, "Christmas 1938," 52.

²⁰Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Darkness," 15.

euphemistically in correspondence as dried vegetables, which probably fooled no one. Any fresh food at all was such a treat after a winter of beans, beans, and beans, wrote Christina Fry, who called them Mackenzie River Strawberries.²¹ Beans even figured in the folklore about white women in the North. One Anglican missionary recalled in his memoir how the white wife of an HBC trader was ill and "of a delicate stomach." There was available country food and dried meat, but a traveller who spent a short time at the post noted the condition of the wife and "took courage to advise his host" and asked whether he could not order some luxuries for her. "Luxuries? is it?" asked the trader. "Do you no ken that I get 600 pounds of beans every year?"²² The accuracy of this tale is unknown, but it is an indicator that luxury in northern kitchens often meant quantity and not quality, and the supply of provisions was often determined by another hand. It also puts a situation into perspective when beans can provide a measure of social status.

At least beans could be prepared with some flair if the cook was versatile, but "the eternal canned meat" recalled Luta Munday, "was fearful eating and so salty." There was no nourishment because it had to be "boiled to rags." She "really preferred cold boiled bacon, though it was not altogether appetizing either as it had been at the detachment for two years." It had been shipped into the Arctic "rolled in a creosote preparation the flavour which more or less" permeated the whole thing.²³ Since goods had to be shipped

²¹Christina Fry to Bishop Lucas, Herschel Island, 5 January 1917. GSA, DOA, M71-4, Series 5-3, Box 19.

²²Charles Edward Whittaker, "Autobiographical account as a missionary," Typescript, GMA, M5960, 32.

²³Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 152.

in bales or boxes, there was often a chance that flavours and foodstuffs mingled. Insignificant as this problem may seem, such inconveniences meant daily challenges rarely encountered by a southern cook. In a letter of gratitude to the WA which sent supplies North to her in 1898, Mrs Reeve at Fort Simpson tactfully suggested groceries should be sewn up separately in strong cotton bags. It seems "pearline, oatmeal and pepper were not at all a serviceable mixture."²⁴ Any blending meant an entire year's supply was contaminated, and there was no way to replace the goods until the boat returned in twelve months time.

To supplement the monotonous diet, gardens were planted wherever there was a little soil, but the fickle climate and poor growing conditions meant harvests were unpredictable, like the garden at Aklavik which yielded lettuce leaves three inches in length, four to six leaves to a plant. The lettuce was so tough, the staff at the mission resorted to boiling the leaves. The radishes and spinach went to seed due to rapid growth under the continuous daylight.²⁵ Sister Ward wrote how the barley crop one year at Fort Providence was ruined by locusts, the potato crop was very poor, and the previous year's wheat was destroyed by frost. In addition, the lake froze over before fish could be caught. The nuns in charge of the gardens managed to harvest one carrot. The onions remained because it "appears they were so bad that the locusts disdained them." The loss of the barley was apparently near catastrophic because barley was used as a coffee

²⁴Mrs Reeve, Fort Simpson, *Letter Leaflet*, March 1898.

²⁵Hackett, *Living Message*, October 1928.

substitute, and for soup when there was no fish.²⁶

In the early years at Fort Providence, the Grey Nuns lived under severe hardships; their gardens essential because their supplies were not shipped with any regularity into the region. But even if northern gardens yielded a bounty, these fresh vegetables did not last through the long winter. And that absence weighed heavily on the minds of white women in the Arctic. Winifred Marsh wrote from Eskimo Point in July of 1936 that she had "been crazy for something fresh" for she had no fresh food for days,²⁷ and Mena Orford described how a calendar picture of a bowl of fruit "provided the last straw to [her] hungry cravings." Everytime she saw it, her "mind would flood with a poignant yearnings for bananas and nostalgic memories of apples ripening on a tree."²⁸ Bananas were not unknown in the NWT, and could sometimes be purchased at Fort Smith where the Connibears were independent traders. It seems Mrs Connibear was not afraid to order goods that no one else bothered with, and this included shipments of green bananas. Her first order spoiled because it was not loaded on the boat in time, but the next year's supply arrived intact for the shrewd Englishwoman who obviously understood what would sell the fastest in her store.²⁹

While Mena Orford had to make do with a picture on the wall, Flossie Hirst and Florence Giles at Pangnirtung engaged in window box gardening with some amusing

²⁶Duchaussois, *Grey Nuns*, 134.

²⁷Winifred Marsh, 1 July 1936, GSA, DOA, Marsh Papers, M71-4, Box 16.

²⁸Orford, *Journey North*, 85.

²⁹Miriam Green Ellis, "A Business Woman in the Far North," *Canadian Countryman*, 12 December 1925.

results. They planted potatoes in a box and at what they considered to be the appropriate time decided to have a dinner party and surprise their guests with a treat. They went to dig out the potatoes, all the while concerned the bowl they held in hand would not be big enough. In her journal, Miss Hirst divulged they had previously cut off the tops and eaten them as a green vegetable, which might explain her description of the harvest.

Our expressions must have been rather comical when we had all the obvious result of the total crop on the floor. There were about 3 potatoes the size of an egg, and the rest were the size of marbles -- and smaller!! We set them on the floor and laughed -- and laughed -- and laughed. There was a surprise all right, but it was ours, and we were not the invited guests.³⁰

They did not wait for the guests but cooked the potatoes immediately. They were delicious, and the women rationalized there were more in the garden, so the HBC traders could have those when they next came to dinner. Their garden also provided these two women with a little game of colonial one-up-manship.³¹ Miss Hirst had planted Canadian seeds on one side and declared them to be Miss Giles's. Seeds planted on the other side were claimed for herself and England. "Canada and England are going to it, neck and neck," recorded Miss Hirst, although Miss Giles had insisted if the Canadian seeds started to gain, it would be proof of Canada's superiority over England.³²

"Cooking in the North," maintained Elizabeth Howard, was "somewhat different to what it is at home," and she told how before they were able to get fresh milk, eggs, and butter at St Peter's Mission, "there was nothing to do but substitute *Hay River*. Really,

³⁰Hirst, Diaries, GSA, IV.

³¹Some feminist readers may be offended by the use of the masculine term, but one-up-womanship sounds absolutely ridiculous.

³²Hirst, Diaries, GSA. II.

it is marvellous what one can do with water," she wrote in a letter to the WA. "For cheap housekeeping," it was highly recommended.³³ It may have been inexpensive as an ingredient in small amounts, but securing sufficient quantities of water in the North was labour intensive, and the mechanics of melting snow and ice in the winter occupied considerable time and energy.

The constant need for water was a reflection of the white women's understanding that despite the conditions under which she lived, a clean home, clean bodies, and clean clothes were still important. Of those southern conventions which clashed with the Arctic environment, cleanliness and cleaning were the most difficult to adapt, and the obsession to maintain comparable sanitary conditions was almost perverse. Clean clothes and bodies separated these women from their Native neighbours. Cleanliness provided an immediate visual distinction between the races, yet it would be wrong to assume European women engaged in the southern rituals of cleanliness in order to maintain that difference. They would have done it anyway, because they viewed those chores as a part of their everyday occupation, and because fastidiousness was culturally ingrained and personally desirable, even if this meant cracking the layer of ice on the water pail every morning just to wash a face.

"Washing in the Arctic is one of the housewife's most bitter trials," concluded Isobel Hutchison, after describing how the tub of snow was placed on the stove to melt. She did her washing "which froze stiff as boards the moment it was hung on the line to dry."³⁴

³³Elizabeth Howard, *Letter Leaflet*, January 1915.

³⁴Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 154.

Christina Fry told *Letter Leaflet* readers she liked to put clothes out on the line, but confessed it was not always the best plan in winter.³⁵ Mary Ferguson washed clothes with melted snow in the winter, but even in summer, hard water from the river made laundry difficult. Except for woollen garments, which were hung in the house to keep them soft, clothes were hung out on the line until much of the moisture was gone. Then the laundry was hung inside, which meant endless lines of damp clothes to clutter already small cabins.³⁶

Melting snow in any quantity was a tedious job. The usual method was to fill large pots and reduce the snow to water on the stove. If hot water was the desired result, the wait could be interminable. Fuel supplies were also scarce, although the never-ending cold meant that a stove was probably lit during most of the day and could do simultaneous duty. In the missions and schools, bath night and laundry routines were strictly enforced. Mary Crocker wrote from Aklavik in 1938 that it was the climax of the week when bath water was hauled in pails from the laundry tanks in another building. "It's quite a business by the time you get to the thirty-eighth bath," she recalled, but in the end, she considered it "rather a lark."³⁷

Water could be obtained in a number of ways during the winter months. At Cambridge Bay, huge slabs of ice were sawed out of a fresh water lake to be used for drinking water during the winter. The slabs were stored close to the buildings where

³⁵Christina Fry, *Letter Leaflet*, October 1918.

³⁶Ferguson, *Mink Mary and Me*, 57.

³⁷Mary E Crocker, *Living Message*, March 1938, 70.

"they stood like a sparkling forest as they waited their turn to pinch hit for the water tap."³⁸ Fresh water ice was not always available at locations such as Shingle Point, where at the Residential School, Bessie Quirt longed for an easier way to bring snow into the house from the single remaining large drift which was some distance away from the dormitory. Her solution was to take an old stove with a pipe to the drift. She lit a fire in the stove and stuck the stove pipe into the drift. Within hours, she had a whole tub of water with which she was delighted. She used the stove to melt snow until the drift was gone.³⁹

Men might have delivered ice slabs, or carried tubs full of snow, but for the most part, women took care of this chore themselves, which is significant, because if the snowbanks and ice houses had been in India or Fiji there would have been indigenous servants to perform the task. In the more tropical reaches of the Empire, domestic servants were an integral part of the colonial hierarchy, even after domestic service in Europe was on the decline.⁴⁰ More than anything else, domestic servants in their homes granted status and class to a white woman, and provided a domestic base for racial distinction. Servants also made it possible to maintain the social whirl which kept white women busy in imperial outposts, and for which they have been criticized. Some white women in the North had Native servants, and there is some sense of their presence in letters and diaries, although these employees might more properly be called home help

³⁸Rokeby-Thomas, "Christmas Living, *North*, 21(6), 1974, 9.

³⁹Bessie Quirt, Shingle Point, 14 June 1930, *Living Message*, October 1930, 308. She seemed pleased that *hours* was all it took.

⁴⁰See Strobel, *European Women*, 21.

rather than servants. Often a government official or missionary would hire an Inuit assistant as a guide to help with dogs and boats, and build ice houses when travelling on the land. Such expertise was essential, and few men would have any illusions about who was in control under those circumstances. But when an Inuit guide was taken on, it usually meant that his dogteam and his family were part of the bargain.

When Roly Soper engaged an Inuit male named Moosa in this capacity at Lake Harbour in 1930, his wife Carolyn acquired the services of Neve, Moosa's wife. Mrs Soper called Moosa, Neve and their two children their "attached Eskimo family." The Sopers were responsible for the Inuit family's welfare, which included weekly rations. They lived in their own traditional housing close by to the Sopers, and Moosa was paid a monthly wage, plus food and tobacco for which he was required to accompany the scientist husband on all of his trips. Neve's primary job was to provide Arctic clothing for the Sopers.⁴¹ This form of employment of Native women was not uncommon, and evidence suggests this purpose suited most white women who preferred to get on with the housework themselves.

There were a number of reasons for this, and the first was that it was not usually necessary to have a number of servants to help in a two room log cabin, and for women disciplined to domestic work inside their own homes, the familiar drudgery of housework kept them busy enough to offset depression and loneliness. In the North, servants were not a symbol of status, and while there was a "class" distinction between whites and Natives, the levels of distinction between whites themselves was less meaningful. Women

⁴¹Carolyn Soper, "A Nurse Goes to Baffin Island," *Beaver*, Winter 1964, 33.

did not normally compete for social position. This does not mean there was no pecking order, but for those who were the only white woman in the settlement, what need to be superior would a woman have? In a community where a woman's survival depended on a good rapport with the other white women in the settlement, there was little room for social snobbery.⁴²

Most white women were wives of missionaries, salaried traders, or policemen, and could not really afford domestic help. In one of her letters home, Winifred Marsh told how she had hired a woman to assist her after the birth of her first child. The woman's duties included turning the wringer, bringing in the coal, scrubbing floors, and getting the water. Her main references appeared to be that she had lived with a white man for some time, and that she was clean and strong.⁴³ Within three weeks, Mrs Marsh was disillusioned. Her "maid" had left. "Women up here get spoilt," she declared, because she was paid six dollars per week at a time when a maid in Winnipeg was paid fifteen dollars a month. "She didn't figure the pay was worth the work," wrote Mrs Marsh, and she worked "only from 10.30 till 2.00, and everything [she] had to teach her."⁴⁴

⁴²I can find only one recorded incident which disproves a quiet female society. Fort Smith was the centre of administration; it was a major trading post; it was closest to communication lines via the Alberta border, and Wood Buffalo National Park. Ethel Catt wrote to Bishop Stringer in 1933 to tell him how Mrs Godsell had had a tea party and set the settlement in a flap because she did not invite either the police, or the government ladies like Mrs Gagnon. Mrs Gagnon had another party and invited every lady in the settlement. She included all the mixed blood women, but not Mrs Godsell. This set the settlement "jangling" declared Miss Catt. Whether this represents snobbery, or is just an example of women being bitchy, is open to debate. YTA ACC, DOY, COR250, Box 2, File 11.

⁴³Winifred Marsh, Eskimo Point, 1 August 1937. GSA, DOA, M71-4, Box 16.

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 27 August 1937.

Mrs Marsh's experience was typical, and those women who attempted to train Natives in the house had little success. The explanation for this lies partly in the difference in housing and the understanding of what housekeeping required, especially in the coastal regions where Inuit lived in skin tents in the summer, and variations on tented ice houses in the winter. For example, the Natives would not be able to understand why Christina Fry felt compelled to shovel snow from the roof of the store-house as part of her spring-cleaning ritual.⁴⁵ Luta Munday tried hard to teach some of the Inuit at Chesterfield how to clean her house and wash the clothes, but it was futile. "The Esquimos first of all had never seen a white woman's clothes, nor used soap. They had not the haziest idea how to use the latter," she explained.⁴⁶ Luta Munday and her white sisters could comprehend why the Natives had never used soap, particularly after the women had spent a winter in the North and had developed some awareness of living conditions and Native clothing. The compulsion to keep their own homes clean or to practice personal hygiene, however, interfered with any sensitivity to Native traditions, yet it is difficult to reconcile any objection which would expect white women to give up their own traditions in favour of the Native one.

Domestic employment was also at odds with what northerners referred to as Indian time. This attitude had less to do with hours and minutes as it did with responsibilities and duties, and structured schedules. It was hard to persuade domestic servants to stay

⁴⁵Christina Fry to Sadie Stringer, Herschel Island, 2 December 1918. YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 251.

⁴⁶Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 145.

on the job when their families were returning to hunting or fishing grounds, and one result of this outlook was that employment and commitment held different meanings for whites and Natives. It was impossible to convince young, single, Native or mixed-blood women to stay on as domestic help when the first eligible man appeared to propose marriage, for instance. Native custom and economics left no doubt as to which alternative was most desirable.

Where young women were employed, there was also a matter of propriety, and the missionaries were always distressed by the possibility of their female charges being led into a life of immorality (which was never actually defined, but apparently meant living with a man outside of Christian marriage). Irene Biss Spry reported that at Fort Rae the local priest did not permit individual women to work alone in a house if there was no white woman resident.⁴⁷ This meant the resident white women in the community may have enhanced the possibilities for employment for young women in a region where jobs were otherwise non-existent.

While it is obvious that white women attempted to secure help in their homes in the North, few details of the relationship with servants are mentioned in the sources.⁴⁸ This absence could reflect an attitude of complacency, but given the conditions, it is probable servants were an insignificant factor in the domestic environment. White women may

⁴⁷Irene Biss Spry, Diaries. NWT A N92-139, Western Trip, 1935.

⁴⁸Missionaries often reported the presence of an adolescent orphan or an older child attending school at the mission and who helped around the home. When the children leave, there is always an expression of sadness, and apparently the missionaries made some attempt to keep track of the individual. This is usually the only time a servant is noted, except for Eskimo and Native guides hired by males.

have had expectations of hiring the locals and exercising some prerogative over indigenous domestic help, but any such plans were often scuttled by northern attitudes. Since Native women had different domestic priorities, both sides were somewhat intolerant of each other. This was not the Raj, and there was no caste system in the local tradition to develop a structure of service.

For those women who had other white women as neighbours in the settlement, there were occasions when white women helped each other, and childbirth offered an excuse for closer social contact which might otherwise have been thwarted in northern communities by the danger of wild animals, roaming dogs, and bitter weather. Attending a sister in need was one domestic duty everyone understood, even if it meant packing your bags and moving in to the other woman's quarters for the duration. The rituals of birth emphasized some of the domestic consequences of housewifery in the North, as well. In one of her letters, Winifred Marsh described the situation at the HBC trading post when the white wife of one of the traders gave birth. "There I did miss an abundant water supply, every drop of water I used had to be melted from ice. The men thought they were heroes to supply me with two kettles each half full of boiling water," she lamented. "For a fortnight, I slept with the [mother and child], and cooked for the mother each day. The weather was very cold and I found that oiling the baby was the safest means of cleansing."⁴⁹

Necessary adaptations made for the environment were often presented in the same

⁴⁹Winifred Marsh, GSA, DOA, DB Marsh series, M71-4, Box 16. Eskimo Point, no date.

matter of fact way as Mrs Marsh depicted in this letter, and rarely as a complaint.

Agnes Cameron observed that it was a point of honour in the North not to whine, whatever happened.⁵⁰ Miss Cameron does not elaborate, except to describe how Mrs Harding smiled bravely as the scow carrying half a year's provisions broke away from the steamer and smashed against the shore. This dearth of protest signalled an acceptance of the conditions, for there was not much point in griping about something which could not be changed, although it must be considered that pre-Second World War expectations were not the same as contemporary ones.

Historical attitudes and expectations also partially explain the exclusion in the sources of comment about what Jean Godsell recorded as "the complete lack of privacy and the lack of sanitary accommodation," when she journeyed North on her honeymoon in the 1920s. She described her "bridal chamber as a "tarpaulin covered mountain of freight."⁵¹ Sadie Stringer noted the same lack of privacy in a 1955 article in *Maclean's*, where she described how sick sailors off the whaling ships, and sick Inuit, slept side by side with the Stringers in bunks built for the purpose in their mission home.⁵² Neither women divulged how that lack of privacy affected their lives, and the rare mention of things private underscores the sense that these women did not reveal personal secrets because

⁵⁰Cameron, *The New North*, 64.

⁵¹Jean Godsell, *I Was No Lady...I Followed the Call of the Wild*. (Toronto: Ryerson, 1959) 21, and 27.

⁵²Sadie Stringer, "My Husband Ate His Boots," *Maclean's*, 68, 1955, 45.

they were, indeed, personal.⁵³ The historian hoping to discover if the environment affected sexuality, for example, would be disappointed. Jean Godsell's remark was the only one which addressed the issue even in an oblique way, although Wallace Manning described her first year of marriage which was shared with an Inuit family in a snow house. She wrote

Had I been an Eskimo all would have been well -- or at least much better -- for they are accustomed to live with one or two other families in the same dwelling. Since I was not Eskimo, and unaccustomed to lack of privacy, I found it an effort to adjust myself to a life where practically every movement was open to inspection by one, two, or three pairs of eyes.⁵⁴

Like all the brides who travelled North, Mrs Manning likely assumed it was none of her reader's business how her connubial arrangements were affected by the situation. Historians will have to live with that attitude, because no useful evidence exists.

What did receive considerable attention from white women in the North was Christmas. There were two social occasions of some import at northern settlements. One was shiptime, which has already been noted in a previous chapter; the other was the celebration of the Christian festival amidst the Christmas card atmosphere of the Arctic landscape. Like shiptime, when mail from home was delivered in quantity, Christmas in the North was both public, and very private. The ritual procedures of their own Christmas customs represented the definitive endeavour to impose European culture on

⁵³In all the sources surveyed, there are only two brief mentions about toilet facilities. Many women described their homes, their living rooms, their kitchens and even the bath. Whether they just assumed everyone knew about the pail in the corner or the outhouse is unknown.

⁵⁴Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 43.

the indigenous population, while it also required their unconscious attempt not to recall too poignantly the seasonal gathering of relatives and friends outside the North. This meant creating memories of Christmas present, which was a task attacked with some relish and a certain amount of zeal.

Christmastime was *Nerriwigycoak*, wrote Winifred Marsh. This was the time of a big feast and *Kowee-enarktok*, the time of rejoicing.⁵⁵ It was also the time when nostalgia and homesickness could cloud the excitement, especially after the advent of the Northern Messenger radio broadcasts in the thirties. Those messages reinforced the separation from families even while they drew them closer through some sense of personal contact. Since there was often only one radio in each community, or one resident had a radio receiver superior to any other in the settlement, listening to these broadcasts was a social event, yet profoundly personal at the same time, evoking emotional responses in even the most seasoned Arctic residents.

Mena Orford had received three messages during her first Christmas at Pang, but she did not hear much of any of them. "The tears which [she] had been holding back so long took quick advantage at the first sound of [her] Mother's voice." Her husband handed her a handkerchief, but "no one else appeared to notice, or for that matter hear anything unusual, though [her] tears were noisy that night as well as wet."⁵⁶ At Pangnirtung too, Florence Hirst listened to messages directed to all her companions.

⁵⁵Winifred Marsh, GSA, DOA, Marsh Papers, M71-4, Box 16, Series 5-1, Circular Letters.

⁵⁶Orford, *Journey North*, 82.

Despite the disclaimer about how much she enjoyed listening to all the other messages, a single statement in her journal, set in a paragraph on its own, conveys her true feelings. She wrote: "I didn't receive any message at this time."⁵⁷

Louise Buffum was a young bride at Fort Rae at the beginning of the Second World War. She told a writer who described Mrs Buffum's first Christmas there that "it was thrilling to hear my mother speak to us from Winnipeg, but it made me homesick with the knowledge that we were so far apart."⁵⁸ The group gathered at Cambridge Bay in 1938 were disappointed when their radio failed. The routine for messages was regular. First the Maritimes was heard, then Quebec came on the air. Ontario messages followed and friends received messages in turn. But on this occasion when their host adjusted the volume of the radio, Toronto was lost. "I was sure that the whole world must know that our radio had faded at the most critical time," Anna Rokeby-Thomas recorded, and she waited in vain for a return to Toronto and her messages.⁵⁹

Winifred Marsh wrote in 1938 about the CBC broadcast, and pointed out that those in "the empire's outposts [were] privileged to hear mothers and dear ones speaking personally to their own sons and daughters and loved ones. It [was] intensely moving to hear each voice vibrant with emotion speaking some message straight from the heart."⁶⁰ Winifred Marsh began another Christmas circular letter from Eskimo Point with:

⁵⁷Hirst, Diaries, GSA, III.

⁵⁸Nancy Middleton, "Christmas at Fort Rae," *Citizen Magazine*, Ottawa, 24 December 1965, 8.

⁵⁹Rokeby-Thomas, "Christmas 1938," 55.

⁶⁰Winifred Marsh, 1938. GSA, DOA, Marsh Papers, M71-4, Box 16, Series 5-1.

"Continuing the Empire Broadcast. This is Eskimo Point Calling," and she reminded her correspondents that "part of our Christmas we spend with you because we are members of the GREAT EMPIRE FAMILY. We did not hear the broadcast too well," she told them, "but we heard every word of the King's speech."⁶¹ The comment created a link across distances too staggering to comprehend, but she understood that everyone to whom she wrote had also heard the same broadcast.

The association with Empire, and hence British tradition, was evident in Mrs Marsh's Christmas in other ways. Winifred Marsh continued her greetings, and declared she "must make Eskimo Point's broadcast a little longer than most," for she wanted to take her readers to a party given for both Native and white children at Eskimo Point. This is how she described that Christmas Eve.

At 3.00 pm the school door burst open. The intense cold outside as it met the warm air of the schoolroom created a great inrushing fog, out of which emerged our little breathless and excited friends. By the time the fog had cleared tumbled hair was straightened, and a row of rather awestruck and shy children, stared and gaped and pointed at the decorations.

Now, let me tell you what they saw. Down one side of the room we had a long table set ready for the approaching onslaught with jellies, buns, biscuits, puddings and tea. By the side of each plate was a gaily coloured paper hat. The whole of the room was festooned with green and red wood chip decorations. Father Christmas's sitting on paper balloons were hung from the ceiling. (You know the sort of thing made from concertina paper.)

In order to facilitate the clearing of the table, we told the children to line up at the side of the room. My eyes were blindfolded and a huge assortment of lovely balloons was put into my hands. They really were glorious. Each child coming forward received a balloon which I drew from the bunch. (We did this that there be absolute fairness, as the balloons were of various shapes, colours and sizes.)

⁶¹*Ibid.*, probably 1936.

Well! Really I thought that children 'outside' loved balloons, but you can imagine what a thrill those kiddies got when they saw and handled them, some for the first time in their lives. The ages of the children ranged from 3 years to 12 years, while we had three mothers with babies. Now believe it or not! at the end of the party, every child's balloon remained intact.⁶²

There were lots of games like pin the tail on the donkey, hide and seek, and blind man's buff; games with little meaning to the guests. Musical bumps was popular because the deerskin pants worn by the children provided some padding, explained Mrs Marsh, but it is more likely because the Inuit children could understand the point of the game. Each child received a parcel and a squeaker before they went home. The party itself came to an abrupt end because three children had violent nose-bleeds, which Mrs Marsh noted was a common occurrence among the Inuit. Nevertheless, "it was a time of great happiness, of gleaming eyes and flushed laughing faces." She thanked those who had sent the gifts and balloons to them from the South in her letter, and remarked how "great and lovely was their share in making Christmas such a wonderful time" for their Inuit guests as well as themselves.⁶³

The wonder and amusement of the children who were guests cannot be doubted, although Winifred Marsh failed to explain what happened to the balloons when they left the warm friendly atmosphere of the school room for the frigid blasts outside and the icy walls of snow houses, or the disappointment of those Inuit children startled by the 'bang' when the balloons finally burst. It reveals more, however, about Winifred Marsh than it does the children, for what she had arranged was a very secular event, more reminiscent

⁶²*Ibid.*

⁶³*Ibid.*

of a European childhood party than an Anglican missionary's observance of a sacred Christian festival. Her delight in delighting the children of Eskimo Point is both evident and significant.

Christmas is depicted in much the same way across the North in all accounts from Anglican missionaries and those who left chronicles about their lives in the North throughout the early decades of the twentieth century. There are varying shades of religious overtones depending where the illustration was directed, but the effort was to replicate the European celebration, and everyone tried to make Christmas an event to remember. Mrs Rokeby-Thomas recorded in one of her stories how white residents in the North recycled the Christmas cards they had received from the outside, but not only the cards were reused, for so were their own memories of the past and this was important to their own ability to cope with Christmas in remote regions away from home.

At Peel River, Sadie Stringer wrote of Christmas week activities of 1896, which was the first year the Stringers spent at that remote post.

This week we had no school. We had singing practice with the white men for the Xmas carols and with the native children singing their hymns for Xmas. We had them sing in groups. Baked Xmas cakes and tarts. XMAS DAY. In the morning Mr Stringer had service with one hundred natives. The children sang the hymns we had practised with them. After service we gave them a treat consisting of biscuits and butter, raisin cake, caraway cake, tea and sugar, taffy and pop-corn. It was their first celebration of Xmas Day and they all seemed as though it were a Merry Christmas. Had English service at 2 PM. Sermon by Mr Stringer. Christmas decorations were 'Glory to God in the Highest on earth peace good will towards men.' 'Merry Christmas' 'Welcome' and 'Happy New Year' In the evening, had a spread for the white men. Menu as follows: oysters, cold venison, cold fowl, pickles, cheese, bread, butter, tea, coffee, sugar, jelly tarts, mixed cakes, and two Christmas story cakes with icing. Afterwards we had a few

addresses, recitations, and some singing.⁶⁴

Note that sugar was listed as a separate item on both menus. Christmas was one of those special occasions when its use was generous.

Rose Spendlove spent Christmas at Holy Trinity Mission, Fort Norman in 1902. Despite a devastating epidemic of measles in the Mackenzie Valley, Mrs Spendlove reported that there was a delightful service, and at the mission they all had a happy Christmas. As was the established custom by that time, the Dene who had gathered at the mission were provided with a "a good dinner of Arctic Region fare," with added "plum pudding and plenty of tea. This, with the Christmas tree and gifts, well paid the Indians who had come long distances, on *snow shoes*, to hear the joyful news of our Saviour's birth."⁶⁵ A cynic might wonder if the Dene were being bribed to partake in the religious celebrations; that the Christmas festival and all its trimmings was used as a focal point to maintain the continuing acceptance of converts. If that were so, both parties probably enjoyed themselves, and the exchange was considered a fair one.

At St Peter's Mission School at Hay River, Miss Frances Harvie wrote about the Christmas of 1917 in her annual report. It was a happy time for all at the school, she decided, and although it was her first Christmas away from home, she declared it the happiest she had ever spent. At six in the morning the mission bells rang out to signal ten minutes of silent prayer. This was followed by visits to staff members and an exchange

⁶⁴Sadie Stringer, 12 July 1897, Peel River. GSA, DOA, Isaac O Stringer Papers, M74-3, Series 2-A-1.

⁶⁵Rose Spendlove to Miss McCord, Montreal Diocese. *Letter Leaflet*, August, 1903.

of holiday greetings. Cards were distributed to all the children at breakfast, and Holy Communion was celebrated for the Natives in the morning.

Then the children look forward to candies being given them. This one day in the year, school and staff dine together, much to the delight of the children. After supper comes the event of the day, our Christmas tree. The little ones for weeks have been making presents to be put on this tree for the staff and others. Besides these are added toys sent in by friends outside, together with moccasins and mitts sent by parents to their children. The tree last year surpassed any I have seen outside. One of the builders of the school dressed up as Father Christmas and distributed the toys and gifts. It was not until after the children were tucked safely in bed that we looked at our own presents and had light refreshments.⁶⁶

Whether or not the Dene population of the Mackenzie Valley had grasped the true meaning of Christmas is never addressed by any of the women. It appears from Miss Harvie's account that the indigenous residents had caught on to the gift-giving aspect of the festival, although there was probably some curiosity as to why such generosity was confined to a short period of time during the winter solstice. Luta Munday thought that to the Inuit at Chesterfield Inlet, Christmas was a strange celebration and astutely noted that the Roman Catholic Mission directed their attempts at Christian conversion to the children of the community. Children were the ideal constituency for all the festivities, and if there was also a message conveyed, it was easier to rationalize any excess.

Mrs Munday was not a missionary, and her description of her first Christmas at Chesterfield centres on the white residents. She described a parcel marked "not to be opened until Christmas" that had arrived with annual supplies. Since this is how all Christmas gifts arrived from the south, Christmas shopping was not part of the process,

⁶⁶Frances M Harvie, Hay River, 1918. "Annual Reports of the Missionaries," *Letter Leaflet*, March 1918.

and Christmas spirit was in plain sight in small cabins for over six months. Mrs Munday's parcel contained crimson butterfly crackers, which were the only decoration at her table. However, her guests were Roman Catholic priests who had never seen crackers, which Mrs Munday implied indicated some serious shortcoming in their education, yet "when [the crackers] were pulled, the rhymes read, and the caps put on, we waxed quite merry," she recalled. They ate plum pudding and enjoyed the meat of two small caribou brought in the day before. This was the first fresh meat they had enjoyed for some time, so that Christmas was extra special to the white residents of Chesterfield Inlet.⁶⁷

Christmas at Shingle Point Residential School off the Yukon coast meant enjoying the festivities on a desolate ice bound spit. "It does not seem possible that tomorrow is Christmas Eve," wrote Priscilla Shepherd in 1929. "All snow, and ice, and quiet. No fuss. None of the world's celebrating." Ironically, she added, "up here one gets to know the real meaning of Christmas." At the darkest, loneliest part of the winter, all the Christmas trappings were taken out of the box of cherished memories and happy holidays of childhood were resurrected with no need for rationalization beyond the knowledge that Christmas meant food, fun, parties, paper hats and gifts, all tied up with some basic Christian theology. The activity salved the homesickness of the women, and served to provide some gaiety to the more solemn daily lessons of a Christian based education. For those charged with teaching the children, Christmas offered the opportunity to use different themes in their daily work, and to exercise the choirs with some purpose.

⁶⁷Munday, *A Mouny's Wife*, 151-152.

Christmas allowed teachers to introduce an element of excitement and expectation which generated enthusiasm from bored students and staff, and which explains why there was always a curious mix of religious and worldly symbolism at an Anglican mission school.

Miss Shepherd brightened up the quarters at Shingle Point that Christmas with bells and red ribbon, and the children anticipated the arrival of Santa Claus after a short trip from the North Pole. The party included Inuit who arrived for the occasion and who enjoyed Native dances while they feasted on caribou stew, raisins, mince pie, layer cake, bread and butter, candy and nuts.⁶⁸ The following year, Reita Latham and the children had decorated an artificial tree with ornaments and she convinced herself they made the schoolroom look similar to what they might see at "home". A choir consisting of boys and girls who could read English had been organized, and they sang Christmas Carols for the residents and Native visitors. Santa Claus arrived with "a big red sack on his back. Santa's red outfit was very striking indeed," she told readers of the *Living Message*, and "talk about thrills!" for the children were delighted with their gifts. Christmas Eve was reserved for parties and fun at Shingle Point. Christmas Day was slightly more dignified. Church services and Holy Communion for visitors and staff was followed by a formal dinner, but behaviour not normally encouraged was still evident.

There was a card at each child's place and candles were lighted when they came for breakfast. The dining-room looked so warm and cosy and they were all so jolly and happy - singing, playing mouth-organs, blowing horns, beating drums, etc. It was much like Christmas morning in any home, only we had a somewhat larger family than most.

Christmas dinner was at the usual hour. The tables looked pretty with red crepe

⁶⁸"Interesting News from Shingle Point," *Living Message*, August 1930.

paper down the centre and a candle on a little card at each place. One candle was lit and then the others one after the other. The grown-ups were just as tickled with the procedure of lighting them as were the children.⁶⁹

Addie Butler was at Shingle Point for Christmas of 1933. Her frank letters reveal holiday tensions between the staff, and also difficulties apparently not encountered by the previous revellers.

All our Christmas presents for the children were those we had left over from last year, as the bales with this year's supply were on that boat that tried to get to Herschel Island in the summer, and hit the ice. We planned to have a Christmas concert on the Saturday evening, to get it over, but OLA (Our light affliction -- the Principal!) could not find time to get the toys out of the warehouse for them to be allotted to the different children. At tea time on Saturday I was informed that the concert could not take place, but by dint of combined pressure, we made him get the box, and three of us went into the school and sorted toys, decorated and trimmed the tree, such as it was. It looked very nice, and almost like a real tree.

Mr Crowley, the man in charge of the reindeer drive, took the part of Santa Claus, the younger [children] could scarcely restrain themselves they were so excited. Outside the Mission House is a very high snowbank, and with his pack, Santa had much difficulty in getting along, in fact he fell down once, and when he got to our snow porch, which has become so filled in that it is not much wider than a tunnel, poor Santa stuck, and had to be rescued.⁷⁰

The ironies in this tale are wonderful. Santa's reindeer obviously did not run with Mr Crowley's herd, and it was a pity the chimney was in use to keep everyone warm. As well, the children at the school had been told to hang up stockings for the first time, and they questioned how and why Santa Claus was coming back. "We had to play up to them," confessed Mrs Butler, "and make up some tale. For support, and local colour, we had the reindeer herd here, so they almost believed us -- but not quite." The children had

⁶⁹Reita Latham, *Living Message*, April 1931.

⁷⁰Butler letters, 9 January 1933.

recognized Mr Crowley's jewelry and boots.⁷¹

A special caribou dinner was followed by jelly, which Addie Butler reported was a treat the children loved.⁷² There were candies, nuts, and fruit left in the stockings, but because there was little to spare, no extra goodies were part of the menu. By 1935, supplies must have been more plentiful. Ethel Hewer listed items at Christmas dinner which included Christmas pudding and crackers with paper hats. The school was now better organized, which may account for an added feature to the usual carols and Holy Communion.

The Christmas Eve concert included a tableau of the Nativity. Imagine Inuit children dressed in everything from long flannel trousers, woollen scarves, striped towels, dressing gowns, flowered chintz and gold covered cardboard. "A laundry basket filled with straw and hay, and a large gold and tinsel star completed" what Miss Hewer called an impressive little scene, and she claimed it was some achievement for those Inuit children who had "not seen acting of any kind beyond their own Native dances."⁷³ Of course they had never seen a manger, shepherd's crooks, or golden crowns either, and they probably had some difficulty with Kings from afar, one of them being black. The programme included recitations, songs and carols, and then Santa Claus appeared and there were gifts for all.

⁷¹*Ibid.*

⁷²This may have been because of the coolness, and certainly because of the sweetness. The jelly would also have the consistency and texture of the gelatin found in bone marrow with which the children would be familiar.

⁷³Ethel Hewer, "Christmas at Shingle Point," *Living Message*, May 1936.

Whether the Grey Nuns celebrated Christmas in their communities in the same way is difficult to ascertain. The first Christmas Eve Mass at Aklavik was celebrated in 1925. It represents the most detailed entry about Christmas that the Sisters made in any of the northern chronicles. The faithful were called to worship by a small chapel bell. Those "Protestants" from Fort MacPherson who attended included the manager of the wireless office who sang the *Minuit Chretienat* at the Mass, but the Sisters were disappointed because no Inuit arrived, although many Dene came from Arctic Red River. During Holy Communion, about forty Inuit did join the group, then stayed only long enough to examine the Crib, but left because the Anglican priest also offered a service at midnight. On the surface, this description suggests a very ecumenical Christmas at Aklavik, but the chronicles hint at the constant rivalry maintained by the two denominations which festered even during the season of goodwill. "The two ministers came to visit us" the chronicler recorded, but it was more from curiosity than love, she decided. The Anglican missionaries presented the nuns with a box of chocolate, and asked to see the decorated chapel.⁷⁴ Even if this was an olive branch extended for the traditional Christian reasons, the Sisters were suspicious, and it was in a later memoir the real spirit of Christmas in the Roman Catholic hospital was exposed. Isobel Hutchison noted as she passed through the settlement some years later that the nuns had decorated the hospital, and the patients received "wonderful breakfast trays and gifts."⁷⁵

⁷⁴*Chroniques, Mission de l'Immaculate Conception, Aklavik, 1925-1944, 15. SGME. Translation as provided by the archivist.*

⁷⁵Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 220.

There is a footnote to Dr Hutchison's Christmas at Aklavik in 1933. She was invited to the home of Mary Rivett-Carnac for dinner. According to Dr Hutchison, Inspector Rivett-Carnac and the Mounties were dressed in their scarlet tunics, "so the absence of holly berries went quite unnoticed." Because the men were attired in dress uniforms, Mrs Rivett-Carnac decided to wear an evening gown. As her husband described it in his memoirs, "it had been left hanging in a cupboard in the lean-to," and they had "found it frozen to the wall." However, the hostess was undaunted by the peculiar northern complication, and "after prying it off with some difficulty, the use of a hot iron brought it back to its original condition."⁷⁶

Evening gowns were not a particularly useful item of clothing in the North, and there were few gatherings where the garment was remotely appropriate, so when an opportunity arose to wear their finery, some women seized it to brighten up their lives in an attempt to relieve the monotony. Archbishop Fleming was astonished, for example, to meet one trader's wife at a remote outpost "arrayed in a dazzling pair of beach pyjamas."⁷⁷ The Archbishop probably thought Mrs Douglas had dressed for his visit of course, but she had dressed for herself.

Acting as hostess to visitors passing through represented the principal social obligation of white women residing in the North. Their homes operated as makeshift hostels to those on their way in or out, delivering the mail, or making official journeys. This meant

⁷⁶Charles Rivett-Carnac, *Pursuit in the Wilderness*, (Toronto: Little Brown & Company, 1965), 279.

⁷⁷Rt Rev AL Fleming, "Nearest the North Pole," *Arctic News*, 1931.

northern hospitality was personal and individual and strongly tied to a sense of responsibility. Acting as hostess at the government agency at Fort Simpson where her husband was in charge, was a fulltime job wrote Annie Card, and there were many visitors who travelled along the river from settlement to settlement.⁷⁸ When oil was discovered at Fort Norman in 1921, Mrs Vale noted how Hay River had become a lively place because "people had been coming in all winter by dog team, and we have had strangers passing through for meals since Christmas." Accommodating the travellers took a great deal of time, but she noted they were pleased to help them. Visitors were welcome to sleep on the floor in the kitchen and share a meal no matter how important or insignificant they might be.⁷⁹

Despite the obvious imperialist nature of the agencies in control, the Arctic frontier was not a settlement frontier; colonial process and expansion of the white population was controlled, limited and slow. It was not until Yellowknife was established as a mining community in the late 1930s that a social pecking order of some significance emerged in the NWT. This permanent settlement with a transient population marks the distinction between Yellowknife and earlier settlements, and the influx of white families changed the pattern of previous immigration. Richard Finnie explained that mine official's wives were at the top of the social ladder; they kept together and hobnobbed with no one else. Aviator's wives came next, then an intermediate class composed of businessmen's wives. These women formed an organization which called themselves the Order of the DMS.

⁷⁸Annie Card, "An Indian Agent's Wife," 7.

⁷⁹Mrs Vale, Hay River, *Letter Leaflet*, October 1921.

Curious men believed this to mean Death, Murder and Suicide, although in truth they were the Daughters of the Midnight Sun. At the bottom of the heap came women who called themselves laundresses and seamstresses, and Finnie concluded some of them really were.⁸⁰

The northern equivalents of social rituals were shaped by necessity, and the environment and isolation, and the women were happy just to have congenial companions and news from outside their settlement. In the Northern settlements there was an excess of socializing when the supply ship arrived because there were visitors to greet, and supplies enough for a feast. But after the ship moved on, supplies were more limited, and there few guests, so the scale of entertaining was humble.

There was one notable exception to this pattern, which can be explained by the nature of the social group itself. Whalers were largely independent of Canadian intrusion into the region. They had a hierarchy all their own, of course, but within the fleet, parties and dances were held on the whaling ships wintered at Herschel Island. In the log of the steam bark *Jesse H Freeman*, Sophie Porter recorded a number of gatherings which were held on any excuse, and where "old fogies" played whist while the wives and families of ship's captains square danced and were entertained by minstrel troupes formed from among the crews.

Mrs Porter described how at one party held in 1895, the deckhouse of the ship was decorated with lights and bunting, and the room was partitioned with flags. But the ice bound ships provided a captive audience and participants, and during one winter there

⁸⁰Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, 140.

were at least six or seven American families on board the whalers. Instead of being the means by which white women played out cultural games to establish a social hierarchy, these events were planned more to keep every one busy when work was not possible.⁸¹

Generally though, in the Arctic society was dull. And while there were some elements for entertaining which everyone understood as *de riguer*, there was also the knowledge that in the North, no one really cared. Beatrice Mason wrote that while no social function in the North was complete without a "quota of red-coated Mounties," she also admitted that at Rampart House, "there was no society for the Mounties to adorn."⁸² There was little opportunity for women to duplicate the social pretensions of elite imperial outposts. The lack of opportunity, more than any other feature, is what makes Northern Canada somewhat of an anomaly in the assessment of social behaviour of a minority group of ruling whites in imperial and colonial settings.

Those who have condemned white women for recreating social hierarchies at imperial outposts have forgotten that these women were only perpetuating what the men had already established in initial military and colonial domination. The structures erected by social pretension were there to safeguard the echelons already put in place by the husbands and fathers of women who were socially conditioned and domestically trained to carry out the role. The women did what the men expected them to do. The climate and remoteness of the North, however, meant that in their domestic situation, white women

⁸¹Sophie Porter, Journal. *Log of the Steam Bark Jesse H Freeman*, 1894-1896. Old Dartmouth Historical Society, (ODHS) New Bedford, Massachusetts.

⁸²Beatrice Mason, Typescript, "Treasures of the Snow." YTA, MSS 169 (81/72) f-166.

did things which they ordinarily would not have done, and expectations were tempered by icy winds and shortages of supplies, and what they saw as simple loneliness. And since the men understood the situation as well as the women, there was no structure to duplicate a "southern society" which might have damaged relations between white and indigenous residents.

Chapter Three

Speaking of Me and Franklin: Women Travellers in the Arctic

A survey of the literature about white women in the Empire reveals it was the lady traveller who has evoked the most interest among analysts. This is primarily because those women left published works describing their journeys into the jungles, mountains and deserts of the world, and which included autobiographical information. Some of these women like Marianne North, Mary Kingsley, and Gertrude Bell enjoyed a profile of some importance and as a consequence, correspondence and family papers are also available to add dimension to the works themselves. In these analyses, the usual framework is feminist, and there is the eternal quest for a woman traveller who epitomizes the cause of first wave feminists, with the specific purpose of supporting the second wave agenda. In addition to the feminist approaches, but not necessarily exclusive of them, there has been some considerable debate about female travellers and their relationship to British imperialism and colonialism, which is a question that has some import to this assessment.¹

¹See for example: Dea Birkett, *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989); Dorothy Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*, (London: Routledge, 1965); Luree Miller, *On Top of the World: Five Women Explorers in Tibet*, (London: Paddington, 1976); Jane Robinson, *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*, (New York: Oxford, 1991); Mary Russell, *The Blessings of a Good Thick Shirt*, (London: Collins, 1986); Catherine Barnes Stevenson, *Victorian Women Travel*

Sara Mills has suggested in *Discourses and Differences* that all British women's travel writing produced between 1850-1930 was an instrument of colonial expansion and reinforced colonial rule already in place.² She argues her case convincingly, but if the sweeping generalizations of her statement were explained briefly to Mills, she might change the parameters of her study when it was pointed out the broad scope ignores the reality of situations which were different because of geography and chronology. Authors like Mills often seem confused about the actual extent of the *Empire*, both geographically, chronologically, and psychologically, assuming the experiences of travellers in Asia and Africa as representative of all, and forgetting not all imperial and colonial settings were uniform.

It is noteworthy the works most concerned with women travel writers and the imposition of imperialism and the perpetuation of colonial rule remain principally within the scope of literary critics intent on textual analysis employing ideological rather than historical questions. For the most part, the analyses are ahistorical, and do not place the women who write the travelogues, or indeed the narratives themselves, into any kind of historical context. Because these narratives were written in the past, about historical figures, literary critics believe they are interpreting history, forgetting that they are simply interpreting the text for its ideological underpinnings, and that the works were written by a single woman, or a small group of privileged ones. These interpretations have value for those interested in the study of literature and the development of language

Writers in Africa, (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1982).

²Sara Mills, *Discourses and Differences*, 3.

and its uses, but while historians can use these analyses as valuable tools in discovering how imperialistic ideas were spread, they have limited application as history. The conclusions are problematic for a historian whose purpose is to locate salient fact and information which allows a greater understanding of social relations and change over time in a particular regional history. In the case of Victorian lady travellers, an inevitable consequence of the discursive framework is that in the assault on the text itself and the filling in of the gaps with ideology rather than historical context, the information becomes so entwined with negative threads, the travelogues become useless as historical documents. This does not mean historians must not be wary of their evidence; it just means that somewhere along the route, the reader has got to make a decision about what the document can provide in the way of useful information. This cannot be done if the text itself is continually challenged.

Significantly, *none* of the northern travellers ever appear in any analysis concerned with imperialism. Could this be because Canada does not fit neatly into the colonial model being employed, or the Canadian experience diverges enough to spoil the paradigm, or that Canada is not an exotic place presenting cultural enigmas? As Agnes Cameron reminded readers of *The New North*, Canada was a part of the British Empire, and technically no longer a colony. But it was still part of the *Empire*. A more cynical question might address how unimportant the Canadian experience was to authors overwhelmed with narratives and supporting documents dealing with Asia and Africa, or the Canadian instance is seen as the same as the American and therefore not in need of separate analysis? Is it possible these analysts are unaware the Canadian North exists, or

that women travelled into the North and wrote about it? The answer to all these questions is, in all likelihood, yes.

Perhaps it is fortuitous that Agnes Deans Cameron, Elizabeth Taylor, Emma Shaw Colcleugh, and Lady Clara Vyvyan have remained anonymous to those intent on finding the deeper meaning of their words, or some underlying ideological concepts in their travelogues, for it allows an unfettered look at what they wrote about the North. It is also important to remember they have remained relatively anonymous to historians who have chronicled exploration in the region, so this account is given primarily to place these women into the recorded history of Canada's North, acknowledging they were aware they were travelling within the Empire. One of the most consequential features of this northern travel was the trips could not have been undertaken without the aid of truly imperialist commercial enterprises, but it is not naive to interpret the accounts on a simpler plane, or to accept that as female travellers their accounts have value just for information about the conditions under which they travelled. They were women independently exploring the North, on the look out for those aspects of the region which interested themselves, and as Agnes Cameron explained to the *Globe*, it was possible that

A man who goes North to see rocks, sees little else; the bug hunter looks for bugs, and the oil prospector keeps his eye on the ground for cosy exuditions. But a person who goes as Kipling went through his slice of the empire, just a greedily impressionable bit of blotting paper, will surely soak up impressions that passed the others by.³

In 1908, Agnes Deans Cameron, a forty-four year old spinster from Victoria, set off

³"Remarkable Journey of Two Women to the Arctic," *Globe*, Toronto, February 6, 1909.

on an adventure down the Mackenzie River to Aklavik. She was accompanied by her niece Jessie Cameron Brown, and they had planned their trip along a "route unspoiled by Cook's,"⁴ which was defined by the absence of a resort destination or package tour. The adventure was what in their minds separated them from mere tourists out to enjoy the sights, although the sights were an integral part of the adventure. Miss Cameron was intent upon discovering the magic of the world she entered, as well as the tragedies and hardships endured by those who lived in it.

Despite their desire for an unorganized plan, the women approached the Chicago office of Thos Cook's & Sons to arrange a trip into the Northwest Territories. Cook's, not surprisingly, were unable to help and could only refer the women to the HBC at Winnipeg, which according to Agnes Cameron had been "the Foster-Mother to Canada's Northland for 239 years." She might well have added that without the HBC, it is unlikely any traveller, female or male, would have been able to make the journey. The Company planned the journey, gave them introductions to post factors, and sold them an outfit. They also supplied a letter of credit which could be "transmuted into bacon, beans and blankets, sturgeon head boats, guides' services, and succulent sow belly at any point between Fort Chimo, and Hudson's Hope-on-the-Peace, between Winnipeg and Herschel."⁵

Agnes Cameron and Jessie Brown were not the first female travellers in the region. sixteen years earlier, Elizabeth Taylor had undertaken a similar journey into the North,

⁴Attributed to Rudyard Kipling by Agnes Deans Cameron, *The New North*, 3.

⁵*Ibid.*, 5.

although as she pointed out, in 1892, "as a rule, one didn't 'go in'. One most emphatically stayed out,"⁶ particularly if one was a white, middle class woman; even one with connections. Elizabeth Taylor was the last of five daughters of James Wickes Taylor, an American expansionist and United States Consul at Winnipeg. As an art student in Paris in the early 1890s, she had been encouraged to make a Northern journey by the young Ernest Thompson Seton who himself planned an Arctic expedition. Originally, Miss Taylor had envisioned a trip to the Peace River area, but after those plans collapsed, she prepared to make her voyage down the Mackenzie in a "queer little steamboat"⁷ that plied the river for the HBC. She had high expectations for her tour and wrote to her friend in St Paul, Minnesota:

Helen, I am going to be an Arctic explorer. If I carry out my plans I can next year be able to speak of Me and Franklin -- for I am going to the Arctic Ocean. Think of it Helen, going to the land of the midnight sun within the Arctic Circle.⁸

Two years later, another American woman made a similar trip which included parts of the Peace River journey denied to Elizabeth Taylor, although the *Manitoba Free Press* apparently had forgotten the first "intrepid traveller" with Winnipeg connections and erroneously reported Emma Shaw Colcleugh was the first white woman to go

⁶Elizabeth Taylor, "When I Knew the Far North in Canada," Unpublished Article, Elizabeth Taylor Papers, Articles: Canada File, James Taylor Dunn Papers, Minnesota Historical Society, (MHS), St Paul.

⁷This was the *Wrigley* which was built by the HBC to supply its fur trade. Later, Taylor would change her description and would recall the *Wrigley* as a "staunch little steamer."

⁸Taylor, Paris, 27 January 1892, Correspondence 1892, Dunn Papers, MHS.

"summering and sight-seeing in unfrequented districts, so far from civilization."⁹ The forty-eight year old Mrs Colcleugh was a Rhode Island schoolteacher and journalist who married Manitoba politician Frederick Colcleugh in 1893.¹⁰ The marriage gained Emma Colcleugh entry into Winnipeg society, which included the officers of the HBC, and as she later explained, passage was arranged as a personal favour of CC Chipman, chief officer of the Company. She was to travel with the annual supply expedition. Already an experienced traveller by 1894, Emma Colcleugh had braved Lake Superior and the Saskatchewan River, but like Elizabeth Taylor before her, she began to understand the sheer enormity of what lay ahead only as she proceeded North on the first leg of the tour. At the first camp she "felt so remote from civilization, so much as if I had cut loose from all my former world; before me long leagues of untrodden lands; 'Into the North' had, in those few lonely moments, a power of meaning I had never dreamed."¹¹

In 1926, Clara Vyvyan¹² and her friend Gwen Dorrien Smith travelled with the HBC down the Mackenzie, and then further on a harrowing journey by canoe along the Rat and Porcupine Rivers to the Yukon and Alaska. Travel conditions in the region had not changed significantly since Agnes Cameron travelled the course in 1908. By then, the steamer was a little larger, and the facilities along the way were less primitive, but as

⁹"In the Far North," *Manitoba Free Press*, 1 October 1894.

¹⁰The marriage was short-lived; they separated in 1897. Emma was travelling for most of the time of her marriage.

¹¹"I Saw These Things," Providence, RI *Evening Bulletin*, 10 September 1932.

¹²At the time of the trip, Lady Clara Vyvyan was Miss Clara Coltman Rogers, and earlier works were published under that name.

Lady Vyvyan later described it, "it was the most formidable enterprise," yet "the high peak of her life."¹³

Clara Vyvyan's plans to travel in the NWT were made more difficult by a cynical and decidedly negative family. At the same time, it was made easier through the intervention of a "friendly neighbour" who by happy circumstance was a Director of the HBC. Leonard Cunliffe encouraged the women, and acted as intermediary between them and the HBC carriers whose officers eventually proposed the cost of a trip to Fort Yukon via Peel River and La Pierre House would be about \$675 each. Travel time was estimated at fifty days.¹⁴ The eventual route was decided partly because La Pierre House and the Rat and Porcupine Rivers were evident on maps in Clara Vyvyan's atlas, creating the illusion of a settlement and supply post, where in truth there was only one deserted cabin.

What the trips these women took had in common was the co-operation of the only viable transportation authority in the area, the HBC. More importantly, all four published accounts of their adventures with the specific intent as travel writers to inform armchair travellers fascinated by the remoteness and romance of the North.¹⁵ Since Mrs

¹³Lady Clara Coltman-Rogers Vyvyan, *Roots and Stars: Reflections on the Past*, (London, Peter Helm, 1962).

¹⁴Brabant to Governor and Company at London, 5 January 1926, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Hudson's Bay Company Archives, A92/19/4986; also A92/19/5125 and A92/19/5107.

¹⁵These were not the only travellers, but these were the ones who published some significant material. Gladys O'Kelly prepared a manuscript about her voyage around Alaska into the Northwest Passage on the HBC schooner *Kindersley*. Miriam Ellis travelled the Mackenzie in 1925, but I could only locate one short article written by her, and one photograph in a missionary's collection. Dr Isobel Hutchison sailed from Vancouver around Alaska, and wintered at a cabin off the Yukon coast near Herschel Island, then flew back south. Dr Hutchison was a scientist and her book on the trip falls

Colcleugh, Miss Taylor and Lady Vyvyan also produced works about other travels, their Northern accounts were part of their expanding world view,¹⁶ but the northern stories stand alone as observations about the region in various stages of immigration and development, and in many ways act as benchmarks against each other, mapping the changes, and significantly, a lack of change, in the North.

Elizabeth Taylor's narrative appeared in a four part series of *Outing* in 1894-95, entitled "A Woman Explorer in the Mackenzie Delta," and was illustrated with her own pen and ink drawings.¹⁷ There was also an additional item in *Travel* of 1899 which was a shorter version of that piece. Some of the correspondence relating to the plans made for Elizabeth Taylor's trip has survived in addition to her published work, and these letters suggest some of the obstacles she had to overcome in order to make the journey.

Miss Taylor anticipated her father's approval for the expedition because the trip had been proposed by one of his personal friends in place of the Peace River course. A Mackenzie trip was apparently cheaper, easier, and more pleasant, but Miss Taylor chose to interpret the trip as described by the HBC as the more trifling of the two. Despite her optimism, James Taylor was not entirely happy about this excursion and expressed his doubts to Donald Smith at Montreal, suggesting any aid the Governor of the Company,

outside the scope of "lady travellers". There were undoubtedly others who only made the trip and never published their records.

¹⁶Agnes Cameron died an untimely death from appendicitis in 1912, preventing further exploration.

¹⁷There is a copy of the journal made by Miss Taylor in the holdings of the Minnesota Historical Society, but the published work is not substantially different from this diary. There are also numerous unpublished typescripts in the same records. Whether any attempts were made to have these published is unknown.

or the Commissioner at Winnipeg could extend would be appreciated. Between the lines, he intimated outright rejection would be welcome.¹⁸ Smith had reservations even though he offered every assistance. The proposed expedition "would greatly tax the endurance of a lady," he wrote, "and notwithstanding all the efforts the HBC officers and employees would make, it could be an undertaking of great hazard to her health."¹⁹ How much control James Taylor had over his thirty-six year old daughter is unclear. Whatever the reins he held, financial or otherwise, he failed to discourage her, and she continued to make plans from Paris, and then London in the spring of 1892.²⁰

The plans included the collection of scientific specimens -- for some future consideration and with an eye to turning herself into a "far-seeing woman of business". "Wise friends" advised Taylor to take along a revolver, and insisted she knew how to use it, even though she confessed to one correspondent she was more afraid of a handgun than she was of Indians and Grizzly Bears. "They" had told her the "moral suasion of a revolver was wonderful" and just the knowledge she had one would bolster her own confidence,²¹ which was probably needed after queries such as one she recalled from a London scientist who had asked her what enemies she expected to encounter. He told her about savage tribes, and drew a "touching picture" of her being murdered in her sleep

¹⁸Winnipeg, 21 January 1892, Typescript, Correspondence 1892, Dunn Papers, MHS.

¹⁹Montreal, 7 March 1892, James Wickes Taylor Papers, Microfilm, PAM, MGS B2. Original in MHS.

²⁰1892 Correspondence File, Dunn Papers, MHS. See also James Taylor Dunn, "To Edmonton in 1892," *Beaver*, June 1950, p.4.

²¹Paris, 6 September, 1891, Correspondence 1892, Dunn Papers, MHS.

"for the whiskey needed to preserve her specimens."²²

Among the assurances Miss Taylor gave to her father was the understanding she would employ a female companion when she began the northern leg of the trip. She told him she felt she would be safe enough on the boat, but she might be far less independent without another woman to perform light duties such as laundry, and to carry her sketching materials, or to provide comfort and possibly act as a nurse if required. "Another lady wouldn't do" she told him, and expressed preference for a "half-breed" who would know something of camp life -- and would then presumably not be afraid, or become a hindrance along the route. The woman could also be hired at Edmonton or at some point along the way North and Miss Taylor would not have to pay the servant's expenses from Winnipeg.²³ Whether or not Elizabeth Taylor secured the services of a female companion is unknown. Her diary and subsequent publications make no mention of one, but it is more revealing she felt that to enable her to explore the Arctic "like Franklin," she needed someone to help her with her laundry. This betrayed not so much a weakness, but an understanding of her position as a lady and the proprieties of the age, and even in the rugged and primitive conditions of the North, she herself, her father, and everyone else, expected her to act as such.

As she departed from Edmonton, Miss Taylor wrote to Helen Carver that people who knew the region had tried to be encouraging about what lay ahead. Nevertheless,

²²Elizabeth Taylor, "A Woman in the Mackenzie Delta," Part 1, *Outing*, October, 1894.

²³Winnipeg, 21 January 1892, Correspondence 1892, Dunn Papers, MHS.

well wishers believed that while her summer would be interesting, it would be unpleasant. Supplied with bottled and personal spirits, and despite everyone's concerns, Elizabeth Taylor set off from Edmonton at the end of May.

Like all women travellers, Elizabeth Taylor took pains to describe the scenery to her readers, as well as the perils of travel in freight canoes and on supply barges. She was fascinated with the men of the boat brigades who for her, were

always a diversion. They would make some great exertion such as lowering the boat through the rapids and then they would fall down in picturesque attitudes and smoke and look off at the water in a dreamy way, while one of them would tell an anecdote with great dramatic fervour, and wild gesticulation.²⁴

Scattered throughout the *Outing* article are drawings depicting many of these men who manned the sturgeon-head boats which she described as something between a scow and a York Boat. At the time of Elizabeth Taylor's trip, sturgeon-head boats were used on that segment of the trip North along the Sturgeon River. The boats had blunt, rounded bows and were built to withstand the shock of the Grand Rapids. They carried ten tons of goods, and were manned by eight rowers, and a steersman who guided the vessel by a long sweep fastened to the stern post by an iron ring. Passengers sat in a clear space on either side of the sweep.

The sturgeon-head boats ferried passengers and freight as far as Fort McMurray from where the HBC steamer *Grahame* navigated the Athabasca River to Smith Landing. Wagons pulled by oxen carried the *Grahame's* load across a difficult sixteen mile portage and Miss Taylor recalled how on the day she travelled across the portage

²⁴Taylor, "A Woman Explorer," Part I, 51.

the road lay through alternating stretches of marshy and sandy pine-land. There were deep, patchy holes, roughly bridged over by loose saplings, over and between which the oxen slipped and plunged, scattering the black mud over us, while the rough carts swayed and creaked, and the half-breeds shouted. The air was heavy with the fragrance of wild flowers; but the mud-holes and submerged parts of the road made it impossible for [her] to follow on foot.²⁵

The HBC supply ship *Wrigley* left on its journey down north from Fort Smith, with all the cargo piled on deck which left little room for passengers. The *Wrigley* was first and foremost a supply vessel for the HBC, and was not designed for tourists or even travelling officials. That was why the dining room was a box, with no window, and six diners seated at the table filled the room. At night, one missionary slept on top of the table, while another bunked underneath. Miss Taylor's room was furnished with a sack of hay.²⁶ The *Wrigley* was launched in 1885, and enjoyed the distinction of being the first steam propelled vessel to cross the Arctic Circle, anywhere in the world.

The Arctic Circle was one of those northern features which captured the imagination; its existence presented fascinating illusions, probably because travelling beyond it was so far from the reach of all but a lucky few. When Elizabeth Taylor crossed the Arctic Circle in 1892, her account of the momentous event recorded how her childhood image had been shattered, for she had

always imagined a large shining wire, about three times the size of a telegraph wire, suspended in the air, without visible support, perhaps five feet from the ground and disappearing across a barren waste, with musk oxen and reindeer in the dim distance rubbing their ears against it. When the place where that shining

²⁵*Ibid.*, Part II, 122.

²⁶Elizabeth Taylor, "Up the Mackenzie River to the Polar Sea," *Travel*, (3), 1899, 562.

circle should have been was pointed out, [she] was disappointed.²⁷

One aspect of the journey was not a disappointment, however, for she found treasures in the woods "enough to repay one for the effort." At Peel River, the delighted collector found

cranberries and cloudberry, Andromeda, and lychnis, the pretty yellow flowers of the lousewort, the large white buckbean by the edge of a pond, large northern yellow lilies in the water, shrubby cinque-foil, marsh ragwort, and Siberian asters, two kinds of orchids, the marsh marigold in seed, the fragrant pink and white flowers of the valerian, and the lady smock, all silver white. Dainty pink and white vetches and the bishop's cap were here too, growing high and rank.²⁸

And this was only one of many flower-picking expeditions. Previous walks had produced up to twenty-five specimens at a time, but there was a down side to the natural history of the North, too. Miss Taylor discovered "an enemy lurked" in most areas along the riverbank which provided a "permanent camp from which the blood-thirsty mosquito regiments ferociously sallied forth."²⁹

Elizabeth Taylor interrupted her observations about the flora of the Mackenzie Valley with comment on some of the conventions which seemed strange to her, but which were made necessary by the uniqueness of northern conditions. In a description of Sunday service at the camp at Fort Smith where she awaited the *Wrigley*, she revealed

I am not quite clear in my mind as to the etiquette of a camp church. It is allowable, it seems, on breezy days to chase hats and fly-away hymn books; also to flap at mosquitoes, if it is done without too much emphasis and with no exclamations. But -- may a natural history student grab at a butterfly fluttering close by or tie up a beetle in the corner of a handkerchief? Then as to shying

²⁷Taylor, "A Woman Explorer," Part III, 229.

²⁸*Ibid.*, 232.

²⁹*Ibid.*, Part II, 125.

sticks at Indian dogs -- well that seems to be without objection, if only those at a certain distance from the clergyman indulge in it. The people within five or six feet of him must keep quiet, even if the dog is sniffing at the bacon box.³⁰

She added one northern missionary had told her that during a service he had snatched up his gun in the middle of prayers to shoot at a flock of geese overhead. He explained it was an instinctive action, for his wife and children were literally without food at the time.³¹

Among the commentaries about scenery and plant life in "A Woman Explorer in the Mackenzie Delta" are sprinkled snippets of northern history, usually relating to individual settlements, or explorations and tales of white man's heroism in opening the North for the fur trade. These episodes provided context for Miss Taylor's readers, but it is the characterization of the Dene people she encountered which is the most valuable of her remarks. This is because with the exception of a few letters from missionaries, Elizabeth Taylor was the first white woman to publish her observations about the Dene and Inuit who inhabited the region.

Miss Taylor's portrayals demonstrate a curiosity reflecting her artistic eye as well as that of the anthropological explorer, which was one of the roles she had assigned herself. She noted how the Loucheux³² encountered along the coast had a peculiar habit of raising their voices gradually as they talked, until the sound reached an ear-splitting shout. Apparently the more important the matter being discussed, the louder the howl had

³⁰*Ibid.*

³¹*Ibid.*

³²The current preferred term is Gwich'in.

to be. This meant when the Natives appealed for tobacco and tea, which they considered a necessity, they shrieked at the top of their voices.³³ Also described and illustrated was an Inuit dance enjoyed at Peel River, where in honour of the occasion, the men wore their best clothes, and the women had turned their dresses right side out. Her comments failed to explore the implication that the men had "best" clothes, and the women had to make do with the inside of their everyday garments, which is interesting if only because it was the women who sewed the skins for the men in the first place.



Figure 2. Elizabeth Taylor's drawing of an Eskimo Dance at Peel River, 1892.

The singing that accompanied the dance followed the pattern of the "usual Indian

³³*Ibid.*, Part III, 230.

chant" but there was more music, and some variety to it. There were five or six flat drums made of sealskin which were beaten with a flat stick.

First one man leaped into the middle of the circle, then a woman followed him, and they went through a pantomime, advancing and retreating, waving one another away with scorn and horror, and then becoming appeased, then friendly; at last they retired and others took their places, while all those remaining beat upon the drums and sang at the top of their voices.³⁴

The description suggests some sexual undertones to the dance, but there was no attempt at interpretation from Miss Taylor. This could be because *Outing* was not the place to comment on Inuit mating rituals, or Miss Taylor was not comfortable with divulging her observations. It could also be she was not the woman of the world that a traveller might be and failed to notice the significance of the dancer's actions.

The Mackenzie River Inuit she encountered at Peel River were more warlike, suspicious, and treacherous than those from east and west of the Delta, decided Miss Taylor. They came only once a year to the post to trade, she explained, so their dress and customs were the least affected by the white man's intrusions, and while she found them to be agreeable in nature, their method of preparing skins for clothing caused an intolerable odour which clung to everything they possessed.³⁵

Despite her sense of the ferociousness of the local Natives, it was the land itself which eventually provoked fear for Elizabeth Taylor. The stillness of summer days, the constant light, and sleepless nights, intensified the physical strains of the travel conditions and a steady diet of dried meat. While out on one of her specimen collecting walks she

³⁴*Ibid.*, 233.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 231.

was overcome by loneliness; with the exception of a few moths, there was no other sign of life. She was "seized with panic," she confessed, "and made better time than I care to tell to the mission."³⁶

This vastness, and the emptiness of the region overwhelmed Emma Shaw Colcleugh on her 1894 trip down the Mackenzie and along the Peace as well. Mrs Colcleugh's northern travelogue is less extensive than those of the other travellers, and makes up just one part of a nineteen segment series entitled "I Saw These Things," published in the Rhode Island *Evening Bulletin* in 1932.³⁷ Shortly after her trip, Mrs Colcleugh also published an item in *Catholic World* about the missionaries and nuns she met along the Mackenzie River route.³⁸

Emma Colcleugh did not travel alone; Sarah Camsell, wife of the Chief Factor joined her husband on one part of the trip, as did Miss Thompson travelling to an Anglican mission school. For another stretch, the daughter of Captain Segers of the *Wrigley* was a pleasant companion, although Mrs Colcleugh was considered the sole passenger. The company was appreciated, especially as she had to learn the lesson that in the North, hurry up and wait was often the order of the day even though the interminable waits

³⁶*Ibid.*, 234.

³⁷Emma Shaw Colcleugh, "I Saw These Things," *Evening Bulletin*, Providence, Rhode Island, August 30 through September 21, 1932. The other locations included the Mississippi, the Lake Champlain area, Alaska, Hawaii, the Rockies, to Winnipeg (to view the scene of the Rebellion), Labrador, Samoa, Fiji, Australia, Uganda, the West Indies, and Cuba.

³⁸Emma Shaw Colcleugh, "Missions and Mission-Workers in The Great Lone Land," *Catholic World*, (61), April, 1895.

meant real outdoor adventure. At Smith Landing, she had time to explore, and decided the Natives camped there were the "nastiest savages" she had ever seen, and was horrified at the "monstrous louse" found on Miss Seger's clothing upon their return to the steamer. She wrote "I have felt itchy ever since and have retired into seclusion and instituted several vigourous searches but with no result."³⁹

Emma Colcleugh's mention of the Dene at Fort Smith was a rare one in the published accounts, which is unfortunate. Her comments may have proven interesting since her understanding might have been influenced by her husband who had been an Indian Agent. Northern Natives did not go unnoticed in her letters, and she wrote from the Peace River region that within three hundred miles not a single inhabited house or teepee had been sighted, only three deserted ones had been seen. Her conclusion was the Natives of the North were "vanishing off the face of the earth,"⁴⁰ while the actual reason for empty camps may simply have been a reflection of nomadic behaviour. While she was more concerned with ethnographic collections, Emma Colcleugh collected samples of vegetation like Elizabeth Taylor, and admitted she found the variety and luxuriance of the flowers along the banks drew her attention more than the Inuit she encountered. Nevertheless, while at Peel River, she and Mrs Camsell visited some Inuit, and Mrs Colcleugh noted

³⁹Letter dated at Smith Landing, 21 June 1894. Correspondence 1892, (Elizabeth Taylor Papers), Dunn Papers, MHS.

⁴⁰22 June, 1894, Elizabeth Taylor Papers, Dunn Papers, MHS. There are three letters handwritten by Emma Colcleugh filed into the Elizabeth Taylor letters in the James Taylor Dunn collection. There is no explanation for this. The Rhode Island Historical Society is not aware of any other private papers that can be attributed to Emma Shaw Colcleugh.

that because of strange comments made in their presence, the two white women had an unusual opportunity to see themselves as others saw them, and realized they were the ones who were unique in that environment.

Of her travels on the *Wrigley*, Emma Colcleugh had little to say except that the eighty-three foot vessel rode the mountainous waves of the Great Slave Lake with courage, and sailed bravely through the rapids of the Mackenzie. She noted every available space was taken up by cargo, which caused her to reflect on how "much depended on the safety of that boat and its cargo, including as it did the year's supplies for all those far away posts." Her experience at Grand Rapids on the sturgeon-head boat was the highlight of her journey at the time, but she subsequently recorded her anticipation of the excitement was inexcusable stupidity, for she recognized the danger of the rapids that "rushed, whirled, shot and defiled, while about us curled and twisted the smooth green hollowing curves of great whirlpools, dashing chutes, foaming cascades, dangerous eddies -- every kind of angry vagary in which water could possibly indulge."⁴¹

Mrs Colcleugh had told the Edmonton *Bulletin* the object of her journey was to visit unknown and wild regions, so she could delight the stay-at-homes who would read her descriptions.⁴² Strangely, amongst the descriptions she had little comment for the premier pest of the North, except in a letter home where she commented on the question of an acquaintance "who knew a little of the locality," and who wondered whether she preferred eating seal flippers in a snow house or smoking a peace pipe in a teepee. The

⁴¹Colcleugh, "I Saw These Things," September 10, 1932.

⁴²Edmonton *Bulletin*, 28 May, 1894.

intrepid explorer was firm in her reply: the skin teepee was the best bet, and she envied the "gentlemen their smoke to drive away the mosquitoes." At one point, she recalled, she thought she might "go frantic" from the insect attacks.⁴³

On her return to Winnipeg, Emma Colcleugh told a *Manitoba Free Press* reporter she had only one regret: she could not spend the winter at Fort McPherson.⁴⁴ If she had, her view of the North and its splendours may have changed when her memory of the "hot sun and continuous daylight of the summer" had been cooled by the cold wind and desolation of winter.

Just like Elizabeth Taylor before her, Emma Shaw Colcleugh faded from public memory and the recorded history of the North.⁴⁵ When Agnes Deans Cameron addressed the Royal Geographical Society in February of 1910, she announced that her journey "between ice and ice" was the first time the distance had been accomplished in any one season by any one traveller.⁴⁶ Her expedition in 1908 was more extensive because it included the Lesser Slave Lake region of Alberta, but with the exception of this extension, her route was essentially the same as Emma Colcleugh's.

Miss Cameron had been a school teacher and principal in Victoria, BC before she lost her job because of a number of issues relating to her controversial views on education

⁴³22 June 1894, Elizabeth Taylor Papers, Dunn Papers, MHS.

⁴⁴"In the Far North," *Manitoba Free Press*, October 1, 1894.

⁴⁵Miss Taylor merited a single line in Morris Zaslow's *The Opening of the Canadian North*. Mrs Colcleugh just disappeared.

⁴⁶Agnes Deans Cameron, "Canada's Farthest North," *Geographic Journal*, XXXV (6), June 1910, 705.

policy and procedures. She turned to journalism as a means of support,⁴⁷ and left Victoria to live in Chicago where she worked with the Western Canadian Immigration Association. At that time she was also a Vice-President of the Canadian Women's Press Club.⁴⁸ Although she claimed she made the journey just for fun, Agnes Cameron's northern expedition was undertaken as a fact-finding tour designed to increase interest in expansion into the Canadian Northwest. This meant that unlike the previous travellers, Miss Cameron was as concerned with education, agricultural potential, government issues and treaty entitlements as she was with the Natives and the vegetation.

In some ways, *The New North*, the published account of Agnes Deans Cameron's trip poses a challenge to the modern reader.⁴⁹ The Victorian style makes it difficult to separate bombast from useful fact, and makes the author seem a little more eccentric than she probably was. This may account for a comment made by an Anglican missionary when he wrote from Fort McPherson that Cameron was a "vigorous romanticist, gathering data for a vivid volume, an intricate compound of fact and fiction, a most

⁴⁷For more details see Roberta J Pazdro, "Agnes Deans Cameron: Against the Current," in Barbara Latham, Ed., *In Her Own Right*, (Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1983).

⁴⁸National Archives of Canada, RG 18, Records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Vol 323, File 759-06, Agnes Deans Cameron, 1906. This is the one single letter that was located of Agnes Cameron's. According to David Richeson in his introduction to the reprint of *The New North*, none of her personal papers have survived.

⁴⁹In addition, the following articles were published, using the same material as in *The New North*: "Arctic Host and Hostess," *Canadian Magazine*, 35, May 1910; "Beyond the Athabasca," *Westward Ho Magazine*, 1909; "From Winnipeg to the Arctic Ocean," *Manchester Geographical Society*, Vol 26, 1910; "Sentinels of Silence: Canada's Royal Northwest Mounted Police," *Century*, 79, December, 1909; "Two Thousand Miles to Deliver a Letter," *Harper's Weekly*, Vol 52, January 4, 1908.

interesting and readable romance of travel to be sure, but hardly a reliable book for reference."⁵⁰ These comments may have been a reaction to the outspoken and independent female outsider, and in *The New North*, Cameron did not spare the mission schools. She wondered why the missionary at Smith Landing was teaching "Present Worth and Compound Interest to bare-footed, half-Cree urchins."⁵¹

In photographs, Cameron appears sturdy, (almost dauntless), although she felt two years of life in Chicago had made her soft. Nevertheless, she trudged through the muck on the Athabasca Trail and attempted to match giant steps with a Northwest Mounted Policeman just to have the opportunity to hear his stirring tales. Like Miss Taylor and Mrs Colcleugh before her, Agnes Cameron spent some time camped out along the route waiting for various conveyances to make the next leg of the trip, and the familiar tale of waiting for the boat had not changed even though a new Commissioner had tried to impose an exact and orderly schedule on the northward traffic. The Cree boatmen knew otherwise, for she explained: "the river was the boss." The keynote of the boatmen's character derived from this knowledge and their attitude was "Kee-am," meaning "never mind, don't get excited, there's plenty of time, it will all come out in the wash."⁵² Either Agnes Cameron was patient from the outset, or had begun to adopt the same air of acceptance as the boatmen by the time she and Miss Brown reached Fort Smith, for in the evening when it rained, their room became "a living illustration of the new word

⁵⁰The Reverend C Whittaker, Fort MacPherson, October 1911. *The Letter Leaflet*, May 1912, 213.

⁵¹Cameron, *The New North*, 29.

⁵²*Ibid.*, 29.

[they had] just learned - 'muskeg'. Putting precious cameras on top of the bureau." Cameron "let the rest of the things swim at their pleasure."⁵³

At Fort Smith, Jessie Brown and Agnes Cameron were assigned a double cabin on the newly launched *Mackenzie River*. The vessel was half again the size of the *Wrigley*, and able to travel at up to ten miles an hour. The boat's most unique feature was a steel reinforced hull designed to withstand ice and floating timber. In addition, the *Mackenzie River* had five watertight compartments to make travel safer for cargo and the passengers who occupied the twenty-two staterooms.

While they waited for the *Mackenzie River* to take them north, the women were struck by the abundant flora, and "bringing in our daily treasure trove of flowers," recalled Miss Cameron, "we can scarcely realize that at Fort Smith, we were in latitude sixty degrees North."

One day we gathered careopsis, pretty painted-cups, the dandelion in seed, shinleaf yarrow and golden-rod. Another day brought to the blotting pads great bunches of goldenrod, pink anemone, harebells of a more delicate blue than we have ever seen before, wolf-berry, fireweed and ladies tresses. We identified bear-berry or kinnikini tobacco with its astringent leaves, and pink lady-slippers.⁵⁴

The lush vegetation at sixty degrees North latitude did not impress Miss Cameron as much as that momentous point at Fort Good Hope which was located at

The Arctic Circle! When we used to sit on uneasy school-benches and say our 'joggafy' lesson, what did it say for us? Icebergs, polar bears, and the snows of eternal winter. Nine-tenths of the people in America today share the same idea, think of it as a forbidding place, a frozen silence where human beings seldom

⁵³*Ibid.*, 31.

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 110-112.

penetrate.⁵⁵

What astonished the travellers was not so much the concept of the Arctic Circle, however, but that they crossed the latitude at midnight, and on the horizon was "the Midnight Sun!" whose "supreme marvel" was "not what we see but what we feel."⁵⁶

Further north at Fort McPherson, Miss Cameron met with the first Inuit she was to greet on the *Mackenzie River*, and wrote with some passion about the integrity, versatility and intelligence of these people. She suggested the Inuit were worthwhile although the world had conspired to libel them, and concluded that within a decade or two, the Inuit would have "passed utterly off the map."⁵⁷ The observations reflect such tremendous ethnocentrism it is difficult to separate fact, fantasy, and Agnes Cameron's expansionist propaganda. "Where did the Eskimo get his versatile ability," she asked. "Only the walrus knows."⁵⁸ "We arrogate to ourselves the term of 'white race' but if these Eskimo were to wash themselves daily (which they do not do yearly) they would be as white as we are," she proffered after a lengthy treatise about religious customs where she decided Inuit were not heathen. This was because the Inuit had a well-formed conception of a Great Spirit as well as an Evil One, and because they were not rude, or unthinking.⁵⁹ Agnes Cameron may have been trying to convince *herself* the Inuit were not as bad as

⁵⁵*Ibid.*, 159.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 209.

⁵⁷*Ibid.*, 202.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 205.

⁵⁹*Ibid.*, 215.

she had feared, but the lengths to which she went to stress her point that these were a worthy lot, suggest she was directing an argument towards those who saw the Inuit and their reputation for savagery as a deterrent to expansion in the North.

All aspects of Inuit life were examined by Agnes Cameron, but she wrote extensively about the women whom she judged to be "neither petulant or morose," which was interesting considering their circumstances. The feminist side of Agnes Cameron knew the lot of Native women in the North was not promising, and in their society, they were always fated to play a secondary role in the family. Miss Cameron questioned what pleasure life could hold for these women, for even from infancy, "boy babies, even the dogs," had the choicest places to sleep and the best pieces of meat to eat. Little girls were made to feel they had come into a world where there was no welcome for them, and their whole life seemed to be an apology.⁶⁰

Agnes Cameron faced a conundrum of sorts when her personal ideology came face to face with the reality of northern existence. While she knew on the one hand women were unequal participants in that society, on the other, she demonstrated an understanding of the reasons. "The fact that the women prefer a vulgar-fraction of a man, an Eskimo equity in connubial bliss, to spearing walrus on their own account is a significant factor in the problem of Eskimo men taking more than one wife," supposed Miss Cameron.⁶¹ She then explained in terms her southern readers could understand there were no

want columns North of sixty-eight degrees where unappropriated spinsters may

⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 241.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 169.

become self-supporting wage-earners as chaste school-teachers, Marcel-wavers or manicurists, [and] economically an [Eskimo] woman must herself hunt or have a man or part of a man hunt for her. Ethically, it works out beautifully, for each partner to the hymeneal bargain is fat and full of content, happiness fairly oozing out of every pore.⁶²

Agnes Cameron did conclude she would not like to picture the Inuit woman as being always content with "a circulating decimal of a husband instead of a whole unit," but for the young second wife, she judged "no suffragette need break a lance for her, demanding a ballot, dower rights, and the rest of it, because she is happy and busy. She plays deference to her co-wife," and, (incredibly), "expands like an anemone under the ardent smile of her lord."⁶³ Considered with her descriptions of the Inuit as intelligent and remarkably adaptable it is unclear whether Agnes Cameron had just dismissed the problem of inequity based on what she saw as a "primitive" culture yet to evolve to the stage where suffragism and equal rights would improve conditions for women. It would be more appropriate, and considerate, to conclude the ardent feminist explorer was intelligent enough to realize the imposition of her southern, gender-based ideals was unjustified.

Her concern for what she called "ice-widows" in the region was another example of how Miss Cameron understood both sides of cultural issues. She reported these women who married whalers "for the season only," were not outcasts amongst their own people, and submitted this was because the matrimonial standards of Pall Mall and Washington, DC, could not be applied in the North. In fact, Inuit women who had cohabited with

⁶²*Ibid.*, 170.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 168.

white men were revered by their own families because the woman was supposed to have gained knowledge useful for trading, which was then of some financial value to an Inuit husband. More importantly, the tent, cooking equipment and other utensils she probably had acquired from the whaler were valuable as a dowry. Just because she could rationalize this practice does not mean Agnes Cameron accepted it however, for she confessed "this state of things startles one, as all miscegenation does."⁶⁴

While she was disturbed by what she saw as strange customs at odds with her own values, Agnes Cameron was able to grasp that situations in the North were different. She acknowledged, for example,

if a white woman were to be shipwrecked and thrown upon an Eskimo foreshore and presenting herself at a Husky employment bureau, many surprises would await her. Instead of asking for references from her last employer, the general proprietor would first ask to inspect her teeth.⁶⁵

She also questioned the "intrusion of whites" which had "changed the whole horizon" in the North. "We can scarcely call it the coming of civilization" she commented and astutely recognized it was better to "call it rather the coming of commerce."⁶⁶ Miss Cameron saw agricultural development and settlement as more 'civilizing' than trading and whaling, adopting the accepted notion that farms and families were a stabilizing influence. She was convinced that the possibilities for agrarian pursuits were extensive. This may have been wishful thinking.

On a lecture tour of Britain Miss Cameron proudly showed slides of wild flax in

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, 174.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 204.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, 175.

bloom well inside the Arctic Circle, and told of potatoes, turnips, carrots and parsnips cultivated at Fort Good Hope. What she missed by not being an agricultural specialist, and only a onetime visitor, was the unreliability of crops as recorded in annual accounts of those resident in the region. That is the single failing of the traveller's accounts, because in the North, the realities of the harsh environment cannot be judged by a three month summer journey which allowed travellers to see the natural beauty at its best. Summer trips also allowed them to see the North at what some believed to be its worst -- for there were only two seasons, of course. Winter and mosquito.

Dealing with mosquitoes required constant effort, and it was the general opinion the pest was worse along the first part of the northern journey before reaching the Mackenzie River. This was the stage where the women experimented with all manner of ways to gain some relief. At Grand Rapids, for example, Agnes Cameron and Jessie Brown went to bed fully clothed and covered, but to no avail. Miss Cameron posited mosquitoes were Presbyterian, each determined to taste blood. Nighttime became a "first serious trial to good humour, when each of your four million pores is an irritation-channel of mosquito virus. But, the sun and smiles come out at the same time, and having bled together, we cement bonds of friendship."⁶⁷

Because Clara Vyvyan and Gwen Dorrien Smith travelled more in the bush than the other women, their descriptions of constant encounters with mosquitoes are more detailed, even frightening. Clara Vyvyan saw the mosquitoes as devilish, and at "times, the whole world seemed to be buzzing blackness." It was a struggle to prevent panic from seizing

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, 48.

hold, and she admitted to the "incredible delusion that perpetual movement meant escape." To get dressed under a mosquito net was difficult but not impossible, because the women slept in their clothes, "but it required a gymnastic effort, and as for doing one's hair, it gave one a frightful crick in the neck." At dinnertime, their mosquito veils were lifelines, as they "munched on bacon scraping away with forks [those] that had settled on the fat and became embedded in it." The pests came at them "one wave after another, like Napoleon's inexhaustible attacking armies."⁶⁸

Arctic Adventure was published in 1961.⁶⁹ It was written from notes in a diary kept during the journey made by Clara Vyvyan and her companion in 1926. Reflection after a long period of time may account for her eloquent descriptions, and of all the women's writing, Vyvyan's memoir is the most introspective, offering what one analyst called "the wonder of the shrubbery, and less about the actual trees."⁷⁰ It is difficult to imagine Elizabeth Taylor or Emma Colcleugh confessing that at camps along the way, they stashed a "brandy flask furtively into a rucksack," and "strolled off into the willows while the men who accompanied them laid the fire." In due course, wrote Lady Vyvyan, she and Miss Smith returned from their imbibing, "ostentatiously carrying bunches of wild flowers." It was "a strange tipping place, that thicket of willows, but never did any

⁶⁸Lady Clara Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, (London: Peter Owen, 1961), 95, 97, 100, 111.

⁶⁹Clara Vyvyan also published "On the Rat River," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, January, 1931, 48-57; *Roots and Stars: Reflections on the Past*, (London: Peter Owen, 1962); "Sunset on the Yukon," *Cornhill Magazine*, 153, 1936, 206-216; and "The Unrelenting North," *Cornhill Magazine*, 152, 1935, 176-183.

⁷⁰Dorothy Middleton, *Victorian Lady Travellers*, (London: Routledge, 1965), 5.

tavern hunter enjoy his liquor more." It also became an evening habit. "If there were no willows, there would be dense alders or secretive firs," and there would always be the wild flowers to justify their absence.⁷¹ Vyvyan admitted the liquor kept their spirits up, and provided some quiet confidence, which while false, was entirely necessary.

The women had been warned by the HBC that beyond the steamboat at Aklavik, they could expect considerable physical discomfort, but travelling was the passion of Clara Vyvyan's life, and therefore she accepted the challenge. In her letters to the HBC she does not waver from her intentions despite an obviously negative attitude in Winnipeg. She was the daughter of Cornish gentry, and described herself as neither rich nor poor, but she had a good education and a pleasant family life free of monetary concerns. This accounts for her observations about Canadians in general as she travelled across the country to Edmonton. Not without some irony she decided Canadians were tremendously proud of their achievements and had altogether too much optimism which was a little too much like tropical sunshine. "It made one long for the coolness of humble shade."⁷² But as the trip got underway, she realized the difference between the actual day dream and the reality always came with a shock, not the first of which came on the railway out of Edmonton. The women bundled their outfit, which included 252 pounds of food and 175 pounds of luggage, into the train which chugged leisurely north. Vyvyan learned the first lesson of the northern traveller: there was no need to hurry. The North began to take on

⁷¹Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, p. 112, 113.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 25.

its own "personality, at once alluring, compelling, and sometimes cruel."⁷³

On the Mackenzie steamer, all the passengers travelled under the same spell, "with a peculiar elation as if a Light were shining there,"⁷⁴ Clara Vyvyan recorded. The women made the journey from Fort Smith to Aklavik aboard the *Distributor III*, launched in 1920 to supplement the *Mackenzie River*. By this time, the steamers of the Mackenzie River Transport division of the HBC offered roomy and well ventilated dining rooms equipped with linen, china and silverware. There was a comfortable lounge, a library, and bathrooms with unlimited hot water. Stewards and stewardesses were available to serve passengers housed in cabins with windows, and berths which had "soft mattresses, comfortable feather pillows and gleaming white sheets," covered by HBC Point blankets.⁷⁵ This description was the one offered in the travel brochure produced by the Company. It was the first time true passenger service was available for tourists aboard the HBC steamers.

The canoe trip beyond Aklavik meant Clara Vyvyan was in close daily contact as an employer to Native guides, so it might be expected she would have comment on the relationship. She was forewarned by her HBC supplier about Native guides who would take no orders from anyone, and he insisted the guides be treated on a friendly and equal footing. As a consequence, Lady Vyvyan always deferred to the guides, or so she claimed. This did not mean she and Miss Smith were not beneath deceiving the guides

⁷³*Ibid.*

⁷⁴*Ibid.*, 30.

⁷⁵"To the Arctic and Great Bear Lake," HBC Pamphlet, 1933. YTA, PAM 1933-8C, 15.

with their little tiplings in the bush, but they recognized their personal limitations and were prepared to do what they were told when paddling the dangerous Rat and Porcupine rivers. Except for everyday comments about the skills and knowledge of her guides, however, *Arctic Adventure* is empty of the type of anthropological comments evident in the other three narratives. Perhaps the Dene and Inuit of the North seemed less exotic by 1961, and Lady Vyvyan decided not to publish her observations made at the time. She did recall the Inuit women at Aklavik who had entrancing smiles, and she remembered that attempted exchanges consisted of smiles, more smiles and yet more smiles. She concluded Inuit babies must have been born wearing smiles. The smiles and the friendliness of the Inuit is a recurring description in all four accounts, and suggests the women were surprised by the happy and amicable people, or they were expecting something more hostile since they had heard tales of infanticide and cannibalism. It is indicative of the expectations in general, particularly as the travellers progressed further North away from fur trade settlements established to serve the Indian population. They were ambivalent about what they might find, and unsure about how they might personally confront cultural differences.

Lady Vyvyan, however, was sure of how she felt about what she called the perennial problem of the North: mixed marriages. These were not the mixed marriages of white women and black men so abhorred by travellers in Africa and India, but the unions between white men and Native women. Clara Vyvyan realized loneliness broke down racial barriers, but it could also drive a "temperate man to become a drunkard, or a sane

man to madness,"⁷⁶ she judged. In her mind there was no excuse. Mixed marriages were a sign of weakness in white men in the North. (Agnes Cameron too, mentions mixed marriages, but her sentiment displayed a peculiarly English-Canadian prejudice. "When a Frenchman marries an Indian woman he reverts to her scale of civilization; when a Scot takes a Native wife, he draws her up to his."⁷⁷)

Clara Vyvyan described an Inuit dance performed at Aklavik, and noted the fascination it held for her, as well as for the participants. It was a celebration dance held after a murder trial where the defendant was exonerated. The steps and sequences were not rehearsed; they were improvised, mimetic and spontaneous. "During the execution of that primitive seal-dance," she wrote, "I was transported back through the ages into a cave-man mentality becoming unconscious of the crowd about me." Despite her claim she was unable to describe the experience in words, Clara Vyvyan remembered the dancer began by beating a one sided drum with a flat stick, and then

in a few moments he was no longer Ikegana nor even a human being, he had become a seal, bending forward and shuffling sideways, with every muscle rippling in an almost fluid movement; he seemed to be endowed with flippers and encased in blubber. Curious groans and roars and hisses of encouragement rose from the audience, but however uncouth were those sounds they were obviously used for expressing delight in this scene, wherein a man became a mammal before their very eyes.⁷⁸

Gwen Dorrien Smith, Clara Vyvyan's companion, was a painter, and it was her job to sketch and record the vegetation along the route. The two women collected two

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 46.

⁷⁷Cameron, *The New North*, 58.

⁷⁸Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, 60.

hundred and sixty-seven kinds of pressed flowers for the Kew herbarium in London. They appeared to be knowledgeable about botanical species, like all the women travellers, although it is unclear in all four cases if this familiarity was acquired before the journey or after the fact. Elizabeth Taylor was allowed little baggage on her trip but considered her botany book essential, for example.

Colourful reports on botanical species in the narratives themselves allowed the women one means of contesting the image of a cold and barren North, and permitted a little hyperbole in terms readers could understand. Yet collecting botanical specimens was a legitimate pursuit which still had a feminine air about it, and provided a cloak of gentility to cover the masculine aspect of exploration. Gathering wild flowers could hardly be seen as a threat to male fact-finders. It set women apart from serious scientists while at the same time was an intellectual pursuit. It was also not exploitative.⁷⁹ The activity served as the guise to veil any suggestion of northern travel as frivolous diversion; there was some purpose, after all, if the Kew herbarium was interested.

At Aklavik, Clara Vyvyan bemoaned the scarcity of species and named only bog-bean, marsh marigolds, bearberry, *Pyrola*, wild roses, yellow anemones, and small gypsophila, a pink *Rubra*, and a dwarf Grass of Parnassus. There were also silver willows, alder and stunted spruce. Later, along the Rat river, she reported on a less beautiful plant, but one with some significance for northern residents and travellers. Nigger-heads, she explained, were a

⁷⁹For an interesting discussion about natural history and travel writing see Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation*, London: Routledge, 1992), 27.

nightmare form of vegetation, bullet-headed tufts of grass, not wide enough to support the length of a human foot, with thigh deep spaces between each tuft. When you step lightly as a ballet dancer on a head, trying to balance on your toes or to grip with your heels, then the head will wobble and you will fall into the space between your tuft and the next one.⁸⁰

Along the swamps and riverbanks of the North, this plant posed real danger to the two women who spent as much time outside their canoe as in it.

Of all the adventures, that of Clara Vyvyan and Gwen Smith was the most physically taxing, and presented unique physical and mental challenges, and at a point on the Rat River they endured the "worst experience of the whole journey, when they stood alone on the muskeg, for the most part in silence, on a ten foot cliff above the river." They were "face to face with naked fear," when they were separated from their Native guides and began to contemplate the prospects of survival without them. Later, Lady Vyvyan recalled the sense "of vastness of the country overcame us, like a threat that might destroy us at any moment."⁸¹

From Clara Vyvyan her readers learned that for two middle-aged English women, the North inspired contemplation, tested ingenuity, and defined personal physical limits. They also learned Aklavik consisted of a single line of houses strung out along a twenty foot mud bank. There was also a beach where crowds of Inuit camped with their dogs. Only Agnes Cameron and Clara Vyvyan visited Aklavik, and the value of any comparison must also be considered in the light of Lady Vyvyan's understanding that Aklavik seemed to be a comparatively prosperous place, but her "standards of prosperity had been lowered

⁸⁰Vyvyan, *Arctic Adventure*, 122.

⁸¹*Ibid.*, 102, 124.

during the last few weeks of association with people living in wooden shacks on muddy river banks with only a dirt track for a main street."⁸²

Descriptions of settlements are uneven and inconsistent in the accounts of all four women, and are usually impressionistic rather than illustrative, so it is not profitable to attempt any comparison. What can be said is that few changes were noted. There was always some trading post, some mission, and some attempt at agriculture, even on a small scale. There were always lots of friendly people, and often white women eager to share conversation and tea with the visitors. Buildings were neat and functional and set in pretty surroundings, but along muddy river banks and exposing two classes of inhabitants: Native and non-Native.

That the northern travellers were of one class and the majority of the people they encountered were of another is not lost to anyone reading these accounts, but neither should that be a surprise. It is not the purpose here to pass judgement on the ethnocentrism of these women or to evaluate the biases, only to examine those they carried with them. To accept what these women wrote as some indication of what they saw and felt does not deny their prejudices or the possibility they were purveyors of imperialist ideas, but the conclusion must be that they were not spreading those ideas in the North, as much as they were reinforcing the mental images of the imperial vision in the south. Their brand of imperialism was not directed towards the indigenous people; they were not in the North long enough to have that kind of impact. Even the style of travel was not in the tradition of Victorian and Edwardian travellers in the tropics. There

⁸²*Ibid.*, 57.

was no entourage or extravagant kit. One look at the photographs of Agnes Deans Cameron will confirm she and Jessie Brown were travelling rough and light, which was the only way one could go, even on an HBC steamer.

There is a danger in concluding any of these women were travellers because they were feminists. It is more likely they were travellers, some of whom may coincidentally have been feminists and carried into their personal lives some of the momentum created by the outburst of feminine energy which surrounded them, and provided the impetus to overcome objections and obstacles by men in a position to frustrate and otherwise impede their plans. The question of travellers and feminism has held some interest for feminist writers who have adopted the hopeful stance that there is a common thread and a feminist link to women's travel writing. There is an underlying assumption that because women chose to pursue what was usually a male undertaking, they were trying to make some political statement. There is also the hope they will find the authors were kinder and gentler toward other women, or the travel writers subscribed to the same values as modern feminists. This was not the case for the northern travellers. Even Agnes Cameron's attempt to understand the position of female Natives was done in a context of the entire community.

Agnes Cameron was the true feminist of this group of women, and actively supported both woman suffrage and equal rights. Her outspoken nature and willingness to make personal sacrifices was a hallmark of her feminism. Emma Shaw Colcleugh was also an active member of women's groups and in her capacity as Clubs Editor of the *Providence Journal*, she had contact with women's groups throughout New England. On their travels

neither planted a suffragist flag, or campaigned for women's rights, whether for Aboriginal or white women.

Agnes Cameron was an acknowledged expansionist, but her settlement vision was a fantasy of internal expansion not to further British Imperialism but as insurance for the Canada of the future. Canada was in the position to construct, she explained, where other nations had to reconstruct.⁸³ Elizabeth Taylor was the daughter of an American annexationist. It is unclear how her travelogue in *Outing* may have served her father's purpose, although Miss Taylor did comment on the potential for development and settlement in the North. Clara Vyvyan's record has a distinctive "travelling in the colonies" perspective, but like Emma Shaw Colcleugh who was on intimate terms with the political forces of a developing Canada, Lady Vyvyan's travels are more suggestive of a strong desire for personal challenge.

Whatever the individual impetus, the principal objective was the exploitation of their travels for personal profit through lectures and publications, but the women were also travelling for travel's sake. The North was romantic and distant; a place few Europeans had seen or could hope to see, so it made sense to capitalize on the curiosity of readers in the South. What these women wrote was what they knew they could sell to publishers and readers. It is understood that what was published was checked by those parameters.

It is notable that in the northern mythology, there is little evidence of the travels of these women. This exclusion begs the suggestion that sex does make a difference to the credibility of the writers. The likes of British naval explorers in the Northwest Passage,

⁸³Cameron, *The New North*, 299.

of eccentric American anthropologists attempting to live off the land, or of strident government and police officials on fact-finding missions provided a more important perspective because they were at least quasi-official and had political purpose. Elizabeth Taylor, Emma Colcleugh, Agnes Cameron and Clara Vyvyan were not taken seriously because they were just women out on a jaunt. In order to establish if there was a difference in the observations because female eyes viewed the scene is difficult to ascertain without a complex comparison with the similar work of men over time. Since the purpose of this study is to place women in the foreground, such an undertaking would be counter-productive. To speak of these women with Franklin might seem audacious to those who revere the great white explorers of the Arctic, yet it is serious comment. Because they stopped to delight in the wild roses and paused to describe the people they met should not diminish their pursuits. And, it might be argued, the women were intelligent enough to push themselves beyond the physical expectations of a woman of their time without foolishly over-extending their own limits.

Chapter Four

A Few Intrepid Women: Travellers With Professional Purpose in the 1930s

When professional women travelled into the NWT during the 1930s, they carried with them the same notions of Empire as their Victorian and Edwardian predecessors. They encountered the same imperialist institutions as well, for time had effected little change to the structures of administration in the North, which were male dominated. What is also evident is how male-defined these institutions were, and how firmly entrenched the men became when challenged by women with some measure of personal confidence.

In her assessment of the relative position of professional women in the 1920s and 1930s in Canada, Veronica Strong-Boag notes their number represented "a meagre, if resourceful, handful." She adds an "intrepid few could not demolish patriarchal structures that flourished" within their professions. Women developed ways of coping with resistance, suggests Strong-Boag, wondering what else they could have achieved if the energy wasted on fighting the system had been put to better use.¹ Professional women who went to the NWT in the 1930s however, did not necessarily encounter resistance from within their own professional communities as much as they did from the bureaucracies which administered the region.

¹Veronica Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*, (Toronto: Penguin Books, 1988), 67.

The experiences of artist Kathleen Shackleton, journalist Marilyn Grange, and scientist Isobel Hutchison support the assertion of Mark Dickerson that the NWT was administered like personal fiefdoms by men in the government, at the headquarters of the HBC, and of the churches operating in the area.² Unlike their Victorian and Edwardian predecessors, these women travelled in the NWT with some purpose in mind rather than the production of a travelogue, but like the observations recorded by Miss Taylor, Mrs Colcleugh, Miss Cameron and Lady Vyvyan, their stories add dimension to Northern history.

For the most part, those adventures have been excluded from the historiography so their inclusion here is relevant if only for that reason. They allow a gender-based view which has hitherto been ignored, and which provides a foil against the male-dominated focus of descriptions of other explorations in the region during that era. Since experience is the personal observation of, or involvement with fact, and the knowledge or skill based on that involvement, women's experience becomes more than relevant: it becomes essential to an understanding of the social conditions of the time. How Miss Shackleton portrayed Northern residents and reacted to the administrators, how Mrs Grange reported on the government patrol, and how Dr Hutchison explored the wilds of the Arctic provide a focal point for comparison with the earlier works described in the previous chapter.

The issues of gender suggested by the experiences of these women also opens a

²Dickerson, *Whose North*, 57.

window to the understanding of how male bureaucrats associated with the North worked,³ and more importantly, how they related to those distant from the positions of power as they exercised the politics of exclusion against those persons considered marginal to their purpose. Natives represent one such group; women another.⁴ The nature of the barriers placed before the women, and the attitudes of the men they encountered suggests the shallowness of women's apparent professional status when they encountered men who did not agree with the women's assessments.

This was evident in the case of British artist Miss Kathleen Shackleton who applied to the HBC in 1937 for a commission to produce three dozen portraits. Her purpose was to reflect the Company's interests in the North; controversy was not her intention. She was the sister of a famous Antarctic explorer, although it is unclear if her brother's exploits provided any impetus to her suggestion to the HBC to produce a series to record "all types of Indians, Eskimos and trappers associated with the Company, and members

³The window would no doubt be small, not big enough to crawl through, and one of my colleagues who offered this analogy suggested that the window was dirty which was why it had to be opened. Inevitably, it would be a woman who would have to clean it from the inside.

⁴Mark Dickerson explains the hierarchy of the Northwest Territories Council in his recent work entitled *Whose North*. He outlines how the NWT was administered as a branch of the Department of Interior, then the Department of Mines and Resources. The Department of Indian Affairs was responsible for Native welfare in the NWT, and it was common for policy makers to serve other roles within those Departments. This did not necessarily confuse programs as much as it consolidated ideas. It was also an indication of the lack of importance of the NWT in the overall administration of the country. Dickerson suggests those who ran the NWT had their own agenda which charted two divergent courses for the North. The intention was to develop the natural resources of the NWT, to maintain the traditional life of the Natives, and to keep the two separate.

of the staff, dressed in picturesque or strictly working costume."⁵ The HBC and Miss Shackleton had high hopes for her work and were convinced of the publicity value of any show of work in the USA or Britain which depicted "His Majesty's Most Northerly Subjects."⁶ There were prospects for slide and lecture talks, illustrations for articles in periodicals, and perhaps even the incorporation of Northern ideas in modern dress design. There were endless ideas for "commercializing of any work Kathleen Shackleton would do, such as 'high class advertising' in conjunction with the Company Sales Organization, and publicity and propaganda generally."⁷ In short, this was to be a profitable enterprise for both Miss Shackleton and the Company.

Kathleen Shackleton initially asked for remuneration of three thousand dollars, excluding expenses, but after some bargaining settled for two thousand dollars which included an advance and travel expenses from London to Winnipeg, with first class rail tickets and ten dollars per day while within the range of railway communication lines. After that, the HBC would arrange transportation and absorb costs.⁸ Miss Shackleton's journey to the North was undertaken in three parts. She toured the Mackenzie-Athabasca Region in the summer of 1937, Northern Quebec in the autumn, and returned to

⁵"Artistic Canadian Records," Typescript, 26 July 1937. HBCA A/102/2217, Kathleen Shackleton. (Hereafter HBCA/Shackleton)

⁶This was the title eventually given to the showing of drawings when they were displayed in Britain.

⁷"Artistic Canadian Records."

⁸FA Stacpole, London Manager to Kathleen Shackleton, 12 August 1937. HBCA/Shackleton.

Coppermine for Christmas.⁹ The artistic project proved successful. Kathleen Shackleton wrote to J Chadwick Brooks, her Winnipeg contact how "it had all been absolutely *wonderful*. I nearly get *bushed* as I am in love with the 'North' and the people."¹⁰ After her first trip down the Mackenzie she had already completed two-thirds of her commission and believed the portraits to be the best work she had done in years.

Encouraged, and excited by her adventure like most Arctic travellers, Kathleen Shackleton gave interviews to the Press. The Canadian newspapers reported she was filled with a sense of outrage at the arrogant treatment of the Natives of the North, and was "critical of the way the Government cared for its wards and the way in which the church was seeking to bring Christianity to them." She did not believe there was any need to break down the habits of generations; habits which were fundamental to successful living in the country.¹¹ Some accounts suggested Kathleen Shackleton came away from the North "with the feeling that missionary groups were confusing 'anglicization' with Christianizing." The *Globe* interpreted this to mean "English customs aren't necessarily Christian custom," and reported Miss Shackleton as denouncing the construction of the Anglican residential school at Aklavik as stupid, for the Church would better serve the Northern Natives if it would carry its message into Native camps and not take children

⁹"Artist Going to the Arctic," *Gazette*, Montreal, 11 December 1937.

¹⁰Shackleton to Hudson's Bay House, Winnipeg, 7 November 1937. HBCA/Shackleton.

¹¹"Feels Indians, Eskimos are Suffering Injustice," *Star-Phoenix*, Saskatoon, 20 February 1938.

from their traditional surroundings.¹² This view was contrary to the accepted one, and at odds with the practice of both the Anglicans and Roman Catholics in the region who brought children into the residential schools and settlements. About the facilities at Aklavik, Miss Shackleton was quoted as saying

The church, which is used once or twice a week has an electric lighting plant, while the school where the Eskimo and Indian children are living and which is in use daily, is lighted with oil lamps. The teachers are in constant fear of fire.¹³

It was not long before headlines reading "Flying Bishop Resents Criticism from Artist," appeared in the same papers. "Any tourist who goes into the North and elects to criticize what they find should at least give constructive, not destructive criticisms," declared The Right Reverend Archibald Fleming, who then argued Miss Shackleton never actually saw the church at Aklavik in use. As for the power plant, he explained it was installed for the use of the hospital. There was not sufficient electricity left for the use of the school, and "in any event," he noted, "the school plant [was] not under our jurisdiction's but the government's."¹⁴ The Bishop defended the Church on the grounds "we are only trying to prepare [the Natives] for the kind of life being forced on them by the white man's invasion," apparently unwilling to recognize a significant element of that invasion was from the Church itself. But he did concede, "they won't need to know some

¹²"English and Christian are not Synonyms Says an Artist," *Globe*, Toronto, 25 February 1938.

¹³"English Culture of No Use to Nanooks of the North," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 28 February, 1938.

¹⁴*Winnipeg Tribune*, 29 February 1938.

of it, but it will help them."¹⁵

The newspaper accounts generated correspondence behind the scenes which further indicated how sensitive an issue had been raised by Kathleen Shackleton's purported comments. Fleming wrote to Ralph Parsons of the HBC asking "what had we done to merit this wholly undeserved attack?" and speculated about Miss Shackleton's motives. Fleming suggested Kathleen Shackleton's actions might have been for publicity or the result of a grudge against the Church of England. More importantly, the Bishop noted Miss Shackleton was under contract to the HBC, and reminded Parsons "since I first came into touch with you and the Company in 1911 I have not ceased to try and play fair," which implied playing fair enjoyed precedence over Native welfare. Fleming suggested that since the Church of England and the HBC were in this Northern enterprise together, the Company should do their part to clear the reputation of those who worked in the North.

Bishop Fleming's lengthy letter countered the untruths he claimed were printed in the newspapers, and concluded with the opinion

I think it would be a good thing if she could be persuaded to attend to her drawing and let other people attend to their business. She has only a short time in the North and has not earned the right to express opinions as against those who have been there many years.¹⁶

He awaited a reply, and an explanation of Miss Shackleton's offensive and untrue remarks. Can it be that it did not occur to the Bishop that there might have been some

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶The Right Reverend Al Fleming, Bishop of the Arctic to Ralph Parsons, HBC, 10 March 1938. HBCA/Shackleton.

value in Kathleen Shackleton's observations?

"I suppose when Bishop Fleming referred to tourists he meant me," Kathleen Shackleton wrote in rebuttal. She added "I have never been a tourist, and I was on my job in the North as a hard-working artist, and my criticism I did not consider in the least destructive." With some foresight, Miss Shackleton also recognized that "unless the whole face of Nature changes in the Aklavik district, the natives will have to earn their livelihood by trapping, hunting and fishing," and pointed out these were skills being denied to the young people of the region.¹⁷ At first glance, this observation contradicts what Mark Dickerson claims was the government policy for educating the Native population, and therefore it appears the Church curriculum was at odds with the NWT Council. What Miss Shackleton saw, however, was the education of young children in absolute basics. They would be back on the land soon enough.

As for the HBC, Brooks wrote to Miss Shackleton on April 1st to tell her he had been "horrified" to read the press reports -- copies of which he enclosed. "The publication of such dogmatic criticisms of the Church of England activities is greatly to be deplored and it is unfortunate that they should be expressed and published following your visit to the Arctic on behalf of the HBC," he told her. He then noted there were probably considerations of which she was not aware, and it might have been prudent to express her opinions in private rather than to the Press. The Company's trading operations had always been carried out with careful consideration for the welfare of the Native population, explained Brooks, and "the most cordial relations had always existed

¹⁷"Miss Shackleton Replies to Bishop Fleming," *Winnipeg Tribune*, March 1938.

between the HBC, the government and all denominations." It was clearly noted in the letter that Fleming was a personal friend of the Governor and the Anglican Bishop's protests would be dealt with by the Board of Governors in London whom she had placed in a difficult position because of her comments.¹⁸

"I thought I was a free individual when my contract expired," replied Kathleen Shackleton. Because the views were expressed before the HBC finalized her expense payments, she admitted it might mean she was "retrospectively in [their] employ," but since the contract had expired, "so much for my obligations to your Company." Miss Shackleton proceeded to explain to Brooks that the newspaper accounts were inaccurate and she was misquoted. She had spent a "marvellous month" at the residential school at Aklavik with very sincere Christian workers who nevertheless questioned the economic value of their work. "They have a splendid staff at the school, living examples of Christianity, who will be remembered by the children long after the Church is forgotten. They were making the best of a bad job."¹⁹ Yet she decided after her visit the value of the curriculum was probably useless, "but as those [teachers] were so much in earnest, I not only kept my views to myself, I arranged a show of my work to get funds to help them with their little concerts and other purely 'British' affairs and in various other ways tried to make things easier for them."²⁰

She admitted she may have gone too far for this cause. She conceded

¹⁸Brooks to Shackleton, 1 April 1938. HBCA/Shackleton.

¹⁹"English Culture of No Use to Nanooks of the North," *Winnipeg Tribune*, 28 February, 1938,

²⁰Shackleton to Brooks, 15 April 1938. HBCA/Shackleton.

a good deal of what I said to the newspapers might have been privately communicated to officials of the MSCC, but you see, the poor dears had so often applied for things and only been told "we are bearing the matter in mind" that I said "when I go out and the newspapers ask me questions, I won't talk about my sketches, I will talk about the school needs instead, and above all the electric light plant. I was burning with the injustice done to the living workers by "the powers that be" among the Missionary headquarters in concentrating so much on the dream of a "Pro-Cathedral" in the North.²¹

And Bishop Fleming, maintained Kathleen Shackleton, "passed the buck" by saying the school was under government jurisdiction. He also said "all sorts of unpleasant personal" things against her during a lecture at Montreal, comments for which one Vice-President of the WA felt compelled to apologize. It had become a personal issue to Fleming who was known to tirelessly campaign for support for his vast Diocese and its missions. Kathleen Shackleton told Brooks she was convinced the Bishop had made up his mind she was entirely in the wrong, and only he was right.²² What she had really done was question the Bishop's policies and challenge his personal hegemony in the Arctic.

A return to the "Good Old Days" when the Company reigned in the North would serve the Natives better Miss Shackleton decided, and told the HBC official

it would be much better if the Natives could be assisted, not to become half-British (which is not necessarily "Christian") but healthy, productive Natives, you must know how serious are the drawbacks from the point of view of health and general efficiency when they are allowed or encouraged to hang about white settlements. It is bad for the Company's finances to say the least of it.²³

She wondered if it would be more logical if the Church concentrated on the attitudes of the traders before those men came into contact with the Natives rather than preparing

²¹*Ibid.*

²²*Ibid.* She pointed out that after the lecture, Fleming got cross and shouted at her.

²³*Ibid.*

children so they would not be preyed upon, which was how one missionary justified the Northern mission. She was also concerned about the values the female teachers imposed through the religious nature of the curriculum at Aklavik, and told Brooks boys and girls were not allowed to play together "for moral reasons" even in the snow, which was so unlike Northern life. Explanations such as that did not enlighten her at all, she commented, but perhaps edified the situation more than she realised.

It would be speculative to conclude Kathleen Shackleton's statements and the ensuing debate would have been different if she were not a woman, although it can be confirmed no male "tourist" of her stature had made similar comments to the Press. For that matter, there is no evidence any male visitor without government or Company sanction concerned himself with the issues in question. It is difficult to ascertain whether Miss Shackleton just foolishly thought she was correcting an injustice or whether she consciously chose to challenge what she called the "powers-that be" and their policies. It may have been she was not aware of the rules, or it might have been her choice not to play by them. As a woman, she identified with the hardships the female missionaries dealt with in the day-to-day running of the Aklavik school. She recognized the practical and domestic problems of feeding, clothing, and housing children, rather than the political and economic issues which concerned the administrators, and understood those women were in a relatively helpless situation. They were meeting the challenges of the moment, yet unable to effect any change in policies because as women they occupied an inferior position within the hierarchy, and because they were situated on the Arctic coast.

Addie Butler had written in one of her letters about a similar problem with the same

Bishop, which affirmed Miss Shackleton's commentary. Mrs Butler anticipated the occasion of Bishop Fleming's visit to Shingle Point so she could outline the problems she encountered as a teacher at the residential school, but she remembered when His Lordship visited, she did not get much satisfaction from her personal interview. "He wanted to do all the talking," she wrote, "he was too much taken up with the big things that loom up in the front of his vision and the little everyday things that make up our life here, and which help keep the wheels go smoothly or otherwise, were too small for him to see." Not without some irony, she suggested the Bishop should "come up here and live for a week or two."²⁴

Kathleen Shackleton's opinions are recorded in personal letters as well as the newspaper reports, and differ only marginally from the press interpretations. She may have been misquoted, but the intention was the same. She admitted to Brooks she empathized with the women who worked at Aklavik, but reasoned this was probably due to her own missionary calling. Despite her understanding of their condition, she concluded the women missionaries were charming, sincere, but mistaken teachers, an opinion formed because she had lived with them, not simply because she had visited the school. In the end, Kathleen Shackleton announced to Brooks she was making plans to pursue her career in Canada, independently of the HBC. She felt it was better to avoid official associations, and reaffirmed that since the newspaper accounts appeared several weeks after her contract had expired, she did not feel answerable to anyone, and the HBC could feel free to disown her to Bishop Fleming.

²⁴Addie Butler, 9 September 1934.

"If you had only lived in the Arctic" was a familiar response to those who questioned how and why things were done differently in the North. Those words were also used in defense of criticism about how the North was administered, or how non-Native residents made decisions. Evidently, no one, and certainly no woman who had only made one summer's journey into the region was entitled to question conditions until they had earned the privilege through some kind of Arctic endurance test.²⁵

Decision-makers were able to deflect criticism by confusing experience with expertise, as if the North was some kind of special enclave where observations from outsiders were not entertained. They were also able to censor reports from the region which were not flattering to the administration. Mark Dickerson cites an example of how the RCMP member of the NWT Council was able to order his men "that nothing be included in any of their reports that might be construed as a criticism of the administration."²⁶ The order was the response to a report about Native consumption of wood alcohol. The *Ottawa Citizen* picked up the story from an official report and published what the Council considered a sensationalized and inaccurate version. Which may be why Marion Grange from that same newspaper encountered resistance when she was invited to join the Eastern Arctic Patrol in 1938.

Roy Gibson, Deputy Commissioner for the Northwest Territories wrote to Mrs Marion Grange on 29 June 1938 to inform her provision was being made for her

²⁵Things have not changed that much. This is still a common refrain.

²⁶General O'Brien, NWT Council Minutes, 42nd Session, 5 April 1933, quoted in Dickerson, *Whose North*, 58.

accommodation on board the HBC supply ship, the *RMS Nascopie*. Mrs Grange was to be the official historian attached to the Dominion Government's annual Eastern Arctic Patrol. Gibson enclosed a map and general information about weather and conditions, and pointed out it was customary for the Press representative to comply with certain guidelines.²⁷ As a reporter for the *Ottawa Citizen* and as a Southam News representative, she was expected to submit all material written about the journey to Major DL McKeand, Officer-in-Charge of the EAP. Gibson explained McKeand had extensive experience in the Eastern Arctic and knew the full significance of various features of life and conditions in the region. Moreover, McKeand was fully aware of Departmental regulations.²⁸

Major DL McKeand was the Secretary of the Northwest Territories Council and Superintendent of the Eastern Arctic Patrol. He was not overjoyed about Gibson's decision to allow Mrs Grange to act as the historian on the EAP. In a memorandum written in March, McKeand told Gibson the appointment of a Canadian Press reporter as historian the previous year had been an improvement on past efforts, but offered four points which he urged Gibson to consider before Mrs Grange's employment was confirmed. McKeand argued the Southam Newspapers were privately owned, and articles might be syndicated outside of Canada, whereas the Canadian Press was a co-operative organization composed of daily and weekly newspapers. A charitable interpretation might view McKeand's concerns as security related, but Canadian Press reports could be relayed

²⁷The custom was, in fact, only one year old.

²⁸Gibson, Director, Lands, Parks and Forests, Department of Mines and Resources, to Marion Grange, 29 June, 1938. RG 85, Volume 72, File 201-1, Marion Grange. (Hereafter RG85/Grange)

to other wire services, so the point is lost. McKeand also suggested problems would arise because articles by a Southam reporter would appear in English only, but Canadian Press news was in English and French. In addition, a Canadian Press representative was probably more familiar with Departmental practice and government procedure. Why that should be so for a Canadian Press writer and not Southam reporters, particularly one based at Ottawa, McKeand did not explain, except to add *he* could be relied on in confidential matters.

The true protest was more evident in Major McKeand's belief that "generally, newspaper women wrote good copy, but are limited by their assignments." He did not elaborate on what he thought were the limitations, or notice the irony of his remarks. Here was his opportunity to expand the narrow horizons of at least one female reporter. His argument was backed with the observation that "women tourists on the *Nascopie* never seemed to understand the native women or their family life." He did not explain his comment, but it is likely he was disturbed by the possibility a woman might be less sympathetic toward white European men when she encountered mixed-blood children along the route of the EAP. McKeand was confident of a male reporter's discretion, and nervous about a woman's reactions, and even if as Officer-in-Charge McKeand could monitor articles despatched from the North, he had no control over articles published after the EAP returned to the South. He ended his memorandum by suggesting there were "a number of other reasons for the appointment of a man instead of a woman to the EAP, which could be advanced, if necessary."²⁹

²⁹McKeand to Gibson, 22 March 1938. RG85/Grange.

Although Gibson overruled him -- and there is no indication as to why -- McKeand exerted pressure on Mrs Grange in other ways. A memorandum of June 7 reminded Gibson that as far as the HBC was concerned, Mrs Grange was not just another passenger, for Mrs Grange, like officers and members of the government party, were guests of the Minister, and under government control. All messages of a public nature sent by them from the *Nascopie* were subject to scrutiny by the Officer-in-Charge. He requested Mrs Grange be reminded that even as an official member of the EAP, she would not be permitted to attend all of the on-board meetings because of their confidential nature. "Newspaper people are not members of any departmental committees in Ottawa, and it could not be expected that a newspaper woman would enjoy the same privileges aboard the *Nascopie*," he reasoned. Mrs Grange was only a member of the EAP when it suited McKeand's purpose.

McKeand reported to Gibson in September after the EAP's return that despite the exclusion of Mrs Grange from meetings, those who attended were less than candid during discussions because Marion Grange was on board as historian, *not* because she was present at their meetings. He suggested this was because the EAP included public servants or those accustomed to authority and loyalty of their respective institutions. No doubt this was also because they were all men who were suspicious of a woman holding anything other than a tourist's interest in the Arctic. Consequently, the RCMP, the doctor, and other scientists were "very reticent in discussing the results of their observations and future plans." He added the same "could be said for employees of the HBC who "flatly

declined to co-operate with Mrs Grange."³⁰ Even within the context of the time, McKeand's attitude leaves a lingering suspicion about what was said at those on-board meetings the men in attendance could not trust to a woman, but would have allowed to a man.

Gibson's memorandum to McKeand on March 18 mentioned Mrs Grange had written some excellent human interest articles about a northern Ontario mining community, and hoped she could "write up the Eastern Arctic from an altogether new standpoint." This was what McKeand feared, of course, and to some degree his fears were well founded, for Marion Grange wrote as much about Native women and their families as she did about the scenery, the RCMP and the workings of the EAP. Whether she misunderstood them is open to interpretation, however.

In one article entitled "The Women of Pangnirtung" she named the five white women at the settlement and recorded the presentation of Coronation Medals to Flossie Hirst and the unnamed Inuit wife of a well-known Arctic trapper and explorer. Mrs Duval, she explained, was the "only female Eskimo to be honoured by her King."³¹

From the *Nascopie*, Marion Grange wrote about an Inuit woman named Napatchie. Napatchie was on board the ship because she and her family were being relocated from Cape Dorset to Arctic Bay, and she had given birth during the voyage. Napatchie's presence on board the *Nascopie* prompted Marion Grange to remark on the lot of Inuit

³⁰McKeand to Gibson, 30 September 1938. RG85/Grange. A letter to Mrs Grange from Ralph Parsons, Fur Trade Commissioner of the HBC praises Mrs Grange's reports and thanks her for the kind references made about the Company.

³¹"The Women of Pangnirtung," *Calgary Herald*, 12 November 1938.

women, who "were able to do two things that her generally considered more sophisticated sister has never been able to accomplish. Never has she been, neither is she now, a slave to the kitchen." This was because the Inuit liked his food raw, so meals were never a problem. Not without some sarcasm, Mrs Grange added in parentheses "whether Christianity with its accompanying civilization will bring in its wake a female domestic serfdom, it is still rather early to tell." On the surface, this observation appears to be a comment on the primitive domestic arrangements of Inuit women, but as McKeand was a devoted Anglican and lay reader, it is not difficult to imagine this remark being the result of dinner conversation about the effects of Christianity in the North.

In the same story Mrs Grange expressed surprise that an Inuit husband would be to look after his wife's children regardless of who their father was. She decided this indicated a double standard of morality, "especially if the woman was a good needle-woman, in other words economically independent." From the way Mrs Grange recounted the story, one has to wonder whether she was testing the patience of McKeand; she was certainly offering a different viewpoint. Male observers had never offered this twist ³² which hints at some agency and decision-making by Inuit women. Neither had they ever considered whether or not Inuit women's domestic conditions were better than those of their white sisters in the South.

A marginal note on the manuscript copy of Marion Grange's despatch indicates some of her judgements were not used in the *Citizen*. She wrote of the practice of interchanging

³²Interestingly Agnes Cameron made a similar observation. See the chapter on women travellers in the Arctic.

wives which she noted was a seasonal rather than a permanent arrangement. Earlier accounts by travellers in the Arctic intimated

that this rite was owing to man's variability, that the woman had no say in it. Maybe so. On the other hand many Eskimos show traces of white blood. One authority has stated that there are no full-blooded Eskimos. Blame it on the whaler is a practice of the North. The whalers were on the Eastern Arctic for over a hundred years and left immediately before the Great War, owing to the almost complete demolition of the whale. In the North, it is deemed unmannerly to suggest that any intermixture may be of a later date. Since whalers all were men, it is to me more obvious that the Eskimo lady had the wandering eye. But then I belong to the realistic rather than the sentimental sex.³³

Marion Grange's reports describe ship life, shiptime, and amiable Natives. She told about the "secret wedding" of Thomas Manning and Ellen Jackson aboard the *Nascopie*, as well as another marriage ceremony when the ship landed at Port Burwell, and she recognized that for young white women heading North to get married, theirs was a one-way passage for at least a year. But her description of a scene involving male officials also illustrated something about the expectations of white men acting in an official capacity in the North. It is another example of the type of report McKeand was nervous about, for Mrs Grange's account makes these men of authority look a little silly. The story began by explaining that many Inuit were machine-minded; they only had to be shown how a piece of equipment worked, or how something was made, and they were prepared for the task. But, not all Inuit had the opportunity to learn everything, she added

as the Bishop, the artist, and the ornithologist found out when they cheerfully stepped off the gangplank at Cape Dorset into a motor boat seemingly manned by three Eskimos. The "crew" and passengers took off, and then discovered all were

³³Marion Grange, "On the Eastern Arctic Patrol: Birth, Death and the Arctic Circle," Typescript. RG85/Grange.

passengers. None of the Eskimos could run the boat. Neither could the white men. The Bishop was anxious to get to shore to drum up a religious service.³⁴

For the time being, concluded Mrs Grange, the Bishop forgot his real love and admiration for the Natives, but with the assistance of another Inuk who came alongside, the engine was started.

Since there were so few white men and women in the Arctic, any pomposity was immediately noticeable, particularly so to women who were probably a little cynical about men anyway. For the most part, the men with whom these women came into contact were all part of the official hierarchy in some way. The men expected to be treated with some respect in accordance with what they saw as positions of some import. They envisioned themselves as extraordinary men in a demanding environment, whereas the women probably knew better and often saw the situation as the other way around.

Marion Grange was not the only woman to make this observation. In one of Addie Butler's letters home, she told how the RCMP Inspector arrived at Shingle Point unannounced, and then complained he was not received with the respect that the representative of His Majesty's Government should have been. Mrs Butler "apologized for the absence of the red carpet and the brass band and the flag hoisting," and told him "that if he would come at school time, he could not expect anything else."³⁵ Both the Inspector and Addie Butler thought of Shingle Point as an outpost of Empire, but Addie Butler knew it was also the school where she taught.

³⁴RG85/Grange.

³⁵Addie Butler, 1 April 1933.

While Marion Grange's portrayal shows she was not above poking a little fun at the officials who travelled on the *Nascopie*, she held these men in some esteem, even if she enjoyed their predicament. For example, she recounted how the character of the RCMP officers seemed to change when they came into contact with Natives. "With the majority of white people they were taciturn, almost curt," but with the Inuit they were garrulous and often burst into gales of laughter. "Why not?" she asked, for they were "brothers in arms," with experiences of Arctic travels, frozen caribou and seal meat. "They love the Natives, know their failing, and they appreciate their virtues."³⁶

Marion Grange was unable to successfully convince Major McKeand a woman was up to the task. He wrote to Roy Gibson and reported smugly that Mrs Grange's first item was so full of inaccuracies he had suggested she rewrite it. He claimed he was careful to avoid editorial criticism but felt there were errors in "dates, numbers and nautical terms, etc.. While some corrections were made others were evidently not thought necessary with the result that the material, style, etc. of the articles," were the responsibility of the *Citizen*, and not those of the Government party. He finally conceded he had no objection to the articles.

McKeand had one further opportunity to make his point to Gibson, and wrote on November 22 to inform the Deputy Commissioner about a CBC Radio broadcast which Marion Grange was to make the next day. The topic was "The Northern Trek of Eskimos". "It might do well for some of us to hear what Mrs Grange has to say," he declared, and indicated his intention to listen. After the broadcast, he offered that "while

³⁶RG85/Grange.

Mrs Grange has a pleasing radio personality her voice is not very clear. The material was good," he admitted, but in his opinion it lacked continuity. More significantly, McKeand assigned Marion Grange to her rightful place by concluding "I feel certain that it was enjoyed by many women listeners over the Canadian network."³⁷

These memos present an image of McKeand doing his best not to be exasperated by having had to take a woman on "his" inspection tour, but he was the single official charged to deal with the Dominion government's business on the EAP so Marion Grange had to put up with any bureaucratic barriers he decided to erect. The unknown is why Gibson did not bend to McKeand's objections, and why he insisted on Marion Grange's presence on the EAP of 1938, and it is curious McKeand never offered what had to be the best argument against the employment of an individual woman in an official capacity. There was the remote possibility the *Nascopie* might be stranded in the Arctic. The HBC used that reason to initially refuse passage to Mhairi Fenton and her aunt the previous year. The Fur Trade Commissioner had written Mhairi Fenton's uncle to explain that "in navigating these northern waters we have at the back of our minds always the possibility of the ship being caught and being obliged to winter."³⁸

Eventually seven women travelled aboard the *Nascopie* in 1937, but the potential problems posed by stranded females were enough to make officials balk at taking women

³⁷McKeand to Gibson, 22 November 1938 and 23 November 1938, RG85/Grange.

³⁸DiCastro, NAC. Fur Trade Commissioner, HBC to Dr McEuen, 16 April 1937. The EAP in 1937 involved an incursion into waters farther North than had previously been penetrated by the supply vessel.

along. There was a legal responsibility for the physical well-being of the women, and in the Arctic this included food, warm clothing and medical attention, but this responsibility was clouded by sexual anxieties, and fears for the reputations of single, unattached white females.

There was never any apparent need in the North for regulations like those described by Almirah Inglis in her analysis of the White Women's Protection Ordinance in Papua, New Guinea.³⁹ Native men in the North were never portrayed as sexual beasts intent upon violating white women, like that described by Elizabeth West in her account of white women in colonial Australia.⁴⁰ Both analyses portray the image of white women in the colonies in question as possessions of white men determined to maintain their property as sacrosanct and undefiled. It is obvious those perceived notions about increased sexual desires and activity of tropical climates were not a factor in the Arctic.

This is not to suggest white men in the North did not view women as property, but since the white community was so scattered, there was never any group large enough to rise up and legislate against imagined dangers. The dispersed white population also meant any threat was individual, but whether white women had to be protected from white men or Native men is not known, because these fears are never openly expressed. Official documents only record assaults and alleged rapes against Native and mixed-blood women. There are no indications white women were unsafe or subject to sexual assault in the

³⁹Almirah Inglis, *The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety in Papua*, (London: Sussex University Press, 1975).

⁴⁰Elizabeth West, "White Women in Colonial Australia," *Refactory Girl*, March 1977, 54.

North, although admittedly, there is little chance that the women would record any such events themselves. If there was any danger, it was more likely from lonely white men looking for companionship. The prospect of grievous deeds, with the added possibility of a little philandering had to be in the back of the minds of men who had to make decisions about whether to allow women into the farthest regions of the Arctic and it is possible those in charge were as worried about their own reputations as they were about their female charges. Anyway, the *Nascopie* did not get stranded in any ice floes in 1938, and despite her anticipated limitations, Marion Grange was able to offer her "feminine standpoint" and still conveyed the Government's desired message.

Unlike Kathleen Shackleton and Marilyn Grange, Dr Isobel Hutchison had few difficulties with bureaucracies when she planned her trip North. That was because she chose to ignore the necessary conventions about entering the region, thereby flaunting the regulations that were in place to protect all travellers in the region. Her adventure proved to be the very sort of trip officials wanted outsiders to avoid, but it was still an adventure worthy of note.⁴¹

It is hard to imagine that Dr Isobel Hutchison did not know of the protocols when she started out from Scotland on her way across the Atlantic, through the Panama Canal, and north to Vancouver. She intended to travel by sea up the coast of British Columbia, around Alaska through the Bering Sea and along the Arctic coast to Herschel Island and Aklavik.

⁴¹I think it is fair to say that male adventurers and explorers were usually allowed free rein across the region, often at tax payer's expense. All they had to do was convince the government they were worthy.

When she arrived at Vancouver, Dr Hutchison met ethnologist Diamond Jenness of the National Museum of Canada. Jenness told her of the need to obtain a Scientific and Exploration License before she entered the North primarily because it was her intention to collect specimens for the Kew Gardens, and ethnographic artifacts for the Cambridge Museum. From on-board the *Princess Nora* at Vancouver, and just before she travelled North, Isobel Hutchison wrote to the Secretary of the NWT requesting a license to be sent to her in care of the HBC Post at Aklavik or Herschel. She hoped to be at one of those posts by August. The letter was perfunctory considering the circumstances -- she was going anyway. Who was going to prevent her collecting specimens along the Arctic coast in wintertime?⁴² Some time in August of 1933, Diamond Jenness told a Department of the Interior official about his meeting with Isobel Hutchison and recommended the appropriate permits be issued, but pointed out that because he had not heard from the botanist since June, he believed she had not carried out her plans. No doubt he expected Dr Hutchison would wait patiently in Vancouver for the Department's permission.⁴³

The Commissioner was duly notified that license number twenty-two was to be issued to Dr Hutchison upon the recommendation of WA Collins, acting director of the National Museum of Canada. He told HE Hume that Jenness regarded Isobel Hutchison as a woman of intelligence who was collecting specimens for reputable institutions.⁴⁴ Rowatt

⁴²Isobel Hutchison to Secretary of the NWT, Vancouver, 9 June 1933. NAC, RG 85, Volume 850, 7834, Isobel Hutchison. (Hereafter RG85/Hutchison)

⁴³JF Doyle to Department of Interior, 24 August 1933. RG85/Hutchison.

⁴⁴Wyatt Malcolm to HE Hume, 28 June 1933, Ottawa. RG85/Hutchison.

signed the permit but suggested, somewhat belatedly, that Isobel Hutchison should be advised fully of the conditions in the North "so she will have an idea of what she [was] running into", operating on the false assumption that Isobel Hutchison actually cared.⁴⁵

Strict regulations were to be observed and these were outlined in Hume's letter to Dr Hutchison. Her work was to be limited to Herschel Island, and the Mackenzie River Delta. She could not collect skeletal remains, and any such specimens had to be turned over to federal officials in the region. These men were identified. Dr Hutchison was to abide by all regulations of the Scientists and Explorer's Ordinance of the NWT.⁴⁶ This Ordinance required that no person could enter the NWT for scientific or exploration purposes without first obtaining the license, and without one, the individual could be summarily ejected from the Territories. These were empty words in this case, because Isobel Hutchison was stranded on the coast near the border between Alaska and Canada for some time, probably wishing she could be ejected from the middle of nowhere with Government assistance so she could carry on with her adventure.

Isobel Hutchison's trip to Herschel Island was an eventful one. Severe ice conditions in the Beaufort Sea forced her to curtail her journey and spend almost two months on the Arctic Coast with an "Alaskan-Estonian Digger" named August Masik. She wrote "my situation was highly romantic if highly unconventional. I was a prisoner upon a solitary Arctic sandspit -- a strip of snow-covered shingle about a mile long and scarcely any part

⁴⁵Rowatt to HE Hume, Ottawa, 3 July 1933. RG85/Hutchison.

⁴⁶*An Ordinance Respecting Scientists and Explorers*, Northwest Territories, 1926. (King's Printer, Ottawa).

200 yards wide, washed on all sides by the sea (until it froze).⁴⁷ Masik provided her with a wooden bunk separated from the main part of his cabin by a curtain that formed a cubicle. "With this privacy Propriety and Mrs Grundy had to be satisfied for seven weeks," wrote Dr Hutchison in her single reference to what contemporary readers might consider the obvious question.

While Isobel Hutchison was safe and cozy in Masik's cabin, the RCMP were holding Hume's letter and permit. The Mounties wondered where she was, and by October they were concerned enough to inform "G" Division Headquarters in Edmonton they would try and determine her whereabouts. This meant two men had to travel to Herschel where they knew that one white trapper lived in a primitive state.⁴⁸ The necessary trip was doubly disturbing for Inspector Rivett-Carnac, the officer-in-charge at Aklavik. He had just been to Herschel Island, and now he had to return at a time when hazardous ice ridges were forming on the ocean. He was troubled by Dr Hutchison's possible fate, while at the same time, he was more than a little exasperated by her independence, and annoyed because he had to leave his wife in Aklavik when she was about to give birth. He later recorded he received a wireless message about a lady botanist "who evidently was not to be deterred from her purpose by any impediment,"⁴⁹ and who was unaware of the commotion she had caused.

When Isobel Hutchison showed up at Aklavik at the end of November, the RCMP

⁴⁷August Masik and Isobel Hutchison, *Arctic Nights' Entertainments: Being the Narrative of an Alaskan-Estonian Digger*, (London: Blackie & Son, 1935), x.

⁴⁸Aklavik Post to OC, "G" Division, Edmonton, 6 October 1933. RG85/Hutchison.

⁴⁹Rivett-Carnac, *Pursuit in the Wilderness*, 271.

were not as impressed by her adventure as she was, and in her published account of her journey casually noted she was informed by the Constable that she was wanted by the police and had long "been given up as a bad job."⁵⁰ The RCMP were vexed, but relieved. Dr Hutchison should have considered herself lucky they did not charge her for the expenses of their rescue attempt as was provided for in the Scientific and Exploration Ordinance. She was shown a copy of the letter which had been attached to her license, and wrote back to Ottawa with some understatement that she had some difficulty on the trip. She had decided to risk getting caught by freeze-up because she was determined to complete her task. She stayed two months in Aklavik planning the next stage of her journey which included a visit to Cambridge Bay via Coppermine. Probably to the relief of all officials concerned, the aeroplane she hired broke down, so Isobel Hutchison found herself on her way home to Scotland. Although she anticipated a return the next summer, Isobel Hutchison did not go back to the Canadian North, which saved the authorities from having to institute those provisions of the Scientific and Exploration Ordinance which allowed them to refuse permission to individuals who had abused the privileges.

Isobel Hutchison had collected ethnographic specimens in Alaska only, so they were none of Ottawa's concern. Those objects and her botany specimens, however, were of some interest in Britain. They also captured the attention of a Canadian reporter who irreverently referred to Dr Hutchison as a "Scottish geranium and petunia Hunter."⁵¹

⁵⁰Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 306.

⁵¹Gordon Sinclair, "Wife-Swapping Now Obsolete in the Arctic," *Daily Star*, Toronto, 24 February 1934.

Gordon Sinclair's article is riddled with salacious remarks, and he managed to belittle Dr Hutchison by assessing the value of the expedition in monetary terms. He told his readers that in case they had any ideas about "hunting arctic asters" as a profitable pastime, Isobel Hutchison had paid her own expenses and received no salary during the eighteen-month trip. This intimated that since she had to pay for the trip herself, and there were no sponsors, who could take her seriously?

These journalistic and sarcastic comments are significant if only because Sinclair's column had wide distribution in Canada. His comments represented Isobel Hutchison as some kind of crackpot lady gardener on an extended house and gardens tour, and while she was cavalier about planning and regulations, Isobel Hutchison was a serious botanist and that aspect of her work did not merit insults. One paragraph noted how Isobel Hutchison was "the only woman for the well known miles and miles and miles," and he posited "that's where a woman prowler gets the big edge." The edge on what, was only indicated when Sinclair finished by explaining he had been in far-flung places too, but he had "yet to see the place where I'm the only man. That might be fun."⁵²

The British Press were kinder to Isobel Hutchison, leaving lewd remarks to the colonial newspapers. Impressed by the botanical specimens she had sent home, and intrigued by the trip she had made, the papers offered praise, and noted the staunch heart and dogged determination⁵³ attributed to her by the pilot who flew Isobel Hutchison out of the North. There was no mention of her stay with August Masik.

⁵²*Ibid.* Obviously he meant if there were women there too.

⁵³"Woman's 1,000 Miles in Arctic," *Daily Mail*, London, 8 March 1934.

There is some evidence from these three accounts that men felt they had some special aptitude which allowed them to measure the capabilities and competence of women, and which influenced their decisions. That should not come as any surprise. There was almost a universal assumption that women could not endure the inconveniences of Arctic travel, the loneliness of isolation from other white women, and the complications of the climate, despite the living examples already in the North to dispute the view. Their conception of what women were able to physically withstand based upon their male prejudices and misunderstandings of what inconveniences a woman had to put up with also affected their judgement. Overall, men in the Arctic assumed women as weaker, especially when it involved travel. They had a myopic view about how women could survive the Arctic with the same regularity as men. Why they did not learn from the examples around them is a mystery, as if the continued impression of women as delicate, and men as robust allowed them the delusion of superiority even when it was proven inaccurate.⁵⁴

What men actually thought about what women could do, however, is relatively unimportant. What is significant here is what happened when the men were challenged.

⁵⁴Anna Rokeby-Thomas remembered how conscious she was that her husband had taken no long trips during her first winter in the Arctic. She wanted to go with him, but could get no support for her plans. "You're a woman was the reasoning," she explained. (Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Darkness, 18.) Her first long sled trip to Bathurst Inlet from Cambridge Bay had involved some controversy. She was travelling Native-style, and "the police didn't like it. The Eskimos gave her silent and dubious looks." (Rokeby-Thomas, "On an Arctic Trail," *North*, 22(4), 1975, 26) Wallace Manning recalled how on general principles, no one wanted her to go North either. "No white woman had ever gone to the Arctic to live away from the Posts; it was madness to keep up with the travels and share the hard life of a man who had asked me to go," *they* told her, "so they made excuses. Mr Manning had not been heard of for a long time, and they didn't know where he had gone." (Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 12.)

There was an informal Northern Compact among the men who had braved the wastes, or at least had done so in a cerebral sense from their desks in Ottawa and Winnipeg. Women entering the region, found the administration of the North involved a series of personal empires which could expand to manage on a broader scale, or contract to defend one another's interests. While the elasticity of officialdom had its merits when budgets were tight, employees were spread thinly, and communications were stretched, individuals often got caught when the tension was allowed to relax.

Since most of the men who have written about their life and experience in the NWT shared the same community, the projected view has never questioned the "old boys network" like women can -- as outsiders. The men's assessments rarely made use of records concerning women, because to them, women were of no concern. How men saw women was unimportant to their overview, and as women were never considered important enough for membership in the "Wide World Club," it should come as no surprise they were not invited to be associates of the "Northern Club" either. It may be that Kathleen Shackleton, Marilyn Grange and Isobel Hutchison represented a new breed of women who were about to start up their own branch membership, or it may simply have been a sign of the times that they received the press coverage which made it seem so. Nevertheless, they transgressed the frontiers of their own professions as well as those of the North and northern administrations.

Chapter Five

Standing in the Gap: Anglican Women and the Northern Mission

As elsewhere in the Empire, the Christian missionary in the North has been burdened with much of the blame for the wrong-doings inflicted by imperialist and colonialist activity because they were the most persistent of all purveyors of imperialism whose purpose meant they deliberately placed themselves in close relation to the indigenous population. There was nothing subtle about the missionary message. Missionaries were agents of change if only because of their calling, but they were also children of their time. That time, suggests one analyst, was one of high empire, and they believed, almost without dissent, in the essential "beneficence of the empire."¹ Included in the generosity was the idea that aboriginal peoples could only survive contact by adopting Christianity and its concepts, which became a fundamental postulate of Protestant missionaries.² The missionary's concern with religious beliefs and the saving of souls, however, intruded into the very roots of Native heritage and culture.

Missionary efforts were paternalistic in nature, although they have viewed their work as humanitarian. But the imposition of ideas like sin, thrift, and work, tied closely to the

¹Andrew F Wallis, "British Missions," in *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era*, Toben Christensen and William R Hutchison, Eds, (Aarhus, Denmark: Forlaget Aros, 1982) 164.

²John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 107.

Christian ideal and its European views, and coupled with attempts to teach the English language, and the introduction of European healing practices, promised a kind of dominion over the Inuit and Dene which exceeded any which may have been established by settlement or government regulation. This influence raises fundamental questions about the moral validity of social change induced by external forces, and the relationship of imperialism to what are essentially humanitarian efforts,³ and caution should be exercised by any historian so that she does not commit a parallel transgression when considering the North.

The first goal of both Anglican and RC missionaries in the region was spiritual conversion. Social change was only a by-product of that mission and it was initially effected through humanitarian efforts. It is perhaps unfortunate that academics appear compelled to submit those humanitarian efforts to some kind of judgemental enquiry which is in itself fraught with bias and prejudice of some kind, but that view at least offers some foil against the hagiographic accounts which constitute the literature about northern missionaries. These stories are part of the masculine history of the North so they are doubly damned, although in fairness it should be pointed out that many male missionaries at least noted the presence of women, or remarked on the difficulties women encountered.⁴

These narratives about heroic northern missionaries represent just one of the

³Margaret Strobel, *European Women*, 50.

⁴For example, TCB Boon, *The Anglican Church From the Bay to the Rockies*, (Toronto: Ryerson, 1962), Craven and Webster, *Arctic Adventure*, and numerous works cited in the bibliography by the Venerable Archibald Fleming are but a few examples.

historiographical trends⁵ which offer tempting models for analysis of the Anglican female missionary in the Canadian North. Another framework is offered by feminist history which struggles with those questions concerning patriarchy and imperialism. The Christian mission presents only one area of interest in the feminist history. Most recently, Chilla Bulbeck's *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea* discusses the role of Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries in the region through the use of oral histories. Bulbeck's account is mainly narrative, but in an earlier article, she argues that while missionary wives were expected to be helpmeets, it is anachronistic to assume they simply represented a female aspect of male-dominated colonialism. This was because a closer examination of their work shows the women's role in the mission was more personal and direct, particularly in relation to women and families, and because studies about women tend to deflect focus on policy and policy-makers.⁶

Susan Bailey takes Bulbeck's conclusion further. She believes missionary women were more adept at dealing with Native culture than other white women because they sought contact as part of their purpose, essentially breaking down barriers rather than working to maintain them. Bailey also provides a focus on the women themselves, rather than their mission. She suggests, however, that their personal problems had to be subordinate to God's work, yet the evidence for the northern experience indicates how

⁵It is not the intention here to offer debate of the historiography about missionaries, only to suggest some of the questions raised by SOME of the material. This chapter is about the female Anglican missionaries in the North, and their experiences. The bibliography suggests just some of the primary and secondary material available on this theme.

⁶Bulbeck, "New Histories of the Memsahib," 90.

difficult that was to do because one was so intricately bound up with the other. Bailey's study is valuable for its genuine attempt to consider the Empire as a whole, and it makes Bailey's work unique because Canada and the other "white Dominions" are considered.⁷

The feminist framework still makes a scapegoat of the missionary because of her goals. Analysts cling to the attitude that missionaries were irrevocably tied to the concepts of racial superiority, which assumed their destiny to rule the subject races. No matter how humanitarian and personal the white woman's contact, feminists maintain she was still a representative of the ruling elite and hence must share some of the blame for colonial injustices.⁸ These arguments rightly introduce the elements of racism and power within their gender analysis, but they argue the female missionary cannot escape the fact she was an instrument of imperialist forces despite her intentions. Feminist historians of Empire are acutely aware that there were women within the subjected groups, and what complicates the feminist analysis is the knowledge that Indigenous women were sexually exploited by white men while they were being subjected to the sincerity of white women.

Feminist works offer useful questions for this present enquiry, and for the questions they raise about women's role in the Christian mission, although like this one, most studies tend to focus on a particular region or situation, so the basis for comparison and conclusion is often shaky. The location is a substantial determinant in the analysis; Fiji

⁷Susan Bailey, *Women and the British Empire: An Annotated Guide to Sources*, (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1983).

⁸See, for example, Janice Brownfoot, "Memsahibs in Colonial Malaya: A Study of European Wives in a British Colony and Protectorate," in Callan and Ardener, Eds, *The Incorporated Wife*, 190.

and Bombay bear no relation or comparison to Herschel Island or Pangnirtung. Studies about missionaries in the Empire which specifically address the issue of missionaries and imperialism are extensive, but they are of limited use for comparative purposes if their emphasis is more exotic places and the earlier spread of imperialism, military expansion, and the ensuing institutional and societal entrenchment.⁹ They are based on the assumption that dominion was physically, economically, and socially effective.

Brian Stanley's *The Bible and the Flag* is useful here. It is centred on the structures of colonial rule and how Christian missions fit into those structures. He notes the idea of western imperial expansion and Christian mission going hand in hand has become one of those "unquestioned orthodoxies of general historical knowledge." He suggests the concept has some basis in fact, but what is really needed is a more informed historical understanding of the issues involved which are not bound up in the tenets of a post-colonial consciousness. Perhaps the most significant of Stanley statements, however, is his comment that

readers who do not themselves possess a strong religious commitment are likely to find alien and unattractive the confidence in their own rectitude displayed by most of the missionaries who will be discussed,¹⁰

which accounts for the negative aspects of some analysis. Any apprehension about the missionary mind by someone unable to cope with intense religious faith might also interpret women's mission in the North as feminine religious zeal manipulated by male-

⁹One notable exception is Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*. Grant's chapter on the "Race to the Northern Sea," is particularly useful for background, but is not very specific.

¹⁰Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag*, Introduction.

dominated Church hierarchies.

Studies which deal particularly with the North and make specific references to missionaries in the region like *Best Left As Indians* by Ken Coates, or Kerry Abel's "Of Two Minds: Dene Response to the Mackenzie Missions," and the her recent *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*,¹¹ offer some useful regional focus for broader issues which includes missionary involvement. *Best Left as Indians* is a study in Native-white relations, and is a recounting of what Coates labels as non-Native response to the Indigenous people of the Yukon. Abel's work presents the reverse view, but neither study reveals much about the women missionaries in the region or about their lives. This is understandable in Abel's case because that was not what she had in mind, but it is a failing of the historiography in general when the concentration is on understanding the policy of the CMS and the MSCC rather than the people who attempted to execute those policies.¹²

The policies of the Church of England in Canada and its missionary societies in the North have some import for this present study because of the assertion here that the women's own agency, and the environment in which they lived acted as a balance against the policies of one of the most patriarchal of Churches. This does not mean faith was an unimportant factor in their lives, or their practise of religion was insignificant, only that

¹¹Kerry Abel, *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993).

¹²One of the most annoying errors in *Best Left as Indians* is the persistent referral to the MSCC as the Missionary Society of the Church of Canada, and to avoid any confusion, Coates is speaking about the same organization, despite the error. According to the Society's own letterhead, it is the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada.

the structures of their Church had less of an impact than might be at first expected. To illustrate that view requires that the details of the experience itself must be addressed. The simple truth was that rules were broken and decisions were made because the situation often required that advice be ignored, conditions were less than perfect, and communication lines were extended. The environment set the tone for this mission field just like any other.

Wives of Anglican clergy had been in the North since 1862, although it appears the earliest were local women of mixed-blood or Native heritage.¹³ By 1876, Selina Bompas had arrived at Fort Simpson with her husband the Bishop of Athabasca, and joined the Reverend and Mrs WD Reeve who opened an Indian Residential School at Fort Rae the same year. Reeve had been at Simpson since 1865; Bompas had been in the North since 1872. Augusta Morris and Rose (Gadsby) Spendlove arrived at Fort Norman in 1881. Miss Gadsby married a clergyman, but Miss Morris acted as secretary and companion to Mrs Bompas at the mission at Fort Simpson.¹⁴

By the time Sadie Stringer arrived as a new bride to Peel River and Herschel Island in 1896, there was some precedent for accompanying wives as well as single women. Teachers began to arrive at

¹³These included Julia McDonald, wife of then Archdeacon McDonald who were married at Fort McPherson in 1877. He had been in the North since 1862.

¹⁴Most of this information is gleaned from three sources. The most comprehensive is Chapter ten of Boon, *The Anglican Church from the Bay to the Rockies*, "The Farther Northwest, Athabasca, Mackenzie River, Yukon," "Memoranda to the Mission to the Mackenzie River Eskimo," Typescript, ACC, DOA, NWT A N90-501, and Ven AL Fleming, *Brief History of Missions to the Canadian Eskimo*, (Toronto: MSCC, 1929). Augusta Morris's diary is held at the HBCA, PAM, Typescript, E78(4M72). Her name appears nowhere in the published sources used here.

the Indian Residential school at Hay River by 1890. The first residential school for Inuit children was established at Shingle Point in 1928, and the hospital and school at Aklavik were built in 1926. The mission hospital at Pangnirtung was built in 1930. Single female missionaries were employed at the schools and hospitals. More often the wives of missionaries were at smaller local missions such as Bernard Harbour, Coppermine, Fort Resolution and Herschel Island.¹⁵

Married women were in the North in the first place because the clergymen who were there saw the value in having a wife beside them. William Bompas preferred married men, or men engaged to be married and whose wives would accompany them North. He claimed married men would be more reliable and settled,¹⁶ which was one way of saying the CMS wanted its missionaries to preach the Gospel with diligence and fervour without any distractions.¹⁷ Wives were a real necessity at lonely stations wrote William Spendlove to his superiors in London.¹⁸ Charles Whittaker felt so in need of a wife that when his fiance in Toronto died, he proposed to Emma Harvey whom he had met as a travelling companion two years previously. Whittaker wrote that the Bishop had intimated

¹⁵This is not intended as even a brief history of Anglican missions in the region, but simply an introduction for some context. The three sources cited are among the best for information, as is Richard Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, (MacMillan: New York, 1942) which offers a general history of all missions up to the Second World War. See also Grant, *Moon of Wintertime*.

¹⁶Kenneth Coates, "Send Only Those Who Rise a Peg: Anglican Clergy in the Yukon, 1858-1932," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXVII (1), April 1986..

¹⁷See Frank Peake, "From the Red River to the Arctic," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXXI (2), October 1989, 46.

¹⁸Quoted in PA Thomas, "Kindly Dispatch Miss Gadsby," 10.

to him he liked his missionaries to be married because they were more likely to remain in the field. Miss Harvey was already in service at Fort Chipewyan, and after their marriage, Whittaker described her as "an immaculate housekeeper, an excellent cook, and a congenial companion, a very great pleasure indeed."¹⁹

A cynic might suggest what the men really needed was women to look after them and to share their beds, or that if the Church of England encouraged their missionaries to have wives already, it might have been because there was an unwritten rule against miscegenation. As might be expected, none of the men were candid enough to confirm those assumptions, but having wives with them at the missions was more complicated than any single reason, and it was a combination of factors which generated the enthusiasm for accompanying wives which included wives who were more than inclined to make the trip. William Fry wrote of his wife Christina as a "great help to me in the work." She was "a good wife and a true missionary. There are some things that only a woman can do," he wrote, and "when our people need help she realizes their need long before I do and has been of great service where I should have failed utterly."²⁰ Women were socialized to be sensitive and nurturing, but this does not mean men could not share those qualities, so whether there were things only a woman could do in the missionary field is open to debate. What is important is the men professed there was, and more important still was their recognition that the task required more than they as individuals

¹⁹The Reverend Charles Edward Whittaker. Typescript. Autobiographical Account. GMA, M5960.

²⁰William Fry to Isaac Stringer, 10 December 1916. YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 251, File 16, Herschel Island.

could manage.

That does not mean the same sensibilities about marriage applied to single women already in the field. Unlike Emma Harvey Whittaker, Gladys Fosterjohn's efforts to marry a lay worker at Hay River met with less than enthusiastic response from Bishop Lucas. Miss Fosterjohn was employed as Matron at St Peter's Mission when she wrote to Lucas in November of 1921 of her plans. She had every intention of fulfilling her contract, and told the Bishop she was not even going to inform the WA who had sponsored her employment, leaving that role to the Bishop and his personal discretion. His only advice was that she and her fiance Mr Grant "realize the importance of absolutely discreet behaviour around the Mission." He cautioned the "lynx eyed children will detect the least sign of 'courting' and they will not be slow to comment upon what they see, 'with sundry additions'".²¹

Gladys Fosterjohn wrote back to explain how she fully realized "the need of being very cautious," for the children were, "quick to notice" but she added

I am here to represent as far as lies in my power, my Master to these children. I will always endeavour to behave seemly before them and not be a stumbling block to one of the least of Christ's brethren.²²

These intentions, however, were based upon her assumption that she and her fiance would not marry until her contract had been completed, so when they decided to get married later in the year, Bishop Lucas determined her decision would "cause trouble with the WA." He was surprised at the light-hearted way in which she looked forward to

²¹Lucas to Fosterjohn, 31 January 1922. PAA, ACC, DOMR, 70.387/MR200/52.

²²Fosterjohn to Lucas, 23 February 1922, *Ibid.*

marriage, and the continuance of her work as before, but it is difficult to determine from his punctuation whether he thought the two were incompatible, or if he was just being conservative. He noted she had conferred with her mother who had advised the marriage, but noted "surely she cannot be aware of the conditions around you."²³

Only conjecture can explain why Gladys Fosterjohn's impending nuptials were not expedited with the same dispatch as the Whittaker's. Her fiance Mr Grant, was not a clergyman, he was single, and not working at an isolated location, for by this time, St Peter's mission was fairly large and well organized. But Emma Harvey ceased to be a mission worker when she became the missionary's wife and did not insist on maintaining her paid position. Mr Grant has journeyed North at the same time as Miss Fosterjohn, and unlike Charles Whittaker was not a veteran of some standing. Gladys Fosterjohn's file is the only one extant which deals with the issue of single women missionaries marrying while in the field, although she certainly was not unique, and the problem may have simply been her unwillingness to be patient. Of necessity, the MSCC had to make plans well in advance for their northern missions, and any threat to those plans upset the general order. Field staff were difficult to recruit and replace.

In 1904, the first head of the MSCC declared that "owing to the great lack of men for the ministry and the unlimited field for workers in the territories and western provinces, it is necessary that trained, efficient, God-fearing women should stand in the

²³Lucas to Fosterjohn, 5 December 1922, *Ibid.*

gap."²⁴ There were already single women at Hay River and Fort Simpson when this decision was made, and the directive did not mean the North was overrun by female Anglican missionaries after 1904. What came from that realization was a more concerted effort to recruit women for the North who were trained in Anglican theology as well as being teachers and nurses.

A recruiting pamphlet produced by the WA of the MSCC was quite specific about what the Church was looking for.²⁵ They needed nurses -- well trained, devoted Christian nurses for residential schools and hospitals. Each school had to have at least one qualified teacher until a change in government regulations in the 1920s required all teachers had to be certified. Matrons (housekeepers) to be in charge of girls, boys, and kitchens, were always in demand. For the work as Matron, the qualifications included a knowledge of sewing, plain cooking, laundry work, love of children and some skill at managing them. The recruitment booklet offered some incentive to the missionary who put up with this drudgery: "she has endless opportunities in her association with [the children] to show what is true, Christian, everyday living." Everyone, regardless of occupation, however, was required to have

an ability to find one's pleasure and social recreation among the few which one may be associated, and varying gifts of personality, executive ability, common sense, cheerfulness and the ability to make friends rapidly and to get on with

²⁴Quoted in Grace Hallenby, *Anglican Women's Training College, A Background Document*, (Toronto: Centre for Christian Studies, 1989), 69.

²⁵*Enlisting for Service: Information for Prospective Candidates*, Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society for the Church of England in Canada, n.p., n.d., PAA, DOMR, MR200/123/ Box MR12.

people of varying temperaments.²⁶

These were not the most demanding of qualifications to meet, but in the North they were often the most challenging to maintain.

Addie Butler, whose candid letters often spoke about spats between the women she worked with, and included grumps about the male Principals, had cause to reflect on how hard it was to be a model missionary in a northern community. "I don't want to be [a model missionary] if some folks are here," she wrote, adding "if they go to heaven, I don't want to go there, and I am sure the children don't either." She had some zeal when she arrived, she noted, but at the point in the winter when everyone was getting on each other's nerves, her enthusiasm had vanished.²⁷

There was never the prospect of seeing different people socially at small missions like Shingle Point, a situation which just served to magnify the foibles and imperfect character traits of some in those close quarters, but it is perhaps most significant that missionary women committed such un-Christian thoughts to paper. Writing it out provided some catharsis, and perhaps as the boat sailed away carrying a year's reflections on fellow workers, part of the frustration travelled with it through the ice flows.

Complaints about individuals and grievances arising from personality conflicts often arose because of a mission pecking order which included only one person at each step of the employment ladder. These circumstances allowed just about everyone to be in a position overseeing someone else and for most of the year, there was no escape from

²⁶*Ibid.*, 12.

²⁷Butler letters, January 1934.

petty tyrants. Susan (Bessie) Quirt commented on how frustrating it was to work with the Deaconess at Shingle Point, for example. Miss Shepherd "is indeed most aggravating and drives us to despair," she recorded in her diary. We included Flossie Hirst, who would later be assigned at Pangnirtung, and Miss Quirt noted the two of them got "so peeved, for it seems to us that we get no thought or consideration whatever." Those in charge "have no idea of overcoming difficulties -- they just let the difficulties do the overcoming."²⁸ Bessie Quirt and Addie Butler were complaining about the same individual whose brother was the resident Principal and Anglican priest. It seems the problem was that Miss Shepherd was "very conscious of her superior intellectuality" and had "a busy time pointing out the obvious things that anyone without a degree can see." Mrs Butler added that she felt her own powers of concentration were quite as good, but she gave "other people credit for having a few brains."²⁹

In a published address, Helen Sowden described the two special qualifications she felt were needed for service in the Northern mission. Loyalty and adaptability were needed for harmonious well-being she announced³⁰ not without some irony. Only four years earlier at the hospital at Aklavik where Miss Sowden was employed as Matron, the missionary in charge wrote to the Bishop about his staff who were not working together the way they should. An exasperated William Geddes remarked how he expected difficulties to arise, but to his annoyance they kept arising over the merest of petty

²⁸Susan Elizabeth Quirt, Personal Diary, 1929-1932. GSA, DOA, M71-4, p 11 and 12.

²⁹Butler letters, 8 January 1933.

³⁰Helen Sowden, *Living Message*, April 1931.

details. He wrote

One very often can find Miss Catt in the nurses's sitting room at one end of the building and Miss Hackett in a room at the far end of the building. They have divided the building between them and certain things are the property of one that the other may not touch. Miss Catt has her stove that she looks after as well as her own wood box which Miss Hackett must not touch and vice versa.³¹

Geddes decided the problem was due to Miss Hackett's inexperience. As she was a graduate nurse, Miss Hackett was put in charge of two older women, one of whom was a veteran missionary. He thought if Miss Hackett could exchange places with a nurse at Hay River, the problem might be solved. He signed off by apologizing for the added burden of his problem, but did not see any prospect of the two women ever getting along together. The isolation of the northern missions meant situations like this one at Aklavik impeded progress and development through training and experience. Now, the MSCC recruiting pamphlet stated the Society's goal was for potential missionaries, not perfected ones, so that may be why they ignored the appeal, which required a frustrated Geddes to write again to the Bishop. He doubted the hospital would ever be able to do the work intended as long as Miss Hackett was the nurse-in-charge.³²

Occasionally a quite open conflict of some proportion could develop between staff as a result of the isolation and the structure of the mission communities. One recalcitrant missionary could distress the entire mission. This can be illustrated by the case of Miss Donnelly (Christian name unknown) who was the nurse at Hay River in 1923. Some

³¹Geddes to Stringer, Aklavik, 7 January 1927. YTA. ACC, DOY, COR 251, File 22.

³²Geddes to Stringer, Aklavik, 6 February 1928. *Ibid.*

correspondence has survived which indicates Miss Donnelly upset the staff at St Peter's over a number of issues, and the administration was not at all sure how to deal with the whole situation. There is a sense from the letters written between the Principal, the Reverend WAB Stoddart, and the Bishop at Fort Chipewyan,³³ that the men were unable to deal with Miss Donnelly's behaviour, and concluded she could only "possibly do such a thing so insistently unless she were out of her mind," which sounds more like a smoke screen than it does an assessment based upon fact. More importantly, perhaps, was the notation that this was "a serious matter and altogether subversive to discipline,"³⁴ and of course, keeping the troops in line was one way to stop them baiting each other.

The letters and the subsequent report are full of allegations which would be damaging to individuals, and revealing their contents would serve no purpose, but generally the controversy was over what can best be described as a whispering campaign which had the staff "in a state of excitement" and which followed a number of spiteful incidents. For example, the nurse had removed a child from the playground without the matron's permission. The Principal reported she had "coolly told [him] she did so for no other purpose than to annoy," the Matron. Miss Donnelly had also committed the sin of "unburdening herself" to everyone who would listen, which meant the situation was beyond any form of damage control. Whatever her misdeeds at the mission itself, however, Miss Donnelly was doomed to exile because she danced "in attendance at every boat that came," and

³³PAA, DOMR, 70.387/MR200/75. 1922 and 1923.

³⁴Lucas to Stoddart, 6 September 1923. *Ibid.*

her profuse and evident admiration for men was certainly uncalled for, and unwise (sic). Her conduct one evening when we were entertaining some officers of the *Liard River* was certainly uncalled for and savoured more of the fast and loose set of a large city than of an institution caring for the moral and spiritual welfare of the children.³⁵

There were a number of other offenses which annoyed the staff generally. Miss Donnelly apparently walked around the kitchen while scantily clad (no further description) and used water already boiled for breakfast for her personal tea. There were even a number of minor physical assaults which might indicate the woman was a trifle unhinged, but what she was eventually chastised for was her unsuitability as a missionary, which possibly under the circumstances was warranted.

The Principal was concerned because there was some "imputation" that Miss Donnelly was a Roman Catholic. When visiting the RC mission ostensibly for medicines, she was seen at the Presbytery. She had secured rosary beads from the RC mission, and had been indiscreet enough to offer them to the Anglican mission staff. "Considerable comment had been made among the Roman Catholic of the village as to whether Miss Donnelly was working for the Anglican mission or the Roman Catholic, and had she remained, it was likely to lead to some difficulty."³⁶ For missionaries in the North, to present such difficulties was a grievous act.

The Anglican hierarchy was concerned about the effect of Miss Donnelly's behaviour on the historical rivalry between the Anglican and RC missions. The Natives were confused enough by the competition between the two faiths, causing one contemporary

³⁵Stoddart to Lucas, 4 January, 1924. *Ibid.*

³⁶*Ibid.*

observer to describe the enmity as "a savage game in which the Natives [were] bewildered pawns."³⁷ It was a matter of power, prestige, and money, as well as the evangelical beliefs of CMS and MSCC missionaries whose opposition to the Roman Church was firmly entrenched.³⁸ The more pupils in the schools and patients in the hospitals, the more cash that came from the government, but there was a tally kept too. The more Natives converted and baptised, the more points won, although who was keeping score besides the missionary societies themselves is a mystery. It was a game where church *men* had set out the playing field, but the women were part of the team, and they make continual references to the competition, although there were some notable twists. It cannot be discounted that this rivalry was used by the CMS and MSCC men on the scene to boost morale and generate excitement among women missionaries, much like some present day cults motivate their followers. This would have capitalized on the contemporary understanding about religion as a legitimate activity for women within the accepted norms of feminine behaviour.³⁹

Since there are no definitive records it is not possible to categorically list which Natives belonged to which religious faith,⁴⁰ but generally it can be assumed the Dene

³⁷Finnie, *Canada Moves North*, 57.

³⁸See Peake, "From Red River to the Arctic: Policy and Personnel," 51.

³⁹See Christopher Headon, "Women and Organized Religion in Mid-Nineteenth Century Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XX (1-2), March-June, 1978, 3-18.

⁴⁰Although it should be pointed out that there have been a number of attempts. Bishop Donald Marsh continually quoted census statistics which were unreliable to insist the Anglicans had 82% of the Inuits in the flock. (*Arctic News*)

in the Mackenzie Valley were under the nominal control of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. The Oblate Fathers were assisted by the Grey Nuns who acted as nurses and teachers. The Church of England served some Native families at small missions in the area, but the Anglican influence was most evident among the Inuit of the Arctic coast. This does not mean each side did not endeavour to try and change the denominational loyalties of the Natives. In fact, the result of the contest for souls was a duplication of services offered in almost all settlements of some size, and this is the context in which the women's remarks should be placed.

Miss Tims wrote from Hay River in 1898 about how two Dene came to the mission of their own accord, and asked the missionaries to look after their children. "It shows their growing confidence in us, as they are professedly Roman Catholic," she decided. She was also elated by the prospect of Mrs Nagle staying at St Peter's over the winter while her husband went to Edmonton. The Nagles were Roman Catholics, and Miss Tims believed it would make some difference, to the mission work, and would allow the mission to make inroads into the RC community, which was, she declared "our great enemy."⁴¹

Bessie Quirt convinced herself the Natives at Arctic Red River were "so friendly and happy looking," because they were "all Protestant here, and one cannot but help noticing the difference in their faces."⁴² Mrs Jane Clarke informed the *Letter Leaflet* that while the Roman Catholics "have most of the Indians," at Fort Norman, "those who belong to

⁴¹*Letter Leaflet*, May 1898.

⁴²Quirt, Personal Diary, GSA, DOA.

us are very loyal and attend worship very regularly."⁴³ And Mrs Harcourt reminded the loyal mission followers in the South about school work at Aklavik which "crowded out other important duties," referring to mission work, but she added "that in view of the keen opposition from the very efficient RC school in Aklavik, that at all costs our school had to maintained." Mrs Harcourt seemed aware that any nominal Anglicans who sent their children to RC schools would be considered as having changed their allegiance.

Mrs Harcourt made clear her views about "the RC aggression in the Mackenzie Delta," but it was a final statement which provides a clue to the real purpose of her appeal.

They are making so determined an effort to take the Eskimo away from our Church and they seem to possess an unlimited supply of money and workers to further their ends, while we are so pitifully handicapped for the lack of both.⁴⁴

The missionary mind, fired by the intense desire to reform, and the rancour generated by denominational loyalties explains some of the sense of quiet desperation behind these appeals. Without funds, the mission could not withstand the competition, but there is something else going on here as well. For the Anglican women in the region, the most visible competition operating at their level was from the Grey Nuns who lived in community, and whose vocation and lifestyles represented the antithesis of the evangelical tradition of which most of the Anglicans were a part. Female Church of England missionaries were not just competing with Roman Catholic ideology, but with other women who shared the advantages of gender for the approach to prospective female

⁴³*Letter Leaflet*, July 1922.

⁴⁴*Living Message*, June 1929.

converts. In other words, some of them were jealous, partly because they saw the sisters as having the benefits of support from a strong Mother Church obsessed with the desire to save heathen souls. The women were probably not aware of that manifestation, and likely would have dismissed any such charge.

If the Anglican women were disheartened by a phalanx wearing grey habits epitomizing fortitude, it is difficult to tell, because the sisters are so seldom mentioned in the primary documents which were surveyed. In fact, the absence of the Grey Nuns from the chatty letters and diaries of the Anglican missionaries is notable; Anglican women missionaries rarely mention the Grey Nuns even though the order had been in the region in some numbers since 1867. Remembering that communication between the two groups was hampered because of language provides some explanation. The Nuns were, for the most part, francophone; the Anglicans were, of course, anglophone. The condition itself provides a unique Canadian twist because it implies some social order as well -- at least it would have to the British and English Canadian missionaries, for Church affiliations in Canada often defined social definitions.⁴⁵

The silence would be less significant if it were not for the fact that other women who were not missionaries *do* mention the Grey Nuns. Indeed, Dr Hutchison, Luta Munday, Agnes Cameron, Clara Vyvyan, Emma Colcleugh and even Ann Lindbergh have something to say about the brave sisters, while the Anglican missionary women remain mum. Dr Isobel Greenwood was one exception. She visited the RC school at Fort Smith while *en route* North. Her visit provided one of the few observations from an Anglican

⁴⁵See Headon, "Women in Organized Religion."

missionary woman, and may contribute some understanding about why there was such a chasm between the two groups of women. The sisters were most kind and Dr Greenwood commended the nuns for their devotion and a very real interest in their work. She added "I feel we could learn something from them on the score of making the most of one's opportunities, and the least of one's difficulties."⁴⁶

Anglican women were more often in a position to complain than the sisters whose vocation required some degree of devotion, obedience and sacrifice, and there is evidence some of these women effectively pressured the prevailing bureaucracies to make changes at Northern missions. This was probably more a measure of the social class of Anglican women, however, than it was their level of compliance with missionary doctrine. For example, in 1926, Bishop Westgate at the MSCC in Winnipeg wrote to Canon Vale at St Peter's Mission. He had received a letter from the Kitchen Matron about a Native employee who was creating difficulties. Miss Howie, in charge of the kitchen, had complained to Canon Vale but had received no satisfaction, so she took the opportunity to direct the problem to Westgate. "I do not know the girl" involved, wrote Westgate, but admonished Vale to do something about the situation because he knew "Miss Howie very well and [was] satisfied that the conduct of Lucy must have been well-nigh unbearable otherwise it would not have been reported."⁴⁷ Miss Howie apparently knew Westgate well enough to send her complaints over the head of the Principal. There is no

⁴⁶*Living Message*, September 1935.

⁴⁷Westgate to Vale, 8 May 1926, GSA, DOA, St Peter's, Hay River, Correspondence, M71-4, Series 2-1-d, Box 7.

indication how Canon Vale interpreted that action.

Single women were required to have the knowledge and training more likely available to a middle class woman, or at least one of genteel background. Married women were expected to have similar skills. Whichever the case, these were likely women who were used to some level of initiative based on privilege, which presents an interesting question. Ken Coates has argued that William Bompas had a view about recruits for his northern Diocese, and was concerned about the social background of his missionaries, insisting that "gentlefolks" had to "come down a peg in their position which [was] most painful to themselves and those about them. Those of an inferior grade...generally rise a peg which is most pleasant to themselves and their neighbours."⁴⁸ Bompas indicated this attitude pertained to both men and women. Coates posits the clergymen and lay missionaries hired for the North were less than first class candidates. There is no indication that this holds true for the women, in fact the reverse is more probable.

In 1906, Isaac Stringer had occasion to write to William Bompas about bringing women workers into the North. Bompas had suggested he engage what Stringer described as a "lady helper as teacher or Matron, or something else. I am rather perplexed as to what to do about women workers," Stringer replied. His confusion was partly because Bompas vacillated about bringing women into the North, although he would have been happy with a "treasure." Stringer countered how it was hard to get "a real treasure," and

⁴⁸Bompas to Secretaries CMS, 3 January 1895. Quoted in Coates, "Send Only Those Who Rise a Peg," 7.

added "I do not find them without much searching."⁴⁹

There are records which indicate what might constitute a treasure, and how these women were found will be explained by the recruiting process which eventually developed, but first it might prove beneficial to entertain the opinion of one Arctic veteran. "Who are those who should not venture upon life in the Far North," asked Selina Bompas who knew what the wife of an Anglican clergymen could expect. Her advice was extended to women, but could apply to any Northern missionary. She wrote:

The nervous and hysterical should not do so; there are too many surprises in the North, too many startling incidents and unlooked for events for any who have not acquired the art of self-control and absolute composure under trial of provocation. Those who have been subject to rheumatism should not come, nor should the very delicate or the consumptive come. Those who suffer from weak eyes should not come for the glare of sunshine on our vast fields of snow is apt to produce snow blindness. These are few of the physical causes which should make one hesitate.⁵⁰

Mrs Bompas added a postscript to her advice which was probably more important than any other. A missionary should "start with a fair prospect of clinging to the life [she] has chosen, and not of coming back at the end of a year or so, having discovered a little too late [she] had made a mistake." The vague reference to a year or so carries a subtle message. You had to stay there for at least a year. Winter made it almost impossible to serve a shorter term.

There is little concrete evidence about employment contracts for the earliest period when the CMS was in charge of Anglican missions in the North. Information about how

⁴⁹Isaac Stringer to William Bompas, 3 April 1906, Isaac Stringer Papers, YTA, Series 1-A-1.

⁵⁰Bompas, "Our Women in the North," 8.

long women were expected to stay is available for women engaged with the MSCC, and generally, the MSCC correspondence provides some insight into conditions under which women were employed by the Society. In reply to a request about employment conditions in 1938, Bishop Fleming noted women were required to serve not less than four years and not more than five; six years was inadvisable.⁵¹ It appears this rule was fairly rigid. Fleming had written in the *Arctic News* in 1931 that Prudence Hockin had requested a fifth year at Pangnirtung instead of coming out for a mandatory furlough. Fleming sought the approval of the nurse's mother before he allowed her the extra year. When she applied for a sixth year, Fleming refused. He felt five years was the limit that a healthy person should remain in the Arctic during one term.⁵²

Five years may have been considered a long time, but as early as 1921, JR Lucas reminded one correspondent that Mrs Reeve had stayed thirty years, Mrs Spendlove twenty, Mrs Whittaker twenty-three, and Mrs Lucas twenty-eight, under "conditions which were far worse than those which exist today." Bishop Lucas was remembering married women who had husbands, if not families, to provide moral support for their service, so it was a little unfair of him to conclude "that the younger, present generation of men and women lack something of the true missionary spirit which actuated the older workers in the Far North -- sacrifice makes no appeal to the newer, it seems like

⁵¹Fleming to Westgate, 31 March 1938. GSA, ACC, DOA, AL Fleming Papers, Indian and Eskimo Residential School Commission, M70-1, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 17.

⁵²AL Fleming, "Nearest the North Pole," *Arctic News*, 1931, 14.

foolishness to them."⁵³ This comment suggests that because it was easier to move In or Out of the Arctic by this time, "newer" missionaries were able to take advantage.

Naturally, wives of missionaries were unpaid, even if they performed professional duties as nurses and teachers, but single women were *employed*. The range of salaries for single women was wide, depending on the service and of course, the date. In 1913, Miss Leroy and Miss Page at Hay River were paid a quarterly sum of \$57.00. \$5.50 was deducted for superannuation. The WA forwarded cheques to the mission for their room and board.⁵⁴ To provide some context for this amount, in 1915, Miss Jackson claimed \$47.80 for her fare, meals and war tax paid for her journey to Hay River from Smith's Landing.⁵⁵

In 1924, the male Principal at Hay River was paid a salary of \$80.00 per month; he was also a clergyman. The farm instructor at the school received \$60.00. The general male assistant was paid \$55.00 and the fisherman employed at the mission received \$50.00 in December. Women "agents" included a matron-in-charge whose salary was \$45.00 a month, a seamstress and laundress who was paid \$30.00, and two supervisors

⁵³JR Lucas to Mrs Bedford-Jones, 21 December, 1921. PAA, ACC. DOMR, 70.387/MR200/161. Interestingly, Lucas worked with a number of single women at the turn of the century who served for long terms. He does not mention them in his list.

⁵⁴Edith Carter, WA of the MSCC, to Archdeacon Lucas, 1 May 1913. PAA, DOMR, MR200/Item 18/Box MR10.

⁵⁵Westgate to Carter, January 1916, *Ibid* This high cost of travel would account for why contracts stipulated that the employee was responsible for paying travel expenses should they not fulfil the entire contract.

each received that same amount.⁵⁶

The MSCC informed then Archdeacon Fleming in 1933 of the following salary schedule. Head Matrons who were qualified nurses were paid \$50.00 per month, including room and board. Teachers were paid the first year at \$35.00, and in subsequent years \$40.00 per month. Kitchen matrons received \$35.00. Supervisors and assistant matrons were paid \$30.00 per month. In comparison, engineers in larger schools might receive \$50.00 per month, farm instructors at large schools were paid that amount, but if the schools were smaller, \$40.00 per month was the salary. Night watchmen received \$30-\$35.00 per month depending upon the size of the institution. Board and accommodation were provided.⁵⁷

A furlough allowance of one month's salary for each year of service was paid at the appropriate time, although this policy seemed to be more flexible depending on the contract and the circumstances. There are a number of cases where women had difficulty collecting out-of-pocket expenses, but this too appeared to be due to communication problems. Either there was a lack of it, which caused confusion, or the process of getting letters back and forth impeded it.

Salaries and terms of employment changed over time, but there was one financial condition which remained constant. Money was "of little use to missionaries on arctic

⁵⁶Return of agents employed at the Hay River NWT School. GSA, DOA, M71-4, Series 2-1-d, Box 6.

⁵⁷TBR Westgate to Fleming, 5 October 1933. GSA, DOA, Fleming Papers, Indian and Eskimo Residential Commission of the MSCC, 1933-39. M70-1, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 17.

service," suggested the secretary of the MSCC, so pay was usually deposited in an Edmonton bank on their behalf.⁵⁸ This means that many of the women had some financial security when they left the North after four or five years. There is, however, little evidence to suggest any financial motive for mission work, with the possible exception of Addie Butler who "was tired of not having a regular job and a regular income instead of outgo."⁵⁹

Contractual obligations for health care varied according to the times as well. The employment contract of Marion Harvey in 1928, and Winifred Neville in 1929⁶⁰ indicate that employees were expected to accept full responsibility for any expenditure necessary for medical treatment. By 1938, this policy had changed, and one dollar per day was charged for any health care services.⁶¹ This change is coincidental with the building of Anglican hospitals in the North. When care became available in the NWT, it became more accessible and less expensive. There was some concern about the health of potential candidates and the report form supplied to the medical examiner by the MSCC made specific references for women. Along with health questions that were gender neutral, question number ten asked "If the applicant is a woman, is she now suffering or has she

⁵⁸Westgate to Marion Harvey, 16 June 1928. GSA, DOA, St Peter's, Hay River, Correspondence. M71-4, Series 2-1-d, Box 7.

⁵⁹Butler letters, 15 August 1932. Addie Butler had previously worked at an Indian Residential School.

⁶⁰GSA, ACC, DOA, St Peter's, Hay River, M71-4, Series 2-1-d, Box 7. Miss Neville's contract is reproduced in Appendix I.

⁶¹Fleming to Westgate, 31 Mar 1938. GSA, DOA, Fleming Papers. M70-1, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 17.

ever suffered from uterine or menstrual disorder?" What is significant about this question which would ordinarily be asked as part of any regular medical examination is the rider which followed. "It is desirable that particular attention be given to this enquiry, as the climate of all our mission fields bears heavily on those thus affected."⁶² What climate has to do with gynaecological disorders is unclear, although isolated locations could account for difficulties -- but no more difficulties than might arise for men with kidney stones or appendicitis. What is more likely is the question reflects the contemporary views about how women's reproductive system affected their lives, and how their biological functions affected what they could, or could not do.

After the MSCC undertook to maintain the northern missions in 1920, candidates were required to fill out a number of "preliminary papers," which included an application form as well as the medical questionnaire. Female candidates were screened by a candidate's committee for women which operated under the auspices of the WA of the MSCC. This organization was responsible for the work done by the MSCC among women and children in both the foreign fields and within the Dominion. Their mandate included the support of all women missionaries, exclusive of wives of missionaries, and the support of all female Native agents, whether evangelical, educational, or medical. It also included the financial support of children in orphanages, and the expenses incurred by women missionaries travelling to their posts.⁶³ The WA of the MSCC raised money,

⁶²The Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, "Report of the Medical Examiner," Form D. PAA, ACC, DOMR, 70.387/MR200/117.

⁶³Emily Cummings, *Our Story: The Woman's Auxiliary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, 1885-1928*, (Toronto: Glity Press, 1928), 78.

sent bales of supplies to northern missions, helped fund hospitals and schools, and eventually selected and sponsored candidates for the field.

The Candidate's Committee of the MSCC asked all sorts of questions about religion, dependents, musical ability and education. Men were queried about their spouse's religious affiliation and whether or not she was in sympathy with the husband's plans. The form also asked about the feelings of parents. These forms are reproduced in Appendix II, so a comparison can be made between the form given to men and the one given to women, and because they provide a glimpse of what might be expected of a female missionary working in the field for the MSCC.⁶⁴

These questions were used for all mission fields, but qualifications for the Canadian mission were less stringent than those for the "foreign" ones, which may reveal as much about the lure of the location as it does the mission itself. Above all, the Christian missionary "had not only to be able to describe Him to them, she must be able to *reflect* Him," explained the enlistment guide. Women were required to have a working knowledge of the Bible, and understand the doctrines and teaching of the Church of England, although some training was provided before she went into the field.

Candidates for overseas work had to be between twenty-three and thirty-two years of age, primarily because the MSCC believed the learning of oriental languages was too difficult for anyone over that age. For the Canadian mission, concern about a candidate's age was more related to health and the problems caused by the harsh climate and isolation, and because all the Natives were being taught to read and speak English

⁶⁴Forms are taken from PAA, ACC, DOMR, 70.387/MR 200/117.

anyway. The assumed difference between those proceeding to the Orient and those in the Canadian field was also evident in the required educational qualifications. Arts matriculation was the minimum standard for the Orient because women missionaries would be in touch with "highly intellectual and well educated" non-Christians, prompting the pamphlet to note there was a pressing need for women with College degrees. There was no fixed standard for women acting as missionaries in the Canadian field where prestige was obviously less important.⁶⁵

The enlistment guide did note that nurses were needed for Indian residential schools, although it was specific about "devoted well trained Christian nurses." Graduate nurses were preferred, but others were considered for more menial tasks and as nursing assistants. Whatever her qualifications, she still worked within the confines of a Christian mission, which prompted DL McKeand to write to the Commissioner in 1940 he "had yet to meet the nurse [in the North] who did not feel she was first a missionary and second a nurse,"⁶⁶ and this is confirmed by evidence from the MSCC. The Candidates and Furlough Committee of the MSCC turned down one nurse in 1926, for example, because "it was evident from her papers that Miss Yonge's ideal was purely as a nurse and not from Missionary motives."⁶⁷ McKeand's comment hints at the complication which arose at hospitals where the federal government paid one single nurse, whether she was a Grey Nun or the WA was an Anglican worker.

⁶⁵*Enlisting for Service, MSCC.*

⁶⁶McKeand to Gibson, 6 November 1940, NAC, RG85, Vol 907, File 10533.

⁶⁷GSA, MSCC, Candidate's Committee, Minutes, 27 April 1926. GS75-103, Series 2-5, Box 10.

In some ways, the correspondence generated by the bureaucracy over payment of nurses is an aside to this particular assessment, but it must be pointed out that absolutely no other issue concerning women generated as much bureaucratic palaver as the payment of these nurses. This was for two reasons. The first was that the missionary societies chose the nurses who were nominally members of the Civil Service. These nurses were fortunately exempt from Civil Service competition.⁶⁸ The Civil Service Commission had nothing to do with the hiring, and on occasion, the nurse was already in service in the North. She may have replaced one who had gone on furlough or who had left permanently, and there was often overlap because of the transportation system. Both the RC s and the Anglicans moved their nurses around within the region at their pleasure, and the bureaucratic mind had some difficulty with this notion. One letter from the Diocese of the Arctic to Ottawa illustrates why officials in the Ministry of the Interior got so frustrated about the whole issue. The letter, dated 24 September 1934 informs the Department that the Bishop of the Arctic had recently sailed for England, leaving the Honourary Secretary to explain

We had planned to send Nurse Brown to Shingle Point School and Miss Somers to Aklavik Hospital and the Bishop requested that Nurse Somers be substituted for Nurse Rundle at Aklavik and Nurse Brown for Nurse Tomalin at Shingle Point. At Aklavik, however, in discussing things with the Rev T Murray, the Bishop decided that if on the arrival of the nurses, Dr Urquhart and Nurse Bradford approved of having Nurse Brown at Aklavik and Nurse Somers sent to Shingle Point, they could be switched. Rev T Murray now advises that this arrangement had been adopted.⁶⁹

⁶⁸Scott to Finnie, 11 February 1931. RG 85, Vol 907, File 10533.

⁶⁹G Rowley, DOA to TG Murphy, 24 September 1934. NAC, RG 85, Vol 856, File 8115.

The government stance was no forms; no appointment; no pay, and in 1936, Deputy Minister JM Wardle decided that

Evidently the Church authorities are unfamiliar with the Civil Service Regulations and they have taken it for granted that, as long as a Nurse was on the job, it did not matter to the Department what Nurse it was. The Church authorities have certain ground for this belief as the Department and the Civil Service Commission invariably accept the Church's recommendation in the filling of these positions. However, this does not satisfy the regulations, as the Certificate issued by the Commission must name the person employed. It will have to be explained that the failure of the Church authorities to report this case makes it necessary for the Department to call for a refund in order that the new appointment may be authorized from the date that the former incumbent of the position ceased duty.

The Civil Service Commission state that there is no way of authorizing the employment of a Nurse without specifically designating the particular individual and to satisfy the Auditor General, a refund must be made.⁷⁰

All this may seem insignificant until it is remembered nurses so employed had to fill out and sign Civil Service forms. This was not always possible, and certainly meant most nurses who were already there were working at the job long before the form arrived.⁷¹

The Civil Service paid the nurse more than the missionary society had contracted with the women,⁷² but there were differences in the payment toward maintenance. A letter

⁷⁰Wardle to Turner, Ministry of the Interior, 28 February 1936. NAC, RG 85, Vol 862, File 8248.

⁷¹By example, the MSCC notified the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs on 9 November 1926, that Miss Dorothy Bradford would replace Valenis Ottaway at Hay River. The forms were forwarded through the winter mail and were returned to Winnipeg on 24 February 1927. GSA, DOA, St Peter's Mission, Hay River, M71-4, Series 2-1-d, Box 7.

⁷²The 1933 salary for a matron qualified as a nurse was \$50.00 per month. The Government paid a graduate nurse, Grade 1, attached to an Indian Residential School or stationed at a Reserve with a population up to 300 at between \$960 and 1200, plus maintenance allowance. 10 April 1930, NAC, RG 85, Vol 907, File 10533. In 1928,

from the MSCC to Miss E Goddard about her appointment as a nurse at Hay River in 1935, indicates she was to be paid \$85.00 per month by the Federal Government, but that \$25.00 per month would be deducted for room and board. In addition, she had to pay all her travel expenses as far as Waterways. She was also responsible for any medical expenses incurred.⁷³ Another problem arose because the Civil Service Commission was not empowered to pay funds directly to the Church on the behalf of the nurses. Eventually all the bureaucrats in all the affected bureaucracies worked everything out. They wrote many letters and memos, however, and much of the paper still remains in the Capital, but the bureaucratic nonsense had little or no effect on the women themselves, and they just went about their business without being hampered by the transmissions between Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Edmonton.

Confusing those same paper trails were the Medical Officers in the region who thought if nurses were not placed under the auspices of some Federal Government Department like the Department of the Interior, or the Department of Indian Affairs, they believed "it would be difficult, if not impossible, to get nurses to follow the doctors orders and particularly to treat out-patients."⁷⁴ The nurses were all women, so by definition this is a gender issue. Like other colonial situations, the role of nurses

Miss Beatrice Rose Terry was appointed at \$1080 per annum, plus maintenance allowance. McKeand to Finnie, 15 June 1928, NAC, RG 85, Vol 783, File 5299. In 1931, these salaries were raised. The range was \$1380 to \$1560. Heagerty, Pensions and National Health to Finnie, 2 February 1931, NAC, RG 85, Vol 907, File 10533.

⁷³Field Secretary, MSCC to E Goddard, 8 July 1935. GSA. DOa, St Peter's, Hay River, M71-4, Series 2-1-d.

⁷⁴Opinion attributed to Dr Urquhart. Asst Deputy Minister, Min of Interior, to Lorne Turner, 11 July 1935. NAC, RG 85, Vol 907, File 10533.

reinforced the established cultural order by perpetuating the masculine role of doctors and administrators.⁷⁵ In the North, the structure appeared even more patriarchal because the Government made it a practice to hire medical doctors as Indian Agents, but it would be wrong to assume that the sex of the staff had any deeper meaning than was already evident in the South. Unlike colonial West Africa, for example, where British nurses were attached to the military, these missionary nurses did not aid military and expansionist activity, nor did they contribute to rigid racial divisions. In fact, the evidence is to the contrary. This was because they were hired primarily to look after the Native population at the hospitals. White residents were welcome but the facilities were built in response to mission needs,⁷⁶ which was designed to eliminate barriers, not reinforce them.

McKeand rightly considered the northern health system as cumbersome and costly, and determined it would be more efficient if the Government just paid the missionary societies for a nursing service in their hospitals.⁷⁷ The concern had nothing to do with the nurses themselves, just the finances. In 1922, the Privy Council itself had debated the issue of supplying nurses to northern posts. That auspicious body had decided the proper course was to approach the Victorian Order of Nurses to work in Northern hospitals. After all, the VON was

⁷⁵See Callaway, *Gender, Culture and Empire*, 98.

⁷⁶See Dea Birkett, "The White Woman's burden in the White Man's Grave: The Introduction of British Nurses in Colonial West Africa," in *Western Women and Imperialism*, Nupur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, Eds, (Bloomington, Indiana: University of Indiana Press, 1992), 178.

⁷⁷McKeand to Gibson, 6 November 1940, NAC, RG 85, Vol 907, File 10533.

an organized and disciplined body, the workers of which are imbued with an *esprit de corps* and loyalty to the general purpose of the Order. They also wear a special uniform, which would be an important feature of the work on an Indian Reserve, as Indians are always impressed by a uniform.⁷⁸

A uniform meant women would always maintain a sense of being properly and adequately robed, thought Bishop Fleming when he wrote to Arctic workers about their use. The uniforms have been described in an earlier chapter, although it was not mentioned that women married to missionaries were issued one as well. They were not required to wear it when travelling or even when "functioning as wives of missionaries" whatever that meant. The shoulder straps were partly red, and partly blue "making a very nice combination and indicating that the missionary wives were associated with both branches of the service," explained Fleming.⁷⁹ It might also be argued it showed the MSCC were not awfully sure what kind of authority the women held, and the uniform was most definitely part of the trappings of authority, but when the wives actually wore them is a mystery.

The uniform might have been significant because of the association the Natives made with religious leaders and healers of the sick. Missionary women (and Nuns) wearing any uniform which bespoke authority could evoke a certain aura of power. It may have been a case of presenting a certain image to Native observers, for gaining the confidence of local people was the first goal of any of the nursing staff. This was not an easy task, and

⁷⁸14 December 1922, Mimeograph Copy of Privy Council Minutes filed in NAC, RG 85, Vol 783, File 5921. Whether this view had anything to do with the use of uniforms by Anglican nurses is unknown.

⁷⁹Fleming to Arctic workers, 27 May 1932, GSA, DOA, M70-1, Series 3-B, Box 3, File 18.

often Providence itself had to lend a hand. "At first the medical work" at Aklavik "was not popular for the Native thought his own remedies were as good as anything white man could provide," wrote Mildred McCabe in 1932, but added "the influenza epidemic of 1928 proved to be a blessing in disguise."⁸⁰

Bessie Quirt outlined what kind of medical work was done in the hospital at Aklavik on her way out on furlough from Shingle Point in 1933. Accidents were common amongst both white and Native populations, but there was also the "dread scourge of tuberculosis" which she believed attacked the Dene more than the Inuit. Digestive ailments were common due to over-consumption of meat, especially in children. There were an increasing number of maternity cases, but the Native women were still reluctant to use the obstetrical facilities available; Miss Quirt determined the women thought that the five days bed rest the hospital required of maternity patients was a waste of time.⁸¹

At times, this unwillingness of Native women to take advantage of the hospital was probably fortunate because the nurses worked long hours without much relief. When Ann Lindbergh and her husband flew across the Arctic in 1931, she wrote in her diary at Point Barrow about the send-off they had received at Aklavik.

One of the nurses had to stay at the hospital, everyone else was at the dock. The Anglican hospital has two nurses who do everything. One girl I talked to was so

⁸⁰*Living Message*, July 1933.

⁸¹Margaret Currie, "Work Among the Eskimos Satisfies the Soul," *Montreal Daily Star*, 4 February 1933.

discouraged and tired and hadn't had more than five hours sleep for a month.⁸²

Mrs Lindbergh was probably not exaggerating, for the schedule for nurses at Aklavik was incredibly demanding. A guide to duties explains that

The two nurses on the hospital staff shall divide their work as follows:

One nurse shall be in charge of the hospital for one month, and during that time the other nurse shall be the assistant or relieving nurse.

The nurse in charge of the hospital shall have full charge of the patients during her period of duty, and shall arrange all matters concerning their treatment, diet, etc. always in accordance with the directions of the Medical Officer.

The assistant or relieving nurse shall be responsible for the cleanliness of the hospital building, and the hospital laundry, and shall supervise the work of the kitchen and the residence, and shall be ready to assist and relieve the nurse in charge of the hospital whenever required to do so.

HOURS:

Under ordinary conditions, when there are no patients in hospital that require constant attention during the night, the nurse in charge of the hospital shall be on duty in the hospital daily from 7am to 10.30pm, and on alternate nights shall sleep in the hospital from 10.30pm to 7am to answer any and all calls from patients. The relieving nurse shall sleep in hospital for the same purpose on the nights that the nurse in charge does not. It shall be the duty of the nurse sleeping in the residence to call the nurse sleeping in the hospital at 7am daily if necessary.

When there are patients that require considerable attention during the night, the nurse on duty shall be relieved from 10.30pm to 4.30am, and shall be on duty from 4.30am to 10.30pm daily, and the relieving nurse from 10.30pm to 4.30am daily. It shall be the duty of the nurse on duty to call the nurse who is sleeping in time that the relief may be made promptly and on time.

The nurse on duty in the hospital shall be relieved daily from 3-4.30pm so that

⁸²Ann Morrow Lindbergh, *Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead: Diaries and Letters of Ann Morrow Lindbergh, 1929-1932*, (New York: Harcourt Brace Javonivich, 1973), 171.

she may have opportunity for rest or recreation.

Both nurses shall be on duty in the hospital on the first day of each month at the hour of the visit of the Medical Officer, the nurse who is being relieved for the purpose of reporting to the Medical Officer, and the nurse who is taking over in order to receive the Medical Officer's instructions regarding the patients. The monthly term of duty in the hospital shall begin and end with the visit of the Medical Officer on that day. In the absence of the Medical Officer from Aklavik, the change shall be made at noon on the first day of the month.

It shall be the duty of the Assistant or relieving nurse to answer all calls for and from outside the settlement, subject always to the wishes and directions of the Medical Officer.⁸³

With this kind of taxing schedule, the wonder is that nurses like Deaconess Margaret Solomon were able to carry out religious instruction and missionary duties as well as nursing. Miss Solomon may have told the loyal mission followers in the South about how she had time for fifteen minute services in the Aklavik hospital every evening, but she had noted that with her arrival, the other nurse could finally get some much-needed rest.⁸⁴ Despite McKeand's understanding, and the intentions of the MSCC, the mission was more likely the avocation, and nursing came first. Unlike teachers whose primary role was to Christianize their charges through education, nurses had to heal first, then worry about Christianizing.

It would appear that one way which allowed Anglican women to actively pursue mission work among women and children in a more relaxed setting was through the establishment of Woman's Auxiliary branches. The WA was an integral part of any

⁸³YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 263, Series 1-1c, Box 15, File 3. No date.

⁸⁴*Living Message*, September 1934.

Anglican parish, and operated with some autonomy from the men, and afforded women an opportunity to exercise executive skills. At no time should the WA be confused with any body which actually ran Parish affairs. The national WA of the MSCC was something else altogether, so the WA, then, had a double grasp on women and missions in the North, which was less tenuous than that of the Church of England itself.

The support by the WA of the MSCC of missionary women in the North was vital, which was why the letters which were published in the *Letter Leaflet* and the *Living Message* convey so much news about individual success, hardships faced, and mission activities. The women in the South wanted to know where their dollars were going, and how their gifts of goods were being used. The women in the North wanted the flow of money to continue. In essence, each side was aware how the game had to be played because whether at a national level, or in local parishes, or at northern missions, the WA permitted an outlet for capable women who were second-class members of the Church, without actually interfering with the Church itself. When they arrived in the North, Anglican women considered the creation of the WA as an important step in the development of the mission -- now the missionary's wife had arrived, or the single women were on the scene they knew it was time to get down to real woman's work at the mission. This may have been because the women would have been active in their own home parishes as members of the WA, and they probably looked forward to the companionship and activities they remembered. They may have had enthusiasm for mission, but these women were uprooted from their traditional activities at home, and their eagerness to introduce the WA was as much self-serving as it was proselytising.

They had to make some adjustments for the situation, of course, but northern groups were modelled on the four aims of groups in the South: we pray, we learn, we work, and we give.

From the beginning, the white and mixed-blood wives of traders ran the WA, and despite the involvement of Dene and Inuit women in WA branches across the North, this was still a white woman's organization. In the Mackenzie, the women in the community were gradually integrated into the groups as they moved into the settlements and by 1928, the Diocesan Board of the WA had managed three important meetings. The motto of the Mackenzie River Diocese WA was "the willingness and the solitary place shall be glad for them," explained the published report of those meetings. The Hay River branch was formed in 1906, and by 1907, Miss Wilgress had recorded twenty-seven members. The meetings comprised business and missionary news, prayer and educational talks. The Diocesan Board was organized in 1914 and Mrs Vale was elected President. She held this post until 1927. It appears from recorded dates that Diocesan meetings were held to coincide with the supply vessel's trip downriver. The women presumably met, then went home on the return. What a wonderful excuse to visit old friends they had not seen for some time under the guise of Church work.

In her Presidential address at the 1927 Diocesan Board meeting, Sadie Stringer introduced the concept of annual reports, which has proved useful for this study as printed all within one booklet are activities and financial statements of several branches in the region. The total membership in the Diocese, which included Fort Chipewyan, was 82. Because there was no missionary at Fort Smith or Fort Norman, there were no WA.

The first meeting of the Fort MacPherson WA was held on Ash Wednesday of 1919 under the direction of Mrs Reid. "Amidst many discouragements, the WA forged ahead, described as here a little, there a little," but at that first meeting, the six members set to work with needles and thread and three yards of print fabric to make a quilt. By June of the next year, they had completed fourteen quilts and had donated the proceeds of a sale to Bishop Lucas.⁸⁵ This group apparently functioned as a sewing group, but there were always prayer and the singing of hymns at every meeting.

In 1927, the Aklavik Branch showed a roll of twenty members, but most of those were Native women who only spent some part of the year near the settlement. It was impossible to organize a Branch of Inuit women, wrote Minnie Hackett in the annual report, but the Dene women attended faithfully when they were in the area. The group made garments for the hospital, as well as moccasins and moose skin gloves which were embroidered and sold to the white residents of the settlement. With the funds raised, the women donated a hymn board to the church and had plans for supplying more furnishings.⁸⁶ What is particularly interesting about this report is the context it has with the one that followed five years later. Mrs Murray wrote about their "tiny WA branch" in 1933. There were six members which included the mission staff and the RCMP Corporal's wife. In that small isolated Aklavik Branch, the women were saw themselves

⁸⁵NWTA, N79-027, ACC, Journals, St Matthew's Mission, 2 July 1920, 197 and GSA, DOA, M71-4 Series 2-2-c, Box 10.

⁸⁶Mackenzie River Diocesan Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary, Annual Report of All Saint's Aklavik Branch of the WA, 31 December 1927, YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 263, Series 1-1c, Box 15, File 3.

as doing their part "in the weaving of the widespread web of the WA."⁸⁷ Why they were suddenly operating with fourteen fewer members is unknown. It would be sheer speculation to assume the Native women had deserted the Branch; it is more likely that they were never full members in the first place.

An article about the Arctic in the 1938 *Living Message* explained how Anna Rokeby-Thomas was working to bring the knowledge of the WA to that settlement, but it notes her goal was to enrol every woman as an associate member "teaching them, little by little their responsibilities, until in the course of time they may enrol in a full membership."⁸⁸ This makes the WA seem a little like a ladies Girl Guide Company where everyone worked their way up through a series of levels. In some ways it was. Isobel Greenwood remarked how badges were presented to the WA Branch at Fort MacPherson when she arrived there in 1935.⁸⁹ Mrs Rokeby Thomas wrote, it had been her "ambition and hope" while training at the Deaconess House to organize a WA Branch at Cambridge Bay. "It was a big disappointment to learn it would be much harder than [she] thought it would be." The Inuit at Cambridge Bay were "most primitive, and while the men are capable and a little more progressive," the women were always in the background. Of the first all-woman's meeting, she confessed "they looked like a flock of unherded sheep," and she had "to fall back on our interpreter as I wanted them to understand fully." Teaching the meaning of the WA was so important to her that Mrs Rokeby-Thomas made an effort

⁸⁷*Living Message*, March 1933.

⁸⁸"The Arctic," *Living Message*, October 1938,

⁸⁹*Living Message*, September 1935.

to convey the message to every Inuit camp she visited.⁹⁰

At Pangnirtung, the WA was one of Flossie Hirst's chief joys. For her, it was a "means of becoming more intimately acquainted with the mothers and babies," and the large contingent of juniors.⁹¹ The group worked hard at a fund-raising project to help rebuild the hospital at Aklavik, which had burned to the ground in 1926. The women made seal skin picture scrap books which were unique souvenirs. The supervision of the project took up a lot of Miss Hirst's personal time, and she flippantly recorded that she might start charging for her time. Upon reflection, however she decided Bishop Fleming "will rise in wrath and ask whose time we think we're using!"⁹² Sewing groups seemed to be the mainstay of northern WA Branches, especially those with large Native memberships, and since Inuit women in particular were extremely adept with a needle, it allowed for a cultural compromise to take place. Both groups of women could make the best use of skills to work toward some common ground.

Even white women who had no such skills could be useful to the WA, or so Mena Orford described.

Sometimes, the evenings I went up [to the hospital] they'd have a sort of WA meeting, and Nukinga (her help) and her friends would be there too. Everyone would sit around chattering, or sewing, or knitting. I wasn't much help at the sewing or knitting, though I did come in handy to hold things down when someone else cut a pattern off whatever it was, or hang onto a skein of wool with both wrists while one of the women carded it into balls. I could also baste

⁹⁰*Living Message*, October 1938

⁹¹Hirst Diaries, GSA, I.

⁹²Hirst Diaries, GSA, II.

seams.⁹³

Florence Giles, another Anglican missionary at Pangnirtung explained what Mena Orford described. Each member's work was rolled into a towel and marked with her name so that it could be kept separate. Some were making dresses, some were taking apart dresses. Some were knitting. Others were undoing old knitting. She does not say whether the one activity resulted from the other. They closed these meetings with a hymn, and everyone went away with a "smile and a *Tabvoutit Kitonamic*, (Good-bye, Thank You)," she wrote, but added she prayed "their dear souls will appreciate the real meaning of the WA, as they do need it."⁹⁴ The Inuit women may have needed some understanding about the WA, but they probably did not need to learn the lesson about the joy of giving which in this case meant giving up what they had produced to raise funds for the WA and other missions in Ceylon and Malaya! In the Inuit experience, sharing meant survival, and it is interesting how one of their own cultural truths became part of the lesson.

There are many other examples of the activities of WA Branches in the North. One entry bears some mention because it hints at how the Inuit viewed this female enterprise. At a WA picnic at Pangnirtung, the sports included sack races, egg races, spoon races and three legged races. One hundred and fifty women and children were in attendance. Flossie Hirst wrote that "this was one day when it would seem that the men almost

⁹³Orford, *Journey North*, 169.

⁹⁴Excerpts from Diary of Florence Giles, Pangnirtung, *Living Message*, July 1938.

wished they could be women."⁹⁵ How disappointed the men must have been to be kept from the excitement. Of course to the white women, this was a day where men did not run anything and the women could do what they wanted. The Inuit families just wanted to have fun.

In some ways, the extension of WA Branches to Native women represented the closest thing to feminist reform that Anglican women could manage. Although they would most adamantly deny it, the message was initiative. The message was also sisterhood, and it was what passed for female bonding in a male-dominated setting. But the WA introduced concepts of sharing with women for the good of other women, which was radically different from sharing as a community in order to survive. The WA Branches also perpetuated the image of women as adjunct to their men, within the Church itself, and within the community. Inuit and Dene women were already aware of their place in their own cultural order, but that place was not as clearly defined as it was in the white culture they were being taught to emulate. Gender roles were separate in Native culture, but production and occupation were interwoven within those parameters.

The female Church of England Missionary and the wives of Anglican clergymen and lay missionaries have left the most impressive documentary record for white women who went to Northern Canada in the fifty years previous to the Second World War. What is evident from those rich sources is there was no doubt for any of the women that the object of their life amongst the Inuit and Dene was to convey the spiritual message of

⁹⁵Hirst Diaries, GSA, III.

Christianity, and to teach them of "the eternal things that matter,"⁹⁶ which is as much a personal notion as it is a denominational one.

What is also noticeable is that their concerns often appear more pragmatic, yet petty next to the concerns of men. That should come as no surprise, because even the missionary wife was absorbed by those small pragmatic things which make up any woman's day. If it seems like women missionaries complained more, perhaps it was because they had more to complain about, although it could be that as independent women, they whinged because they were less afraid of the consequences. The church was their *raison d'etre* but the situation often controlled how things actually worked, and even missionaries can be un-Christian when they are all cooped up.

On the one hand, white women are blamed in the historiography for erecting racial barriers and for fostering racial tension. On the other, white missionary women are rebuked because they broke down racial barriers so they could carry on their work spreading the Word of God to their Native charges. That left them standing in the gap, but not in the way the MSCC originally intended. The suspicion, is that to the female missionaries, any negative attitude about their work would have been unimportant, like the young nurse Ann Lindbergh met at Moose Factory when she flew across the Arctic. The nurse was on her way North to a settlement where there was only "a missionary, a Mountie, a trading post, and Eskimos. She did not say much," but it "made me quite sick to think of five years up there, a boat once a year, and no other white woman,"

⁹⁶Sarah Stringer, "Address to the Canadian Club," November, 1931. GSA, DOA, Isaac O Stringer Papers, M74-3, Series 2-B #10, Box 13.

remembered Mrs Lindbergh. "I couldn't think of anything encouraging to say except that she would be doing pioneering work." There was "a slight flicker of satisfaction on her face at that."⁹⁷

Margaret Strobel and Nupur Chauduri have come to the conclusion that any survey about white women in the Empire is complicated by the desire to find feminine resistance to the patriarchal institutions manifest in imperialism. What happens is that what is found is complicity. This is because any study about the issue is inevitably a study of present issues and contemporary values. A review of the *work* of female missionaries in the North suggests a bit of both complicity, and resistance. But it also shows that what missionaries set out to do is not necessarily what they accomplish, and if contemporary analysts persist in approaching the problem from a policy perspective, they will continue to find the answers they pursue.

⁹⁷Lindbergh, 6 August 1931, *Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead*, 166.

Chapter Six

Seems Strange To Us Connections and Distinctions Between Cultures

During her first winter at Shingle Point, Addie Butler wrote to her sister about an Inuit wedding which she had attended -- although she recorded "you would never have known a wedding was about to be solemnized. The bridal couple was sitting among the rest of the congregation, not together, and there were no bridesmaids, no confetti, no fuss, no nothing." Mrs Butler considered what she saw, and how she thought it remarkable that after the wedding, the married couple went off in separate ways and not together. It was 1933. Anglican missionaries had preached their message in the region for more than seventy years, but in the isolated mission church, the Inuit showed that even though they embraced the concept of Christian marriage, they maintained their own cultural twist. It "seems strange to us," Mrs Butler concluded about the wedding in particular, but her statement, and the wedding itself, may well have represented a more general commentary on the contact between races in the North.¹

Apparently, any examination of white women in colonial or imperial situations is incomplete without some assessment of the nature of their racist tendencies, or the relation between their racist attitudes and the colonial and imperial undertaking of which they were a part. This idea surfaces in virtually every work which pertains to white

¹Butler letters, 1933. It should be remembered that this study embraces three racial groups: White, Inuit and Dene.

women who have travelled into the *Empire*. Principally, the debate has centred on whether the arrival of white women marked an increase in racist sentiments, or if women were more racist than men. In the Canadian paradigm, Sylvia Van Kirk notes this tendency in her study of women in the fur trade.² The supposition is that while establishing the rituals of their own society, white women erected racial barriers which interfered with the interaction between the indigenous community and the white men who controlled it. Implicit in this analysis is the understanding that while white women did not generally rule or occupy positions of political power, they played an essential role in creating the milieu which allowed control to be exerted.³

Feminist writers argue such a focus is problematic: it assesses female prejudice on the basis of male assumptions, ignores different levels of interaction, and places women only within the framework of political and economic domination. The traditional course which judges women responsible for racial tensions because of sexual jealousies for instance, is the result of analysis which perceives women in terms of their relationship with men. Such andro-centric bias is able to twist the colonial power relationships between white men and indigenous women and the subsequent sexual exploitation into an argument that men were non-racist because of those sexual relations. Because they frowned upon those liaisons, white women are labelled as racist.⁴

²Sylvia Van Kirk, *Many Tender Ties*, (Winnipeg: Watson & Dwyer, 1980), 6.

³See Susan Bailey, *Women and the British Empire: An Annotated Guide to Sources*. (New York: Garland, 1983), 1.

⁴See Chilla Bulbeck, "New Histories of the Memsahib and Missus: The Case of Papua New Guinea," *Journal of Women's History*, 3(2), Fall 1991; Elizabeth West, "White Women in Colonial Australia," *Refactory Girl*, March 1977, and Janice M Brownfoot, "Memsahibs in Colonial Malaya: A Study of European Wives in a British

That kind of convoluted conclusion is one example of how concepts of gender and race can get neatly tangled, like the contradiction which emerges with the understanding that white women were a subordinate group within the dominant one, while their own inferior position did not exempt them from carrying out the expectations of those in power. This means white women could be as racist as white men, even while they were oppressed by those men dominating both indigenous males and females. Feminists have been disappointed to find women did not colonize indigenous women in a different way from men simply because they were women, socialized to nurture, and to carry civilization into the "primitive" world. The hope was to find gentler paths to colonization because white women interacted with Native women at a more personal level. White women, after all, taught Native children, and nursed Native families. But in the attempt to determine if women were more humane, analysts have decided white, European women were enthusiastic purveyors of their own cultural conventions, even though they often questioned imperial policies, or made attempts to improve the lot of indigenous women.

Claudia Knapman suggests in *White Women in Fiji* that concepts of race, and racial tension, however, are too often taken for granted. In the imperial and colonial situation, racism is expected to be present, so it is: the natural concomitant of the post-colonial consciousness. Knapman questions how an increase in racial tensions can be measured, and wonders what behaviour can be considered as racist, or whether racist behaviour is necessarily a result of a belief in racial superiority. These questions are relevant, but

Colony and Protectorate," in Callan and Ardener, Eds, *The Incorporated Wife*.

Knapman also challenges how any historical study can say with certainty that women were more racist than men.⁵ More important perhaps, is whether it matters.

Chilla Bulbeck's notion, offered in *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea*, is that racism is another way of explaining the separation between "the ruler and the ruled, western civilization and local behaviour, the comparatively wealthy and the poor, and the apparently educated and the ignorant."⁶ The definition is a useful reminder that racist behaviour includes class distinctions, and introduces the most important dimensions of racism: power and authority. Such distinctions are examples of what Bulbeck calls cultural markers. These markers are useful in examining the Northern experience, but in the case of white women in the Canadian North, racism provides a limited scope as a conceptual framework, in part because the power and authority these women held was merely intellectual, and based upon their own concepts of racial superiority.

Racism is part of an anachronistic scale which judges rather than analyzes, and belongs with that genre of history Edward Said has called "the rhetoric of blame,"⁷ and which judges the past through the eyes of the present. Political agendas have long since coloured the meaning of the term, and previous bigotries have been replaced with new ones which do not allow for any distinction between levels of outlook, or degrees of oppression, or for historical context or indeed for the possibility that women can change their attitudes over time. What should be more profitable is an examination of how the

⁵Knapman, *White Women in Fiji*, 10.

⁶Chilla Bulbeck, *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 40.

⁷Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1993), 96.

women of one race dealt with racial and cultural distinctions. Therefore, this study will not attempt to discern whether white women were more racist than men, but will provide some basis for understanding the setting created by white women of the imperial outposts of the North, and within the context of female culture.

It is understood any evidence used to illustrate the cultural exchange was provided by one side, which because of the resources available to its society has essential control of the information. There is no view from the other culture, except for what is presented from the white women, but the focus on female interaction opens up a range of topics which have not hitherto been addressed. While the story is incomplete, it cannot be assumed the white women who left the documents and memoirs necessarily meant to mislead. What is presented here are their views on the cultural differences which were significant to them, because, after all, it is people who are agents of change, not their race or their culture.

It is not the intention to deny that as a group, white women who emigrated North went with the attitude that as a race, they were superior to the Native population, because for the most part, they did. As Margaret Strobel suggested, these women "expressed the cultural arrogance which imperialism spawned,"⁸ and that arrogance is pervasive throughout the sources, as are stereotypical, and patronizing remarks. What is also evident, and ultimately more significant than the recognition of their own racial superiority, is how the difference between Native cultures and customs affected the lives of white women, and how often white women were stymied in imposing their own

⁸Strobel, *European Women*, 39.

preferences. Cultural arrogance does not necessarily translate into domination and control. The transition to a *civilized* culture was not a smooth one, and there was necessary collaboration between cultures as well as imposition. There were some positive as well as imperfect connections, and there were also separate realms. Like the cliched twain of east and west, sometimes the north and south could never meet.

One author has suggested racism can be appreciated as the natural preference of one's own appearance and custom over that of others.⁹ This idea serves as a reminder for this study that not only white European cultures held racist beliefs. Wallace Manning told those who read her memoirs to "remember that in their own language [the Eskimos] are Inuit, THE People, while you are only a white, whose origin according to eskimo legend is to say the least, uncomplimentary."¹⁰ In the northern case it was impossible for white women to effectively dominate the indigenous people they encountered, if only because of limited numbers. It was also quite impossible to impose cultural values, and even religious conventions on people who might, and would, up and leave on a moment's notice to follow the seal, the caribou, or the run of Arctic char. In the Mackenzie, missionaries and teachers had to compete with deer herds, ice conditions and trapping season. Life simply depended on those seasonal events, and civilization had to be put on hold while the Native population engaged in traditional pursuits.

It should be made clear from the outset of this discussion that if sexual jealousies

⁹Philip D Curtin, "The Environment Beyond Europe and the European Theory of Empire," *Journal of World History*, 1(2), 1990, 136.

¹⁰Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 19. I have used Manning's spelling in the quotation.

developed among white and Native women in the North, it is not evident in the sources. That does not mean it was not there, it just means the women did not reveal their thoughts on the matter. Jean Godsell did note one manifestation, but strangely, it was an observation made from the other perspective and only hinted at sexual jealousies. This perhaps confirms women did not think in terms of sexual jealousies, and it adds substance to the idea that such preoccupation was a condition generated by male-defined frameworks. Women were capable of reflection which concerned perceived and real power within the community, as well as sex.

As she settled in the Mackenzie Valley, Mrs Godsell reflected on how she

represented, without realizing it, the very thing that native born members of the old regime viewed with such suspicion -- most of the Company's Factors were still intermarried with the tribes, and women of mixed blood dominated the social, and to a large extent the business life of all these forts. Instinct seemed to tell them that once their place was usurped by women of the acquisitive and dominating white race, they would be relegated to a position of more or less obscurity, completely shorn of all their power and glory.¹¹

To assume Mrs Godsell's assertion that the Native women thought in terms of power and glory is not *fashionable* in the current academic climate which tends to view any Euro-centric position as misguided, but it would be naive to dismiss her assessment. Both sides were probably feeling threatened under the circumstances of her arrival in the North as wife of an aggressive and flamboyant Factor. She had an appearance to maintain. The Dene women were likely interested in at least maintaining the *status quo*. To pretend otherwise allows no credit to the Dene women concerned, for Native cultures were not passive, and there is no reason to believe Native women were any more submissive than

¹¹Jean Godsell, *I Was No Lady*, 35.

either Native men, or white women.

As early as the turn of the century, Sophie Porter noted the Inuit along the Arctic coast, and in particular the women, showed some ambition to adopt white customs.¹² Native women displayed almost excessive curiosity about their white counterparts, and were receptive to the ideas so foreign to their experience.¹³ This placed an unusual burden upon white women because, while they were prepared and expected to spread the knowledge of a more advanced civilization, they were not equipped to do it on the Native's terms which was how it had to be done in these circumstances. As Luta Munday explained, "they always wanted to know everything, and the hardest thing I ever attempted was to try to explain things to them."¹⁴ White women, for example, felt responsible to communicate the elements of civilization considered female in nature. The problem was that the Inuit women had little or nothing with which to make comparisons.

All the expectations and attitudes of superiority were unable to shield white women from the scrutiny of the Native people they encountered. As in other outposts of the Empire, their white skins set *them* apart, and even if they carried some sense of privilege, they were nervous because of a preconceived image of the Natives as savages, and because they were continually reminded this was *no place* for a white woman. These white women reacted within the limitations of their own customs and experience until

¹²Sophie Porter, "An Arctic Winter," 358.

¹³See Kerry Abel, "Of Two Minds," 77.

¹⁴Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 147.

they learned otherwise.¹⁵ The women had heard stories of cannibalism, slavery, infanticide, and wife swapping, which no doubt made them apprehensive, but what surprised them at the first meeting was how much of a curiosity they were themselves, and they commented especially when the scrutiny came from Native women. The reasons for the focus is not clear. It is possible the Native men were simply not interested, and dismissed the white women as unsuitable for any Native marriage union. They may also have seen the white women as unattractive besides. It could also be the white men who accompanied the white women North directed them to Native women because they assumed women's interests would be mutual. It might also have been because white women were naturally drawn towards the Native women because of what they perceived as common interests.

Luta Munday suggested another reason. "No man" she wrote, "either native or white, cares to have white women in the country." Men found women "a nuisance in every way," because they were not as free to come and do as they pleased which they otherwise might have been. Mrs Munday's rationale for this remark followed the revelation that Inuit men had some habits which disturbed her sensibilities. These habits were "most embarrassing to a white woman when out among them, or travelling with

¹⁵As one later missionary suggested "Utopia only exists in the abstract -- the packaging is as valuable as the contents and is inseparable from the contents -- [she] arrives with the handicap of not understanding the language and since this is the only way [she] gets [her] message across, [she] has to use it and [her] own cultural biases until something better comes along. R. Lechat, OMI, "Evangelization and Colonization," *Eskimo*, Spring/Summer, 1976, 4.

them," and insisted the men had to learn that certain rules must be kept.¹⁶ Anna Rokeby-Thomas remarked on a similar experience, suggesting time had made little difference in changing local custom. She described how she was startled as she walked through the settlement by an Inuit who "came out of his igloo, shook hands and then urinated -- while [they] talked (or tried to), then went casually on his way."¹⁷

Elizabeth Taylor was not the first white woman in the Mackenzie Delta, yet the lack of presence in 1892 was sufficient enough for her to be able to remark that "few of the Eskimos had ever seen a white woman, and they evidently found [her] strange and amusing." They all treated her with the greatest of courtesy she explained, urging her to visit their skin tents. They presented her with gifts of arrows, and trinkets made from walrus ivory. Miss Taylor was sure they expected gifts in return, although since most initial contact had been with traders and whalers, it is more likely the Inuit were looking for the usual reciprocation rather than presents.¹⁸ More perplexing to Elizabeth Taylor was the reaction of one Inuit woman who looked her all over, shut her eyes, then shook her head from side to side as she went off in a fit of laughter. "Evidently, I impressed her as presenting an utterly absurd appearance," wrote Miss Taylor,¹⁹ unable to see herself and her image as anything but the norm.

The Reverend Harold Webster remembered when his wife Edie arrived at

¹⁶Munday, *A Mouny's Wife*, 173.

¹⁷Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Honeymoon," 31.

¹⁸Taylor, "Up the Mackenzie to the Polar Sea," *Travel*, 3, 1899.

¹⁹Taylor, "A Woman Explorer in the Mackenzie Delta," Part III, 230.

Coppermine she was the first white woman the Inuit there had seen. "They wanted to touch her," he wrote, "to touch her clothes, to watch what she did. They followed her everywhere, even into her bedroom." Not surprisingly, Mrs Webster found this irritating, so in response she shut the door behind her. Eventually, "they got used to her and she got used to them."²⁰ Christina Fry was welcomed to her new home at Herschel Island by Inuit who treated her to a cup of tea. While visiting one family, "many of the Natives called and gazed upon me," she wrote, "but I suppose it was to see what the Parson's wife looked like."²¹

Being subjected to a "gaze" from visitors often resulted in lengthy, pregnant silences because the white women were unsure how to react. In their experience, hostesses were obligated to offer some social response. They were not aware that in the Inuit tradition, this was neither expected, nor necessary.²² Beatrice Mason told what happened when Natives visited her cabin in the northern Yukon. They just stared, and "it was very disconcerting to me and at first I felt called upon to try to make conversation, but not speaking the same language, they just stared the harder," she recalled. Her solution was to "cut my monologue and [go] about my business as if they were not there."²³ Annie

²⁰Craven and Webster, *Arctic Adventure*, 85.

²¹Christina Fry to Lucas, Herschel Island, 5 January 1917. GSA, DOA, M71-4, Series 5-3, Box 19.

²²This element of Eskimo etiquette is explained in Barrington Moore, Jr., *Privacy: Studies in Social and Cultural History*, (Armonk, NY: ME Sharpe, Inc, 1984). In Chapter one, Moore examines the experience of Jean Briggs, an anthropologist doing fieldwork in an Eskimo community, where she learned that despite the constant visiting by Eskimos to her tent, this did not impose any obligation towards visitor's wants.

²³Beatrice Mason, YTA, 69.

Card was alone with her young daughter when her first Dene women callers appeared, and she confessed she "felt a little timid." But she "shook their grimy hands, and asked them to come in." Mrs Card thought she knew what was of interest to women, so she showed them her stove, and they were fascinated by her mirror. She made them tea, and then afterwards took them to see her chickens, which she explained was the most entertaining part of the afternoon for her guests.²⁴

It is this contact at a social level which separates the experience of white women in the North from that of their counterparts in the imperial settings of Asia and Africa. In many Northern communities, the mixed blood wives of traders were accepted in the social circle of other white women, primarily because they offered the only link with their own culture. Inuit women and their families often dropped in to Anglican missions. They were uninvited, but in the North, visitors understood they would be welcome.

Inquisitive Inuit women, and men, were probably intrigued by the obvious distinction in dress and demeanour between the sexes of the white race. The Inuit had some difficulty with the Grey Nuns, for instance, and not just because of the strangeness of their habit. The missions established by the Grey Nuns were actually run by Oblate Fathers, and under their contract, the Sisters were obligated to "help the Oblates in all possible ways." In return the Fathers provided for spiritual and material needs, so it should come as no surprise that the Natives viewed this as some sort of marital relationship.²⁵ Anything else would have been incomprehensible to their culture.

²⁴Card, "An Indian Agent's Wife," 22.

²⁵"Fort Providence," Typescript history, SGME.

The visual differences between white men and women explains Grace O'Kelly's account of her first encounter with Inuit women which only hints at how perplexed and frightened she must have been. She wrote

The women stood in a group on the shore and when I arrived they rushed towards me in a body completely surrounding me. Some of them fell at my feet, examining my brogues and spats most minutely, others felt and rubbed my beaver coat - for it was fur they had never seen before, and my gloves were taken off and my hands examined with ordinary interest. They were most desirous to remove all of my clothes but I had this part of the performance stopped by an interpreter whom I called to my assistance. The children who were then brought forward screamed with fright when they saw me and ran away -- not particularly complimentary, but a fact nevertheless.²⁶

The fascination with hands was also reported by Sadie Stringer who remembered Inuit women took her hands and stroked them. "They guessed I was tired and a little lonely," she thought, so their ministrations were intended to soothe. Mrs Stringer was impressed by the way the Inuit women had gone to the chief and told him she was frightened and needed their support.²⁷

To knowing eyes, hands can tell more about an individual than simple skin colour, and the Inuit women would have used those observations to form their own opinion about the white woman in their midst. The Inuit women would have been looking for indications of Mrs Stringer's capabilities as an Arctic wife and mother whose primary duty was to provide warm clothing for her family. Because of the hostile climate, the manufacture of suitable clothing was a valuable skill. White women relied heavily on

²⁶Grace O'Kelly, Typescript , PABC, Mss 2636, 34. (Mrs O'Kelly also wrote under the name Gladys.

²⁷"A Woman in the Wilderness," *Letter Leaflet*, October 1914, 378.

Native women to provide the clothing for white families as well, partly because white women did not know how to prepare and chew skins to be sewn, and partly because they could not bring themselves to do it after they learned the procedures. The realization of whom was necessary to whose comfort was not lost on either white or Native women.

Caring for their families was a role held in common by white and Native women, but motherhood created one of the most significant gulfs between the two races, even while it was a singularly common experience. Childbirth itself reinforced the cultural differences because there were two sets of practices, each one reflective of the environment and tradition in its own way. Only in rare instances did the two cultures meet so white women aided Native women, or Native midwives were called to assist white women. There were a number of reasons why.

In her assessment of British women in the Empire, Margaret Strobel maintains that during childbirth, the use of indigenous midwives meant crossing racial barriers, and increased anxieties for British women who were concerned with maintaining racial boundaries.²⁸ That suggestion shows a lack of understanding which is unfortunate for a feminist analysis. It assumes that concepts of racial superiority controlled how women lived their lives without taking into full account the ordeal itself. Childbirth is an intimate event, where it is impossible to maintain much dignity or sustain any sense of modesty, so if Strobel's conclusion means white women preferred their inferiors did not see them in a demeaning position then there might be some support for the argument that racial barriers were the issue. There is the possibility white women just simply preferred to

²⁸Strobel, *European Women*, 18.

have a trained white attendant for the same reasons. In the Arctic, anxieties were indeed obvious. When faced with what they viewed as a perilous undertaking, white women were apprehensive because of language difficulties, or what they believed to be unhygienic and "primitive" practices. Why white women would be suspicious can be appreciated when their views of Native childbirth are known.

Sadie Stringer's narrative, written at Herschel Island in 1898, follows her announcement of a Native birth near the community. There has been no attempt to establish the veracity of Mrs Stringer's report because its value lies more in the realization that this is how she envisioned the Native experience. She wrote:

Whenever an Eskimo child is about to be born, a snow house is always built for the mother and she enters it alone. After the birth of the child, the mother remains in the snow house for a period of five days. No one goes inside the house, and no one goes to see her, only one woman who carries her food to her and passes it in through the low entrance called a door. After the expiration of five days, she is allowed to go back to live with her family in their house. This woman I speak of now did not want the child to live because it was a girl, so immediately it was born she herself carried it about half a mile away to the side of the hill and left it out there in the snow to die.²⁹

Emily Craig Romig had met Mrs Stringer on a trek to the Klondike in 1898. She remembered this story as Mrs Stringer had related it, but added that Mrs Stringer had also told her she had visited one Inuit woman while she was alone in her snow house. Mr Stringer got sick shortly after, and the Natives found out. They told her that if she had stayed at home, he would still be well.

Mrs Romig commented that when Inuit babies were born, the mothers just sat on a

²⁹Sadie Stringer, Herschel Island, 25 January 1898. GSA, DOA, Isaac Stringer Papers, Series 2, 2-a-1.

box, adding "this was apparently not too much of a ceremony, and not much thought of as a performance, it just happened."³⁰ With variations, this view about Native childbirth prevailed. Carolyn Soper was determined to see how Inuit women managed in childbirth, and as a trained nurse, was prepared to offer any assistance she could provide. The first opportunity arose when her own Inuit helper gave birth shortly after the Sopers arrived at Lake Harbour in 1930. When Neve did not arrive at the house one morning, Mrs Soper paid a call at the family's *tupik* and found Neve kneeling on sleeping robes, stitching seal skin boots. The Native midwife was present, but Mrs Soper stayed for about an hour. When she returned after lunch, Neve was outside the *tupik*, and the baby was safely tucked in her hood, "cozily swathed in skins of the Arctic hare. The umbilical cord had been cut several inches from his body and tied with a piece of string" from a coal sack. Carolyn Soper noted her trained mind thought immediately of infection, but she reconsidered her hasty desire to help, and concluded that since these "primitive" women had managed quite well without outside help her interference might prove harmful.

Mrs Soper decided that for Inuit women, "childbirth was usually a quick and easy function," which implied to her readers that childbirth for Inuit women was distinctive from that of the white women reading her account in the *Beaver*. It was her understanding that out on the land, dog teams were halted and a few snow blocks were thrown up to provide shelter. When the baby was born, the infant was placed as quickly

³⁰Emily Craig Romig, *The Life and Travels of a Pioneer Woman in Alaska*, (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Privately Printed, 1945), 74 and 54.

as possible in the hood of the mother's parka, and for the remainder of the day, the mother rode in the sled. Usually by the next day, mother trudged along by foot beside the sled.³¹ To women conditioned to view childbirth as a confinement, an illness attended by nurses and doctors, the "primitiveness" of Inuit birth was pointedly apparent, although it must not be assumed white women were insensitive to the need for essential adaptations.

Mena Orford recorded one aspect of Native practices which was specific, and which had been alluded to by Carolyn Soper. Mrs Orford's medical officer husband had noticed the high rate of post-partum haemorrhage and death among Inuit mothers. He was unable to get anywhere near an Inuit birth, but his young daughters had occasion to be present in an Inuit tent when a baby was born. Over dinner that evening, their astonished mother heard them explain how the midwife had only tied the umbilical cord towards the baby,³² which accounted for the puzzling number of post-partum deaths.

Like Dr Orford and Carolyn Soper, Anna Rokeby-Thomas lamented the Inuit women at Cambridge Bay would not allow her to attend as a midwife. She had undertaken special training with the Victorian Order of Nurses before she left Guelph to prepare her for "Igloo Deliveries." "I'm sure [the VON] felt they were making a contribution to mankind," wrote Mrs Rokeby-Thomas, but after her first year in the Arctic, she realized the Inuit women did not want her present at any births. "I was to learn that child-bearing was something they took for granted and was not considered a sickness," she recorded.

³¹Soper, "A Nurse Goes to Baffin Island," 34.

³²Orford, *Journey North*, 76.

But the main reason was that if they should be having a run of girls, it was more than coincidence that some of the girl babies didn't survive. I found the thought of old people and babies freezing in igloos and baby girls being allowed to die revolting.³³

Mrs Rokeby-Thomas recognized the problem was with her own feelings, and concluded "my pride was hurt because of my non-existent role as midwife." She arrived in the North prepared to provide "civilized" assistance, only to discover she could simply be ignored.³⁴

By the time Mrs Rokeby-Thomas arrived at Cambridge Bay, it was possible for white women to fly south to give birth, but it was risky to assume the doctor could fly in when needed. White women in the North viewed childbirth as ominous, for the process of birth was fast developing into a medically supervised condition characterized by artificial interventions, so when the opportunity arose, some women chose to go south, or at least to one of the mission hospitals. Their fears can be explained partly by the isolation, and because there was no help at hand except, perhaps, a husband.³⁵ This sense of loneliness was demonstrated by Catherine Hoare who commiserated to Sadie Stringer how she had not known Mrs Merritt was at Fort MacPherson when she gave birth to her son at

³³Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Sadness and Joy," *North*, 22(2), March/April 1975, 16. The implication, of course, is that Mrs Rokeby-Thomas did consider childbirth as a sickness which required medical attendance.

³⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵One notable exception seems to be the birth of Evelyn Scott at Arctic Bay in 1938. (First baby born farthest north in the British Empire!) Mrs Scott was apparently attended by two Eskimo women. I think there are two reasons for this change in attitude. The first is the late date, reflecting a change in view, but it is more likely that since Mr Scott was an HBC trader, he had no "medical" training like missionary men who were sent into the North. That meant Mrs Scott did not even have the benefit of a husband/midwife. Richard Marriot, "Arctic Bay Baby," *Beaver*, December, 1939, 46.

Aklavik in 1921. "If only we had known," she wrote, supposing everything would have been easier, for both women were trained nurses.³⁶ No doubt tales such as that of Rose Spendlove at Fort Norman in the late nineteenth century had circulated amongst the women. Mrs Spendlove had nine children; apparently all were breach presentations. One author has suggested the only assistance to Rose Spendlove was provided by her husband, a carving knife, and an Indian woman, which is probably a colourful description meant to impress the point.³⁷

Childbirth for Native women who lived in the Mackenzie Valley was different because the Native population was not as nomadic as the Inuit, and there was no need for them to give birth and then move hastily along the trail. Native women did have midwives of their own, and there are at least two examples of these attending a white, European mother, although it is clear that to the families of the women about to give birth these attendants were there only to assist the designated midwife. Charles Whittaker recorded the birth of his daughter Mabel in June of 1899 at Peel River, where two Native women provided assistance.³⁸ He had apparently gained some experience when he had attended complications arising at Native births.

Louisa Camsell Mills described in an unpublished memoir how she believed Native women in the region managed childbirth. She remembered they were usually alone, and

³⁶Catherine Hoare to Sadie Stringer, Aklavik, 11 January 1922. YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 252, File 3, Box 4.

³⁷Thomas, "Kindly Despatch Miss Gatsby." This article was written from Mrs Spendlove's diaries.

³⁸Whittaker, "Autobiographical Account," GMA, 33.

recalled one young girl at Fort Simpson who went into the bush in the middle of the winter.

About a mile from the Fort she made a little camp for herself, first clearing away the snow with her snow shoes, then cutting down some spruce boughs to sit on. She then built a small fire, and there, all alone in 50 degrees below zero weather, her baby was born. The next day she walked into the Fort with her infant strapped up in a moss bag on her back, neither suffering any ill effects after their trying experience.³⁹

Mrs Mill's experience was somewhat unique because she was not a temporary resident in the North, and her own mother was of mixed blood and had lived there since the 1860s, so the trust of a Native attendant may have been more a matter of personal acquaintance and because Mrs Camsell and the Bishop's wife were available as well as the Indian midwife.

Interviewed in later years, Mrs Mills recalled

When my first baby was born, I really needed a doctor, but there was none near. After a great deal of consultation between my mother, the Bishop's wife, and my Indian midwife, they decided to call in an old Indian who said he could help me. He gave me some dried up root which he cut up carefully with his jack-knife. He then sat smoking his pipe and after he was finished, got up and said, you'll be all right in a little while, and strange to say, I was.⁴⁰

Even after the passage of time, Louisa Mills was sceptical of the Native healing practices for childbirth complications which were a part of her own heritage.

Until mission hospitals were established in the early thirties, or unless women were in settlements where there were several other white women, the only white midwife available was a husband, and it is not uncommon to find entries in diaries reading:

³⁹Mills, "Seventy Years Ago."

⁴⁰*Ibid.*

"Herschel Noel was born on Christmas morning. As on the previous occasion we were alone."⁴¹ "Our little son born at 5.30pm. Only myself in attendance upon Mrs Reid."⁴² Ironically, this male presence contributed to birth being a family event during the period when throughout Canada the trend was toward approaching childbirth as illness, which required medical attendants in a hospital setting. Under the guise of a new medical field called obstetrics, the unique female experience became male dominated. In the North, circumstances required parents to adopt an almost reverse approach.

There has been some debate among feminist historians in Canada about the changes in obstetrical practices and the subsequent elimination of the traditional midwife.⁴³ Northern Canada has not been included in those studies, and regrettably, there is not enough material available to change that exclusion, or even add substantially to the base of information. There are implications in the Northern model, however, for those who contend there is some relation between paternal ideologies and the growth of obstetrics, for studies which follow urban models, or analyze the patterns in rural areas of more mature provinces do not adequately judge the impact of isolation and the frontier, or the influences of indigenous customs. The available evidence does suggest white women's experience in remote regions demonstrates how otherwise independent and adaptable

⁴¹William Fry to Isaac Stringer, 12 January 1919. YTA, ACC, DOY, COR 251, File 16.

⁴²"Journals of St Matthew's Mission," Fort McPherson. NWTA, N79-027, St Matthew's Mission, 37, 1 June 1919.

⁴³See the essays in Katherine Arnup, Andree Levesque and Ruth Roach Pierson, Eds., *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, (London: Routledge, 1990).

white women were trapped by their own cultural sensitivities and fears about birth rather than influenced by racist tendencies. It was cultural conditioning which prevented them from using the traditional technologies around them. While they did not have the necessary facilities and assistance designated necessary by medical and paternal institutions, they still had to deal with the anxieties the ideology generated. As a consequence, what might have been a shared experience among women was not shared at all. Only the biological process itself remained the same.

Significantly, white men and women viewed the birth of children in the North as momentous occasions, which of course to the families concerned, they were. The birth of a white child was often presented as a heroic feat especially when the white child was the first one to be born in the region, in a particular settlement, at the farthest north point, or on some particular Arctic island. The immediate reaction to these "records" is how Eurocentric they seem. After all, babies had been born to indigenous mothers in the Canadian Arctic for centuries.⁴⁴ Viewed from another perspective, claims of a special record indicate there was no collective memory of safe births in the region for white mothers -- mothers who had been raised to fear childbirth and its complications, and who expected difficulties and were well aware of the consequences should something go wrong. The concern would not only be for themselves, but would extend to any infant left motherless, for there was no recorded practice of using Native wet nurses, and

⁴⁴Inuit mothers, of course, often succumbed to the rigours of childbirth on the trail. Just because women in so-called "primitive" societies had managed childbirth for centuries without European medical assistance does not mean that it was a safe enterprise.

indeed, there was always the spectre of infanticide associated with Native custom.

Chilla Bulbeck writes in "New Histories of the Memsahib" that motherhood narrowed the lives of women living out in the field, although it is arguable that motherhood narrowed the lives of women wherever they were because a family adds responsibility and expands the role of a wife. In this case, the field had an additional impact. In the case of the Arctic, the harsh environment, and isolation from the usual female support networks narrowed the field even more, and influenced how mothers effected their roles. Bulbeck also suggests motherhood allowed for a closer interchange with indigenous women,⁴⁵ and through the traditional occupations associated with women's work, white women were able to train indigenous women in those mysteries associated with motherhood and marriage in the South. The northern model is somewhat skewed because while white women were teachers and nurses, for example, a considerable number of those women were unmarried. The interchange operated at a different level.

Only Mena Orford expressed any specific concerns about the Inuit woman who looked after her children, and she had difficulty with the difference in attitudes about child rearing which came from that experience. Mrs Orford viewed Native practice as very lax, for the Inuit allowed their children to do as they pleased, and corporal punishment was culturally unacceptable to them. This attitude seemed to particularly offend the missionaries, who were unable to recognize the positive effects of that freedom. "We have so little trouble with our children, they are so well disciplined, if

⁴⁵Bulbeck, "New Histories of the Memsahib," 93.

dealt with consistently" recorded Reita Latham.⁴⁶ What amazed Bessie Quirt, one of the first teachers at the Residential School at Shingle Point, was how the Inuit were willing to leave their children in the care of strangers, and with the knowledge they would not see them for months because families would be out on the land. But Miss Quirt understood why these children were not disciplined within their families. She explained in a newspaper interview about the Inuit superstition that children were born with the spirit of an ancestor, and this was especially the case if there had been a recent death. So the parents thought

it would be presumptuous on their part to correct the child or force him to do anything he did not want to do, since he was really a reincarnation of the older person. This feeling remains until the child is about fourteen when he is supposed to revert to normal. If you ask an Eskimo father to send his child to school, he replies 'I'll ask him,' and if the child does not want to come to school, he is not made to do so.⁴⁷

Knowledge of the purpose behind cultural practices did not make acceptance any easier for white women, however. The Inuit practice of infanticide offended their own sensibilities so much they chose to disbelieve, or to rationalize the practice in some other way as a defence mechanism against having to deal with the unthinkable. Sophie Porter thought that while Inuit were "liable to leave their female children around anywhere, or trade them off for dogs or rifles to any one disposed to take them," she did not think this was done from "natural unkindness, only habit," for as a rule, Inuit "treat children well as long as they have food or clothes for them."⁴⁸ This sentiment was repeated by Grace

⁴⁶Reita Latham, *Living Message*, October 1932.

⁴⁷"Work Among Eskimos Satisfies the Soul," *Montreal Daily Star*, 4 February 1933.

⁴⁸Porter, "An Arctic Winter," 355.

O'Kelly who noted an Inuit family rarely had more than two or three children, and any over that number were adopted by childless couples "or disappear in mysterious ways while young." There was no need for "the advanced ideas of our old friend Malthus" in the North, she thought. Nature and culture took care of that, but the Inuit appeared "to be very fond of those they do bring up," and those children were showed off with some pride.⁴⁹

Mrs O'Kelly, who had been so closely inspected by the local women, was herself intrigued by how women on the Arctic coast carried their children with them. She observed that under every *artigie*, and against her bare back, every woman she saw carried a baby.⁵⁰ The parka-like garment was tied around the woman's waist to keep the child from falling through, for the baby travelled in a large hood. "At the slightest whimper the mother untied the string, leaned forward and with a shake of her shoulders the baby would appear from beneath her skirt in front -- a trick worthy of a conjurer." No doubt Mrs O'Kelly could not visualize herself performing the same feat, but she was astounded when she realized that no matter how damp the ground, babies who were only four to six months old were placed upon it and exposed to the icy wind while their mothers nursed them at leisure. This made her shiver in her tweed suit and heavy beaver coat.⁵¹

In her memoir, Grace O'Kelly made one of the few documented remarks about

⁴⁹O'Kelly, Typescript, PABC, 39.

⁵⁰Unfortunately Mrs O'Kelly failed to reconcile this comment with her previous observation about the small size of Eskimo families.

⁵¹O'Kelly, Typescript, PABC, 31.

women's condition in Inuit society in terms of sexual equality. The women had followed her everywhere and wanted to trade sinew and skins for all the clothes Mrs O'Kelly wore. "To get rid of them" she gave them cigarettes and needles. The cigarettes were snatched out of her hand by one of the men, even though she told him they were for the women. "He replied that she was his woman and he had a perfect right to the present," Mrs O'Kelly explained, "and she "let it go at that as woman's rights had not yet been preached along those shores."⁵² She knew nothing she could do or say would change the lot of Inuit women, but she had also noticed that in some ways, these women were held in some esteem.

Like Mrs O'Kelly, Luta Munday observed that "woman suffrage had certainly not arrived among the people." She explained that Inuit "women must never eat deer tongues," which she astutely pointed out was "a wise taboo on the part of men, as it assured them always having that delicacy for themselves." She also noted women could not eat the eggs of wild birds until they had given birth to one child. The men, she concluded, were clever and artful to impose these customs.⁵³

Grace O'Kelly described how she had observed an Inuit woman being held at the police barracks with another woman and a man who had aided her in strangling two previous husbands. She was an old woman, and had eluded capture by police by making dog-like tracks in the snow. Mrs O'Kelly was impressed by this clever manoeuvre, but she was intrigued by the third husband who "seemed most devoted and could be found

⁵²Ibid., 36.

⁵³Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 184.

sitting in their tent with his arm around his lady love, or holding her hand as he walked," she remarked. It is not clear if the Inuit woman had murdered the first two husbands so she could marry the third, although it is apparent that Mrs O'Kelly believed it to be the case, and she was more envious than damning of the woman. She also noted this behaviour was the only form of love-making she "witnessed among the stolid, and apparently unresponsive natives of these coasts."⁵⁴

Perhaps Mrs O'Kelly expected to see more open affection from the Inuit because of rumours she had heard about sexual customs. The Inuit practice of wife-swapping was misunderstood as promiscuity by most whites, who like Luta Munday determined "moral conditions among the Eskimos were really bad." Of course, evaluation of those moral conditions was based upon Christian and European codes of conduct, and Mrs Munday recognized the Inuit were more *unmoral* rather than they were *immoral*. For them, relationships which Europeans considered immoral were not wrong.⁵⁵ Not surprisingly, it was feminist Agnes Deans Cameron who placed the issue of wife-swapping into proper perspective. She noted that in the "rest of America," the rule was one man, one wife. There was, however, an "elasticity of the rule in Chicago and elsewhere, so that it may read one man, one wife at a time."⁵⁶ Was the Inuit custom really much different?

Relations between the sexes also puzzled Anna Rokeby-Thomas because she had observed that

⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 28.

⁵⁵Munday, *A Mounty's Wife*, 175.

⁵⁶Cameron, *The New North*, 168. See Chapter "Speaking of Me and Franklin."

smiles on the faces of Eskimo women were genuine, they were happy and content, they have great respect for their men, even though they get an occasional beating. There were not enough women to go around, so men share women. It seems SAD, but WORSE, women are exchanged like chattels.⁵⁷

Diamond Jenness explained the practice of exchanging wives in his account of two years living among the Inuit in the early part of the twentieth century. He wrote that the "transfer of wedlock was not made indiscriminately but according to definite regulations." A man may have had wives and children in many tribes, but this meant that he had kinship ties which allowed him to hunt and fish in another family's territory. "A stranger was a potential enemy who could be killed at sight, but by this system of temporarily exchanging wives the natives could travel from one end of the country to another."⁵⁸

Wife-swapping was not an issue in the Mackenzie Valley, but temptations of the flesh were, and despite any reasonable explanation, it perplexed missionary women like Margaret Tims whose concept of morality was too tied up with the religious notions of sin to account for northern experiences. The missionaries likened the frustration of conveying the message about sin and temptation to their Native charges as "trying to break down a thick stone wall with a few pebbles." Miss Tims was a missionary at Hay River who visited the homes of Natives where she would tell them bible stories and show them pictures. But if she talked about sin, the Natives would tell her they never sinned,

⁵⁷Rokeby-Thomas, "Some Notable Inuit," *North*, (22)5, 1975, 16.

⁵⁸Diamond Jenness, *The People of the Twilight*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928), 53-54.

and of course if they never sinned, they never felt need of a Saviour.⁵⁹

The concept of sin was not the only abstract notion which thwarted white women's attempts to change Native customs. Wallace Manning found that the notion of time was "not a cut and dried commodity parcelled out into valuable sections each of which must be seized and spent in a manner advantageous to the spender." For the scientist with limited time at her disposal, Mrs Manning found it difficult to accept that, for the Inuit, time was a "leisurely thing that goes on and on at one's convenience." She decided "Eskimos on the whole hurry only when they must and not think of tomorrow."⁶⁰ What had escaped Mrs Manning was the Inuit did indeed live for today, because the struggle for survival was simply a daily one, and while routines of the day and season were important in the lives of the Inuit, they were not necessarily conspicuous. Besides, where would they get a timepiece? As Luta Munday noted, the Inuit had no way of reckoning time, neither for the day, nor for the long term. Only by remembering some incident could they reckon time in the past.⁶¹

After her lengthy stay in the North, Selina Bompas told readers of the *Imperial Colonist* that women who went into the North should be prepared to deal with the idiosyncrasies of the Natives, "to meet them as equals, not inferiors, to deal gently with their failings and above all, show towards them under all circumstances, 'the summer

⁵⁹*Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work of the Hay River Mission, Great Slave Lake, NWT*, (Np: Nd, Literature Society of the WA to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada,) 12. GSA.

⁶⁰Manning, *Igloo for the Night*, 36.

⁶¹Munday, *A Mouny's Wife*, 147.

calm of golden charity'.⁶² Determining the failings of the Native population seemed to be easy enough, but remaining calm was a difficult lesson for white women to learn. After all, they were the ones who were there to do the teaching. Reita Latham lamented the Natives at Shingle Point had not the slightest idea how to use money, for example. The Natives felt they had to spend it. Miss Latham viewed it as part of her function to teach the Natives to buy "such things as will be of real use and value to their lives,"⁶³ not recognizing that their purchase of things which took their fancy was not a reflection of her failure to instruct, but more of an indication the Natives were capable of using the exchange to serve their own needs and desires. Obviously, material wealth accumulated with an eye to the future, like time, was not as much a priority for them as it was for her.

Although white women expressed frustrations with their inability to teach the value of southern customs to the Natives, *nothing* offended them more than the Natives' apparent disregard for cleanliness, although for those who lived among the Inuit, there was some recognition of the reasons why baths in the Arctic were unrealistic. Anna Rokeby-Thomas wondered "how many of us under the same circumstance could even endure a weekly bath."⁶⁴ The personal hygiene of Natives has already been touched upon in a previous chapter, but it should be noted that for missionaries, sometimes dirt even interfered with their vocation. Margaret Tims remembered her arrival at Hay River in

⁶²Bompas, "Our Women in the North," 85.

⁶³Reita Latham, *Living Message*, December 1932.

⁶⁴Rokeby-Thomas, "Arctic Life, 1937," *Living Message*, March 1938, 71.

1890 because even while the physical surroundings surprised her, her "heart sank" when she looked at the Natives themselves. "Would I ever get used to them," she asked. "They were awful, especially the women," and even though she told herself "they were my sisters and I must love them if I would do them good," it was no use. She confessed "I was ashamed to think I felt like that and tried to pretend to myself that I loved the Indians." Gradually, she wrote, that victory was won.⁶⁵

Catherine Hoare believed the Inuit at Herschel Island lived practical Christian lives. They were a joy to work with because they were sincere, kindly, and truthful, and so "honest, one cannot help liking them. But oh! they are dirty! Dirty in every way," she recorded. What was most annoying was "they seem to make slower progress in this respect than in any other."⁶⁶ One way of dealing with the lack of progress was through the children. Reita Latham told the *Living Message* that during the winter of 1931, the school at Shingle Point had a neatness contest, in an effort "to tidy up the Eskimo race of the future." This was a successful enterprise, for the Inuit children were eager to learn and were responsive to mission teaching in the short term.

One teacher described how the children's faces were "at all times interested, responsive and happy." She had expected less, for she revealed that "once one had been among them even for a short time, one almost forgets that they are native children, because they have so many of the same natural traits as white children."⁶⁷ Ten years

⁶⁵Margaret Tims, *Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work*, 8.

⁶⁶Catherine Hoare to Bishop Lucas, 15 January 1921, PAA 70.387, MR 200/85.

⁶⁷Priscilla Shepherd, Shingle Point, *Living Message*, July 1931.

earlier, Mary Samwell had written to her Bishop from Hay River that she felt Inuit children were intelligent and "can quite readily accomplish what they put their minds to, and have excellent memories." Like other children, (meaning white children) her pupils were more interested in concrete work rather than the abstract, she decided, but nevertheless "were lacking in the power to apply themselves."⁶⁸ This attitude should be viewed from the perspective of a *teacher* as well as from the aspect of racial superiority. As teachers, white women felt they were well placed to indoctrinate Inuit children into a better way of life than that which they considered the children already had. Reita Latham wrote from Shingle Point in 1932 that

in every instance where we see the lack of culture and training, we endeavour to work towards the end of so educating and training the children we have with us that they shall develop and choose rather to go by our teaching than to follow after the foolish method and manner in which their parents have trod.⁶⁹

She added this task was made easier because opportunities were unlimited as nearly everything which was suggested to the children was accepted.

At Hay River ten years earlier, however, Mary Samwell had expressed concern to Bishop Lucas about teaching memory work to Native pupils. She noted that while they had little difficulty memorizing, she was worried they did not understand what she was teaching. She would have rather they understood, she told Lucas, but there were just too many children to teach. More importantly, many in her class were soon going back on the land, and this was their last opportunity for lessons.⁷⁰ Mary Samwell's problem was

⁶⁸16 September 1921, PAA, DMR, MR200/142/Box MR12.

⁶⁹Reita Latham, *Living Message*, December 1932.

⁷⁰4 March 1922. PAA, DMR, 70.387/MR200.

not necessarily the size of her class. Her comments reflect the inability of these teachers to properly evaluate the impact of their lessons, because the Northern lifestyle did not fit the patterns with which they were familiar. The concerns also indicate the usual northern problem of sporadic attendance, and that classes were filled with pupils of all ages and representing a diverse level of achievement.

When the school at Shingle Point was established in 1930, Priscilla Shepherd reported there were eight boys and fifteen girls. The youngest boy was six, and the oldest thirteen. Four of the girls were still babies, she noted, and the remainder between six and fourteen. Only one child knew any English, and a few could count and recite the alphabet, which she attributed to mothers who had had some missionary contact.⁷¹ By 1933, Addie Butler was the only teacher for thirty-eight pupils, and according to Isobel Hutchison, taught English, reading, writing and arithmetic, as well as English folk-dancing and recitations. This curriculum caused Dr Hutchison to ponder on what Robert Louis Stevenson's reaction would have been "if he could have sat with her, listening to a little frosty eskimo glibly reciting his verses."⁷²

It should come as no surprise that what was taught in these mission schools was rife with what might now be viewed as imperialist rhetoric. After all, that is what they were teaching in Canadian and British schools, which is where the teachers were trained. But despite the fact that Priscilla Shepherd proudly reported in 1930 that her prize pupil was

⁷¹*Living Message*, May 1930.

⁷²Hutchison, *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun*, 198.

able to recite "Our Flag" with competence and relish,⁷³ it is questionable how much of the *Empire* propaganda was absorbed by Inuit and Native children. It is noticeable from some sources that the women who had to work with the children were sensitive to the need for some local content in their teaching. The imperialistic content of the education provided in Northern schools is more significant for what it tells us about the teaching than it does about how far and deep the ideals were spread. Caution is required when assessing the impact; just because they tried to teach it does not mean it was learned.

Samples of work sent from Shingle Point to the Deputy Minister in 1932 show examples of spelling sentences like *Do the naughty kittens smell a rat nearby*, and *He is crying because he cannot get there out of the turnip field*. These would have been difficult for Inuit children to comprehend. Rats, kittens and turnips were well outside their life experience, but in fairness to the teachers, the same tests showed sentences such as *Mr Smith is at Kittagazuit*, and *I did not go to Bernard Harbour*.⁷⁴ When Flossie Hirst repainted the nursery at Pangnirtung, the scenes included those of Inuit families and northern wildlife,⁷⁵ rather than kittens, sheep in the meadow, and windmills, which were featured in spelling lessons and which might well have appeared on the nursery walls. These small adaptations do not suggest any overwhelming attitudinal changes in concepts of cultural superiority, but do indicate that change was possible.

Some efforts to teach were decidedly unsympathetic to local custom, however. One

⁷³*Living Message*, August 1930.

⁷⁴Fleming to Rowat, 4 Jan 1933. PAC, RG85, Vol 1883, File 630/219-2.

⁷⁵Hirst, Diaries, GSA, II.

example of this was the formation of Girl Guide Companies. Boy Scout Troops and Cub Packs also operated in the North, but Brownie Packs and Guide Companies were under the exclusive direction of women. There is something almost bizarre about the concept of a white woman from the South teaching Native girls in the Mackenzie Valley how to follow a trail in the bush using Baden-Powell's woodcraft signals, or how to light a fire at the end of the day's hike. Yet, at mission schools in the North, Guide and Brownie meetings were considered to be a great help in character building wrote Helen Sowden from Hay River in 1935, "and the outdoor activities called for in the programme afford them the pleasures very dear to their former mode of living."⁷⁶

Few documentary sources about pre-war Girl Guide Companies in the NWT have survived, but an early log book of the First Hay River Girl Guide Company has.⁷⁷ The log begins in 1934, and continues to 1936. There is no signature on the handwritten scribbler, but it was probably kept by Helen Sowden who reported on Girl Guide activities to the *Living Message* during those years. While the Company was established in 1934, it had an unsuccessful first year, and an entry for January 1935 declares that "after a lapse of almost six months, due to unsatisfactory behaviour on the part of the Guides, we restarted on probation and had an opening meeting." It is unknown if the original members were simply recalcitrant Girl Guides, although the leader's disclosure that patrols were not named at this time suggests it might have been the case. Patrols

⁷⁶*Living Message*, January 1936. Since this programme was offered to girls in residence at the boarding school, this comment suggests Miss Sowden believed their former mode of living was a permanent way of the past.

⁷⁷GSA, DOA, M71-4, Series 2-1-i.

permitted a system of peer control; responsibility was earned by older girls as they progressed through the programme. This may have been impossible under the circumstances because there were no experienced girls to accept responsibility, and because of cultural considerations where some Guides may not have recognized the authority of another girl.

It is possible the Company's activities might have simply been suspended because they were a favoured amusement, and this was punishment for school infractions. The Company was subject to short term shut downs for more important activities such as confirmation classes, but the log entries suggest the programme followed closely the ideals and activities of the Girl Guides of Canada. Included in the teaching were the Guide Law and Promise, much of which would make little sense to Native girls at Hay River, although those who had already been indoctrinated to the Christian Mission would have some idea about duty to God, King and country. The Girl Guide Company also provided an appropriate setting to teach the girls modern health and hygiene. Child welfare classes included lessons about baby health and nutrition, and the proper way of bathing an infant. Of course this socialized girls as mothers, but there was never any serious doubt in this setting that the future held any other promise, so it was seen as a useful skill. The Guides also learned first aid, although there were often shortages of supplies. The leader recorded in the log that no smelling salts were available, but one of the Guides had suggested using hung fish as an equivalent.

By the time the First Hay River Girl Guide Company held their meeting on the 24th May, 1935, there were two patrols in operation: the Pansies and the Bluebirds. During

the spring there had been a number of outdoor excursions, including one where two of the Guides had fallen into a slew, but this particular meeting was held indoors because of inclement weather. The Company reviewed their lessons on the flags, played Kim's game,⁷⁸ and then were told the story of the Daisy, which was the floral emblem of the Empire.

As these activities reveal, there was nothing subtle about the imperialism of the Girl Guide programme of the 1930s, and nothing served to indoctrinate these children better to imperialist ideas like Girl Guide Companies and Boy Scout Troops, although the question must be asked about how much of this instruction was absorbed and how much was discarded when girls and boys returned to their families where there were no regular meetings. There is no way to measure the permanent impact. Guiding might simply have been yet another weekly chore for the girls who attended because someone else insisted they do it. It might possibly have been just a lark for others. There is no reason to believe these Girl Guides were all that different from adolescent girls who lived elsewhere in Canada. All that can be concluded is that the missionary teachers fostered the paramilitary groups with enthusiasm for they saw the structure as an effective means of teaching all those life skills they believed important, including self-discipline, pride in

⁷⁸The new recruit was required to learn the history of the three flags which made up the Union Jack, and the protocol for maintaining and flying the flag before she could be enrolled as a Girl Guide. She also had to memorize, and show some understanding of the Guide Law and Promise. Kim's Game -- for those uninitiated in the mysteries of Guides and Brownies or Kipling, is a memory game. Objects were placed on a tray and exposed for a set period of time. The object was to identify as many items as possible when the tray was re-covered. This game was used to teach observation as well as memory skills. These aspects of the programme were still an integral part Guiding as late as the 1960s. The programme has now changed.

appearance, self-respect and respect for authority.⁷⁹ Those skills were not deleterious in themselves, but when coupled with the assumptions of cultural interference which went along with their teaching, they take on deeper meaning, and present just one example of how good intentions can become labelled as racist behaviour.

By the time the Guide Company at Aklavik was formed in 1937, Guiding was an Empire-wide movement, and supposedly adaptable to cultures of all kinds, providing they subscribed to the ideals of duty to God, and country. Leaders felt that being Girl Guides was one way of allowing girls in the North to see themselves as a part of a wider group, and Ethel Hewer wrote to *Living Message* readers that while parkas, fur boots and mitts were the usual uniform for the "most northerly Company in the British Empire," they were "very proud to belong to the Great Sisterhood of Guides, even if they were so far away at the top of the world." It may have been the enthusiasm was Miss Hewer's, because she also noted some girls were a bit bewildered by the whole idea when they were first arrived at the school at Aklavik, and when Guiding was explained to them. They were, she decided, "somewhat amused at the funny things these white people do."⁸⁰

Despite efforts to convey the message which Girl Guiding offered, for Anglicans and

⁷⁹ Richard Finnie, in his 1944 report, was more cynical about the purpose of Girl Guide Companies and Boy Scout Troops at northern missions. The children were "drilled to signal with flags such messages as 'Welcome to our Bishop' while others were "robed in scarlet cassocks, white surplices, and ruffs." This made the demonstrations attractive subjects for missionary publicity -- a sort of early northern photo opportunity. *Canada Moves North*, 59.

⁸⁰*Living Message*, June 1937.

Roman Catholics alike, schools in the North were primarily concerned with fostering spiritual change rather than they were with education. Literacy was a necessity required to understand the Scriptures in the evangelical denominations, even though many prayers and hymns had been translated for Native use, and in the opinion of some, like Flossie Hirst at Pangnirtung, mission work would never prosper unless the Natives learned to speak English.⁸¹ But the mission schools had restricted finances and limited contact, so reality dictated some compromise. What developed was a curious mix of struggling to teach English along with grappling to learn the strong guttural sounds of the Native languages. Any real attempts to teach English focused on the children in the schools, which for the teachers was difficult. For the pupils it was a strain, but most teachers reported the children learned English quickly.

Outside the schools white women resolved to make some attempt at meeting the Natives halfway. Some compromise was to their own advantage to teach white, southern customs. Not being able to communicate contributed to their isolation as well. Helen Merritt wrote from Bernard Harbour in 1921 about how when her husband was away she felt so alone, and although a Native woman came to help lay fires in the morning, they could not converse. Mrs Merritt knew only about thirty words of Inuktitut, and she was unable to put those together to make sentences. Learning Inuktitut for Helen Merritt meant she could teach well-baby clinics. She remarked, however, that before she did that,

⁸¹Hirst Diaries, GSA, I.

she "would like to start instructing all in the use of handkerchiefs,"⁸² something she thought would be difficult trying to convey through an interpreter. Undoubtedly, there was no Inuktitut word for handkerchief. More importantly, an attempt to convey the more covert message through an interpreter would probably prove to be unsatisfactory. Not only the language was foreign.

Gladys Booy wrote to the *Letter Leaflet* from Hay River about trying to learn the language. "It will take a long time," she said, but "a few words to show willingness are always appreciated by the Natives. It will be such a help to have the knowledge. I can go then without an interpreter."⁸³ At Chesterfield Inlet, the Grey Nuns recorded in their journal that

la nécessité de parler un peu la langue du pays nous obligé a l'étude, c'est de tout coeur et avec ardeur même que nous y livrons. Notre professeur, consacre une heure par jour a notre service. C'est très difficile surtout pour nous qui avons 45 ans, c'est une dure entreprise.⁸⁴

Une dure entreprise, indeed. Some women, like Winifred Marsh, used the opportunity afforded by long Arctic winters to learn the intricacies of Inuktitut. Louisa Camsell Mills, however, lived almost her whole life in the Mackenzie Valley and never mastered the Slavey tongue. Mena Orford described how she had first learned the thirteen symbols of Inuktitut, and the added accents. She had learned words as her teacher Etonah had pointed to common objects, and then progressed to reading symbols on paper. "The

⁸²Helen Merritt to Mrs Lucas, Bernard Harbour, 17 November 1921. PAA 70.387, MR200/111.

⁸³*Letter Leaflet*, September 1921.

⁸⁴*Chroniques*, Chesterfield Inlet, SGMSB, 26 Novembre 1935.

endings," she added, "finished me," but she made up her mind to learn those too because obviously no chances could be taken with a language where, by the simple changing of a vowel ending, you found yourself discussing that part of female anatomy lying squarely in the field of gynaecology, when all you intended was to procure a part of the seal that went well with bacon.⁸⁵

Mena Orford, it will be remembered, had some difficulty eating the part of the seal which went well with bacon, but alongside her willingness to learn to communicate, her attitude toward country food and its preparation shows the vacillation which marked how white women in the North addressed issues of culture and race. There is no pattern of behaviour which can be firmly delineated, which leads to the conclusion that women's reaction to cultural contacts were individual rather than systemic.

How these white women interpreted the other culture was initially dependent on preconceptions developed from misconceptions about Dene and Inuit customs. Tales of wife-swapping, cannibalism, infanticide, and loose morals would have influenced those expectations. This was a barren and largely inhospitable land. Supplies were difficult to obtain. Women knew they would be isolated from women of their own culture who understood civilized people lived in houses, had some knowledge of personal hygiene and modesty, and lived apparently moral lives in the fear of God. There is every reason to assume they met the challenge before them with some trepidation, often retreating back to the culture with which they were most accustomed.

Women cannot be separated from the prejudices which that culture generated, or the ideologies of their own time or culture. But, it is the contention of this thesis that neither

⁸⁵Orford, *Journey North*, 68, 92.

can they be separated from the exigencies of geography or the realities of their circumstances. The ultimate question about white women and cultural arrogance, however, has to be whether their sex made a difference in this situation, and the answer has to be that it did. This was principally due to their conditioning as women and mothers, and the social sensibilities of the time, and because motherhood and the traditional occupations of women dictated a very different existence from that of their male counterparts. There were elements of life in the North which were shared by men and women alike, and the employment of men more often determined where the women were, and why they were there, but the differences between sexes imposed by society accounted for an alternate level of interaction, even though it may have been adjunct. The remote location, physical and psychological isolation from their cultural sisters, and the women's personal initiative to deal with their environment were important influences at this other level.

Discussion about racial and cultural attitudes inevitably raises the more vexing inquiry which follows from this conclusion: what culpability can be assessed because these women refused to use Native midwives, for example, or insisted indigenous children learn their lessons in English, or even because they attempted to impose their own canons of sanitation? In a recent article about *nyonyas* in the Dutch East Indies during the same time period as this study embraces, Frances Gouda notes that what is more important is understanding the sensibilities, perceptions and illusions of white

women in colonial situations.⁸⁶ White women's views about race in the North have been presented here with that understanding in mind, rather than with an attempt to assign blame.

In the Northern model, for example, the introduction of Girl Guiding must be considered as a form of imperialist propaganda, although it may not have been to the women who introduced it. Native girls in the North were not being trained as the female equivalent of the Empire's last line of defense.⁸⁷ Guiding simply reflected the accepted norm for organizing and educating girls in that time. It was seen as a way to link young girls and women across the Empire in common purpose, and as Richard Finnie suggested, the success of the mission could be advertised by using a model of organization recognizable to the women in the South who sponsored it. Their white skins set European women apart from their Native neighbours, but that does not mean cultural and racial conflicts were inevitable, the same way that conflicts did not arise because Inuit women considered themselves as *the people*, and whites as inferior.

Frances Gouda suggests that depending on the social position or geographical location, many women played "a starring role in the colonial drama of racial domination," but she also notes that in some cases, the attempts were merely tangential,⁸⁸ which was the case in the Canadian North. In the NWT, those tangents took

⁸⁶Frances Gouda, "Nyonyas on the Colonial Divide: White Women in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942," *Gender & History*, 5(3), Autumn, 1993, 319. Nyonyas is similar in meaning to memsahib. Gouda uses the term elisions where I have used illusions.

⁸⁷See Robert H MacDonald, *Sons of the Empire: The Frontier and the Boy Scout Movement, 1890-1918*, (Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 1993), conclusion.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 318.

the paths enforced by the remoteness, the climate, and the necessity to adapt, and by the possibility that the Native people of the North made decisions about what was of value to them, only to discard what they did not want without any of the white women ever being aware.

CONCLUSION

White Women Have Strange Ways

The *history* of the North, as we currently know it, is primarily a tale of the impressive feats of explorers and Company men, and it is based on the countless pages of Post journals, RCMP patrol reports, and exploration diaries. These documents provide an explanation of the past which supports the recognition of men as makers of history, and it is not surprising that until now white women have not surfaced because they are rarely mentioned among the game tallies, the fur statistics and heroic actions recorded by these men. Historians of women, however, know that evidence about women's lives is located not in the political and economic records made by men, but in the bits and pieces left behind by the women themselves, and the history of white European women in the Canadian North is no exception. That history had to be built from evidence collected from disconnected sources. The fragmented nature of the evidence imposes theoretical restrictions and necessitates the creative use of material to produce a collective memory, but the volume of that material is significant enough to add new dimension to the history.

The nature of these sources sometimes limits the ability to make connections across time, although that is not as significant as it might be, because living conditions did not significantly change during the period covered by this study. For example, while I may have located Mrs Smith at Fort Good Hope and Fort Resolution in 1911 and 1922, Mrs

Green at Fort Norman in 1915, and at Aklavik in 1927, or Miss Jones at Fort Simpson for two months in 1925 because she had missed the sailing of the steamer, I was unable to extrapolate to some connecting point, or to overlap lives in any significant way, but what was evident throughout was that these women had to change attitudes because of the living conditions imposed by the North.

As the aeroplane flew her North to Cambridge Bay in 1936, the pilot told Anna Rokeby-Thomas that she would not see another tree for three years. He was right, she remembered, "but little did I realize how much I'd long for a sight of a tree in the barren land. I embarrassed even myself, by weeping and then hugging the first tree I could get my arms around on my way back to civilization."¹ The effect of her physical environment was not something she had really thought about. Mrs Rokeby-Thomas recorded that when she had departed from Edmonton, she had been interviewed by reporters. This was ridiculous, she noted, because how could she give them impressions of a place she had yet to see?

She *had* expectations of course, just like all the other southern women who had ventured North. She expected the Inuit to be ignorant of "civilized" ways, and knew them to be superstitious and unchristianlike. "We think of the Eskimo as being very unclean," she told the *Living Message* in 1938, and that they lived in snow houses "exactly like the pictures one sees of an igloo."² But she learned from her three eventful years at Victoria Island as wife of the resident Anglican missionary. She discovered enough about herself

¹Anna Rokeby-Thomas, "Married Under the Midnight Sun," *North*, 21(4), 1974, 19.

²*Living Message*, March 1938.

and her environment to write an almost self-deprecating description of her "northern" self. It was presented as a view that the Inuit women of Bathurst Inlet might have had of her while they entertained at a tea held in her honour.

Anna Rokeby-Thomas thought the Inuit women were amused by the way she crawled through the snow tunnel and how awkward she was when finally inside. She decided they thought her pallor was an indication of ill-health and that if her skin had been bronze-coloured like theirs, she would be better looking. As they all sat together on the snow platform, with Mrs Rokeby-Thomas in the place of honour, she imagined them thinking "it was all we could do from laughing at her white spots." In the words of the fictitious Inuit author, the "article" explained how

the foolish woman took several mugs of tea and pretended to drink them. All the time she was spilling it into the snow blocks. That's because she doesn't like caribou hair mixed with her tea. We have even heard that she turns ill when she gets a piece of blubber in a mug of tea. This proves that white women have strange ways.

When it came time for her to leave, we gave her a new fur outfit, with boots to match. We also gave her a lot of sinew to encourage her to sew on skins. We doubt if she ever uses it! Even so, we invited her to pay more visits. We'll make a party if she does.³

Not all white women were able to leave the North having acquired the kind of understanding that Anna Rokeby-Thomas had, but she was not unique. However, her

³Anna Rokeby Thomas, "Farewell With Memories," *North*, 23(1), January/February 1976, 52, 54.

comments do show how the experience was different from other imperial and colonial outposts, if only because of the blubber and the caribou hair. It is hard to imagine a memsahib attempting the entrance of a snow house, not just because of the confining physical space, but because it meant an acknowledgement of cultural acceptance and some sense of equality with the Indigenous residents which was not possible in the rigid hierarchial situation of the tropical Empire. Keeping that portrayal in mind illustrates how important it is to treat each colonial and imperial setting as distinct and separate when considering white, European woman. It is apparent from previous studies which have attempted to draw broad conclusions about the interconnection of white women and imperialism that the Canadian North is not part of the historical consciousness of those who have.

While it is difficult to compare the climate and chronology of tropical imperial outposts with the Arctic, I think what this study shows is that it is important to remember conditions can change the way people react to their situation despite the ideologies of their time. I know that for the most part, these women had been indoctrinated to the ideas of Empire and imperialism because there are markers throughout the evidence that show their cultural arrogance, and because they have stereotypical ideas about the Indigenous people. There is some considerable literature about how these women may have been indoctrinated,⁴ but what the experiences of white women in the Arctic suggests is that

⁴See, for example, John Mackenzie's *Imperialism and Popular Culture*, (Dover NH: Manchester University Press, 1987) *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion*, (Dover NH: Manchester University Press, 1984) or Anna Davin, "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop*, 5, Spring 1978, 9-61, as well as the works cited as literary criticism relating to the subject.

prescriptive material can also assume a relationship between ideology and social practice that does not always exist. Significantly, in the Northern experience social practice itself deviated from what European women might expect because of the isolation and the environment, and because of the nature of the Indigenous societies which women encountered.

The tea party described by Mrs Rokeby-Thomas provides a foil for what Margaret Strobel and Nupur Chadhuri have noted as an emphasis in the relevant literature about women and imperialism on "the racist attitudes of white women and their luxurious lifestyles compared to their sisters at home."⁵ I think that the women in this study would be hard pressed to describe their existence as luxurious, and I have already asserted that racism is such a value-laden term, it is of little use when the supposedly subordinate race is amused by *your* skin colour.

The Northwest Territories before the Second World War does not constitute a settlement frontier, and a comparison with other North American frontiers would be pointless, which is the principal reason for not exploring this avenue in the text. It was the transient nature of the population on the northern frontier which distinguished it from other North American ones. The frontier itself was almost stagnant; it was the people who moved. In the North there was never a sense of permanency. Remember Richard Finnie's comment about "psychologically camping out?" Mena Orford recorded that she had told her daughter that "we were just sort of visiting," when the little girl complained

⁵Chadhuri and Strobel, *Western Women and Imperialism*, Introduction, 3.

about leaving Baffin Island and her Inuit friends.⁶ This is significant because it means the commitment was different, and women were willing to acquiesce for the time being to the environment because there was nothing final about the situation for most of them, and they put up with it because of their sense of duty. There was never any urgency to establish domestic production or to plant roots to provide some economic security, and while they taught and nursed with missionary zeal, they often commented upon the futility they felt because of the apathy of the Native population. But most women knew that this was a temporary existence, which might explain why they persevered. Perhaps that is one of the reasons Minnie Oulton finally lost her mind. She saw no way out.

The North was a frontier, for it was beyond the borders of what white women would have seen as civilization. The caution, of course, is that this was a white, European frontier, and it was as much a psychological frontier as it was a physical one for those in the south. But it was still a frontier. In the American paradigm, the frontier has raised questions about opportunity, and whether the frontier offered financial or professional opportunities to women that were denied them in their former homes. Feminist analysts of the frontier also wonder whether the frontier changed women's attitudes about themselves, or perhaps more importantly, whether it changed men's attitudes about women. It is not possible to conclude that this frontier provided opportunities for women to advance their social position and economic status, although the situation made available some jobs to a few women, and it allowed a certain sort of adventure to those willing to challenge the region. But this frontier made no lasting impression on the attitudes women

⁶Orford, *Journey North*, 191.

had about equality or freedom. Nor did the achievements of some women in the region change women's status in any way.

The transient nature of their lives, coupled with the isolation of communities with few white residents had implications for the development of "society". The demographic make-up of these communities required that white women socialize with the Native women who lived in the area. Missionary women were able to establish some hierarchial organization through the establishment of Woman's Auxiliaries, but there was never any sense of feminist crusading to change the lot of Native women like there was in India where the goal was to alleviate the constrictions of purdah. White women in the North were aware of their role, and it is indisputable that their role was influenced in many ways by the imperialist and colonialist forces at work within the Empire itself, but the North allowed them to be escapists of sorts. It was easier to go about your daily life untouched by colonial imperatives than it was to avoid the exigencies of a northern home. The examples of Christmas activities suggest such a situation. Christmas is a Christian festival, and it appears that while the women could have used the occasion to simply proselytize and impose their culture, they chose more often to celebrate at a more secular level and with all the delights and festivities that Christmas in the North could provide.

Historians of Empire may contend that good intentions do not absolve women from inflicting colonial impositions, but such a view is myopic. It ignores the notion that women can export the better parts of their culture along with less desirable aspects of the ideologies of Empire in their steamer trunks. It also assumes that the concept of Empire and the ensuing imperialist ideas travel from outpost to outpost, never

changing because of the conditions, or that women must make decisions because of the environment, not the ideologies.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Tables Showing Climatic Conditions in the Northwest Territories

TABLE 1. Coldest month temperatures, Fahrenheit measure, selected communities in the Northwest Territories prior to 1937. (Source: WC Bethune, *Canada's Western Northland*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1937).

	Mean	Daily Range	Extreme High	Extreme Low
Aklavik	-18.9 Jan	16.9	44	-56
Good Hope	-22.9 Jan	20.0	42	-69
Norman	-18.6 Jan	14.6	37	-62
Simpson	-19.2 Jan	16.4	39	-62
Fort Smith	-15.1 Jan	16.1	40	-64
Coppermine	-21.5 Feb	11.5	14	-53
Chesterfield	-26.6 Jan	13.1	30	-55
Lake Harbour	-15.4 Jan	12.3	27	-45
Pond Inlet	-29.4 Feb	13.9	17	-54
Craig Harbour	-25.5 Feb	15.6	21	-45

TABLE 2. Warmest month temperatures, Fahrenheit measure, selected communities in the Northwest Territories prior to 1937. (Source: WC Bethune, *Canada's Western Northland*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1937).

	Mean	Daily Range	Extreme High	Extreme Low
Aklavik	55.0 July	18.6	93	30
Good Hope	59.5 July	25.7	95	28
Norman	59.2 July	24.5	92	27
Simpson	61.6 July	23.3	94	31
Fort Smith	59.9 July	26.7	92	24
Coppermine	50.8 July	16.4	84	33
Chestersfield	48.0 July	17.0	84	26
Lake Harbour	44.0 July	13.4	74	25
Pond Inlet	42.4 July	13.5	77	26
Craig Harbour	40.5 July	10.6	61	29

TABLE 3. Precipitation, in inches, selected communities in the Northwest Territories prior to 1937. (Source: WC Bethune: *Canada's Western Northland*, (Ottawa: King's Printer, 1937).

	Annual		Annual Total	Total Wettest Month	Total Driest Month
	Rain	Snow			
Aklavik	4.95	59.3	10.88	0.41 Dec	1.78 Aug
Good Hope	5.13	51.2	10.25	0.47 Jan	1.63 Aug
Norman	7.02	36.8	10.70	0.36 Nov	1.94 Aug
Simpson	7.67	57.8	13.45	0.49 Mar	1.78 Jul
Fort Smith	8.55	41.2	12.67	0.39 Mar	2.00 Jul
Coppermine	4.97	62.9	11.26	0.32 Jan	1.50 Aug
Chesterfield	7.96	43.3	22.29	0.15 Jan	2.18 Jul
Lake Harbour	7.40	117.1	21.21	1.10 Jan	2.88 Jul
Craig Harbour	2.32	69/9	9.31	0.18 Feb	2.92 Oct

TABLE 4. Hours of sunlight, selected communities, NWT. Source: *Ronne Heming*, *Climate of the Northwest Territories*, Yellowknife, Northern Information Series, GWNT, 1986.

	Jan. 21	Mar. 21	June 21	Sept. 21
Yellowknife	6.5	12.4	20.0	12.5
Inuvik	0.0	12.5	24.0	12.5
Iqaluit	4.5	12.3	20.8	12.3
Cambridge Bay	0.0	12.5	24.0	12.5
Chesterfield Inlet	4.5	12.3	20.8	112.3

APPENDIX 2

Supporting Documents

Indian and Eskimo Commission of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada

EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT

Between:

THE INDIAN AND ESKIMO COMMISSION OF THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN CANADA, represented herein by its Secretary-Treasurer for the time being, hereinafter called "the Employer."

Of the First Part

—AND—

Miss Winnifred Neville.

Of the Post Office of St. Paul's Indian School. in the Province of Cardston, Alberta. hereinafter called "the Employee."

Of the Second Part.

WHEREAS I the undersigned Employee have agreed to enter the employment of the Employer in the position of Head Matron and Boys Supervisor at the said Society's Indian Residential School known as St. Peter's Indian School, and situated about 900 miles from the Town of Edmonton, in the Province of Alberta, upon the terms and conditions hereinafter expressed;

I DO HEREBY AGREE with the said Employer as follows:—

- 1. To be loyal and to obey all the lawful instructions of the Principal of the said School, and of the said Employer.
2. To faithfully discharge the duties attached to the said position as contained in the "Outline of Duties No. 2 and 4," (or any amendment thereto), a copy of which is hereby acknowledged to have been received by me, for a period of four years from the date hereof.
3. In the event of desiring to terminate this agreement before the expiration of the said period of four years, to give to the said Employer 3 month's notice in writing of my intention so to do, I agreeing that the said Employer may terminate at any time hereafter this agreement upon giving me 3 month's notice of such intention so to do.
4. I agree that my salary or remuneration shall be the sum of forty (\$40.00) Dollars per month in addition to my being provided with board and a furnished room.
5. Upon termination of this agreement for any reason whatsoever before I shall have fulfilled my full term of service, I agree to refund forthwith to the said Employer any sum or sums of money spent by the said Employer on account of my travelling expenses, or otherwise on my account.
6. I agree to accept full responsibility for any expenditure necessary for medical treatment on my account.

SIGNED AND EXECUTED at St. Peter's Indian School, Cardston, Alberta, this 16th day of July, A.D. 1929.

(Signature in full of Employee)

Witnesses

(Signature in full of Employer)

THIS AGREEMENT made this 26th day of March, 1930. (C.2)

BETWEEN:

HUDSON'S BAY COMPANY - MACKENZIE RIVER TRANSPORT
of Edmonton, Alberta, hereinafter called the Company

LILLIAM ARMSTRONG and of Edmonton, Alberta,
hereinafter called the Employee;

(1) Witnesseth that the said Company agrees to employ the employee in the capacity of Stewardess on any of its Steamers, Motor Tugs, Motor Boats, or other craft or overland Transport operating on the Peace River, Athabasca, Slave and Mackenzie Rivers, Liard River, their tributaries and adjacent lakes, also their connecting links, by water and by land, or such other rivers, lakes and land connections as the said Company may from time to time nominate and require of her during the season of navigation of the year 1930 for which services the Company agrees to pay the following salary or remuneration:
at the rate of ~~THIRTY-FIVE~~ dollars per month, during the period in which the services of the employee are required by the Company. Plus board. A reward of \$5.00 per mo. will be paid at the end of the season, provided the employee remains the whole of the season and has given entire satisfaction.
SPECIAL CLAUSE: Blue dresses and white aprons must be worn in the mornings, which are provided. Black dresses in the afternoon (which the employee provides) with white aprons.

(2) The employee is to place her services at the disposal of the Company at such places and such times as the Company may designate and is to give continuous and faithful service to the Company during the term of this contract.

(3) The Company shall pay the employee's transportation and expenses from Edmonton and return again at the end of the season.

(4) Provided that the Company may terminate such service and this agreement on account of the incompetency, insobriety, or misconduct of the employee, without any notice whatsoever, and in that event, and in every such case, the Company shall pay and the employee shall receive from the Company such sum as may be due to her at the rate of THIRTY-FOUR dollars P.M. only for and during the time the employee was actually employed in such service, and the Company will not be bound to pay the transportation and expenses of the employee back to her home as provided in clause 3, above set out, and the employee shall then have no further claim against the Company in respect of this contract.

(5) Provided that if the said employee be prevented by sickness, accident, or other unavoidable cause from attending to and performing duties in connection with such service such a proportionate part as shall be equivalent to the time she is disabled or absent, shall be deducted from the sum otherwise payable to her hereunder, and that the amount so to be deducted as aforesaid shall be calculated on the basis of THIRTY-FOUR DOLLARS PER MONTH.

(6) Provided also that during the whole term of this contract, the employee shall carry out the instructions of the Company, and shall render every assistance and information in furthering the interests of the Company, either in the capacity in which she is engaged or otherwise

(7) It is further agreed that the employee will be held responsible for supplies of stores, equipment and material, which are turned over to him or her in his or her personal care. Such stores and equipment to be accounted for in full at the close of navigation, and a signed release obtained from the responsible official of the Company at the close of the season. Such release to be produced before final settlement for wages is made by the Company. The value of any shortages or breakages not satisfactorily accounted for to be deducted from the balance due the employee on account of wages.

Dated at Edmonton this 26th day of March, 1930.

Witness

Port Captain

Witness

Employee

The Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada

131 CONFEDERATION LIFE BUILDING, TORONTO

CANDIDATES' COMMITTEE

PERSONAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY WOMEN

APPLYING FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE MISSION FIELD.

NOTE. *As this inquiry is only preliminary, the applicant should not allow her application to interfere in any way with her present employment or duties, until she has been accepted by the Candidates' Committee for training, or recommended for appointment.*

1. Full name.....
2. Full residence address.....
3. Date of your birth..... Place..... Age.....
4. Date and place of
 - (a) Your Baptism.....
 - (b) Your Confirmation.....
5. Of what parish are you now a member ?.....
6. What is the name and address of your Rector ?.....
7. If you were not brought up in the Church of England, with what Christian body were you formerly connected, and why did you make the change ?.....
8. What is your occupation, if any ?..... Or, are you living at home ?.....
9. Are you married ?.....
10. Are you a widow ?.....
11. If you have children, how many and of what ages ?.....
12. If unmarried, are you under any engagement, expressed or implied, to be married ?.....

- 13. Are your parents living ?..... Are they in sympathy with your purpose ?.....
- 14. Is any one dependent upon you for support, or likely to become so ?
- 15. Are you liable for any indebtedness ?.....
- 16. State the extent of your education, giving the names of the institutions in which you were educated and the date of graduation from each.

Name of institution

Date of graduation

Have you matriculated ?..... If so, when ?.....

What if any, is your university standing ?.....

17. If you are a DEACONESS or TRAINED CHURCH WORKER

What experience have you had ? Give places and dates.....

18. If you are a TEACHER

What experience have you had ? Give subjects, schools and dates.....

19. If you are a PHYSICIAN

What experience have you had:

(a) In hospitals ? Give names and dates.....

(b) In private practice ? Where and for how long ?.....

20. If you are a NURSE

What experience have you had

(a) In hospitals ? Give names and dates.....

(b) In private practice ? Where and for how long ?.....

- 21. What languages, other than English, have you studied ? Have you facility in such study ?.....
.....
- 22. Can you sing, or play on any musical instrument ?.....
- 23. Do you understand housekeeping and plain cooking ?.....
- 24. Can you do simple nursing ?.....
- 25. Can you keep accounts ?.....
- 26. How long have you entertained a desire to undertake missionary service ?.....
- 27. Have you a preference as to any particular mission field ?..... If so, why ?.....
.....
- 28. In what capacity do you desire to serve ?.....
- 29. Would you be entirely willing to go elsewhere if the way was not open to the field of your preference ?
- 30. Is it your present purpose to make missionary service your life work, if God will ?.....
- 31. Do you realize that certain privations and sacrifices, including family separations, are often necessarily involved in a mission-
ary career ?.....
- 32. Can you cheerfully accept the directions of those in authority over you ?.....
- 33. Will you willingly agree to be bound by the rules and regulations in force in the mission field and at home respectively ?.....
- 34. Is your temperament such that you can readily adapt yourself to strange and sometimes distasteful conditions of life ?.....
.....
- 35. Can you bear responsibilities cheerfully, or do they produce undue anxiety, as shown, for instance, by nervousness, irritability
or loss of sleep ?.....
- 36. What is the present state of your health ?.....
.....
- 37. Are you subject to any bodily ailment ?.....
- 38. What is your practice with regard to physical exercise ?.....
- 39. What forms of recreation and amusement do you practice ?.....
Have you a hobby ?..... If so, what ?.....
- 40. If further training for the mission field be deemed necessary by the Committee, how soon would you be free to undertake
such training ?.....
- 41. Would you be willing to pay, in whole or in part, the expense of such training ?.....
.....
- 42. If it were possible, or necessary, would you be ready to start for the field at any time ?.....
.....
.....

43. Do you accept fully the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England ?.....

44. Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament ?.....

45. What are your personal habits in regard to devotional Bible study and prayer ?

.....

.....

46. Explain briefly, in your own words, and without aid from others,

(a) What sin is.....

.....

.....

(b) The need and nature of the Atonement.....

.....

.....

(c) The work of the Holy Spirit.....

.....

.....

47. Describe briefly the characteristics of the Church of England.....

.....

.....

Note 1. In addition to answering the foregoing questions, please attach to this Form a letter, giving in your own words the main facts outlining your education, your experience in Christian work, and your reasons for seeking missionary service. Write this letter as though this Form and your answers to its questions did not exist.

Note 2. These questions are not intended to be in any way unsympathetic, but they are an earnest attempt to enable you and the Society to reach right conclusions. The answers to the questions will be treated by the Candidates' Committee as confidential. Earnest and careful consideration will be given to your application.

Note 3. Please be definite in answering the foregoing questions, they all have an important bearing in determining the applicant's qualifications. Furnish all the information you can.

Note 4. Kindly forward a copy of your most recent photograph with your replies. This is important.

Signature of applicant.....

Address.....

Date..... 19.....

CONFIDENTIAL

Form C—QUESTIONS : FOR MEN.

DATE RECEIVED.....19...

FILE No.....

The Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada

131 CONFEDERATION LIFE BUILDING, TORONTO

CANDIDATES' COMMITTEE

PERSONAL QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED BY MEN

APPLYING FOR APPOINTMENT TO THE MISSION FIELD.

NOTE. *As this inquiry is only preliminary, the applicant should not allow his application to interfere in any way with his present employment or duties, until he has been accepted by the Candidates' Committee for training, or recommended for appointment.*

1. Full name.....
2. Present residence address.....
3. Home address.....
4. Date of your birth..... Place..... Age.....
5. Date and place of
 - (a) Your Baptism.....
 - (b) Your Confirmation.....
6. Of what parish are you now a member ?.....
7. What is the name and address of your Rector ?.....
8. If you were not brought up in the Church of England, with what Christian body were you formerly connected, and why did you make the change ?.....
9. Are you married ?.....
 - (a) If yes, is your wife also a communicant of the Church ?.....
 - (b) Is she in sympathy with your plans for missionary service ?.....

- 10. If you have children, how many and of what ages ?.....
- 11. If unmarried, are you under any engagement, expressed or implied, to be married ?.....
- 12. Are your parents living ?..... Are they in sympathy with your purpose ?.....
- 13. Is any relative dependent upon you for support, or likely to become so ?.....
- 14. Are you liable for any indebtedness ?.....
- 15. Give the extent of your education, giving the names of the institutions in which you were educated and the date of graduation from each.

Name of institution

Date of graduation

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Have you matriculated ?..... If so, when ?.....

What, if any, is your university standing ?.....

- 16. What languages, other than English, have you studied, and have you facility in their use ?

If you are in ORDERS

- 17. What was the date of your ordination (a) To the Diaconate ?..... (b) To the Priesthood ?.....

- 18. The name of the Bishop ordaining you.....

- 19. What is your present parochial connection ?.....

- 20. What other parishes have you served ?.....

If you are a CANDIDATE for ORDERS

- 21. When and in what diocese (or district) do you expect to be ordained ?.....

If you are a PHYSICIAN

- 22. What experience have you had (a) In hospitals? Give names and dates.....

- (b) In private practice? Where and for how long ?.....

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

If you are a TEACHER

23. What experience have you had? Give subjects, schools and dates.....

24. Have you had any experience in Church or Mission work? Give places and dates.....

25. How long have you entertained the desire to undertake missionary service?.....
26. What is your motive in seeking to become a missionary?.....

27. Do you desire to enter any special form of missionary service.—evangelistic, educational, medical or industrial?.....

28. Have you a preference as to any particular mission field?.....If so, why?.....

29. Would you be entirely willing to go elsewhere if the way was not open to the field of your preference?.....
30. Is it your present purpose to make missionary service your life work, if God will?.....
31. Do you realize that privations, including family separations, are often necessarily involved in a missionary career?.....Are
 you ready to accept them cheerfully?.....
32. Can you cheerfully accept the direction of those in authority over you?.....
33. Will you willingly agree to be bound by the rules and regulations in force in the mission field and at home respectively?.....

34. Can you bear responsibilities cheerfully, or do they produce undue anxiety, as shown, for instance, by nervousness, irritability
 or loss of sleep?.....

35. What is the present state of your health?.....
36. Are you subject to any bodily ailment?.....
37. Have you ever applied for a life insurance policy?.....If so, was your application granted?.....
38. What is your practice with regard to physical exercise?.....
39. What forms of recreation and amusement do you practice?.....
 Have you a hobby?..... If so, what?.....
40. If further training for the mission field be deemed necessary by the Committee, how soon would you be free to undertake
 such training?.....
41. If it were possible, or necessary, would you be ready to start for the field at any time?.....

42. Do you accept fully the doctrines and discipline of the Church of England ?.....

43. Do you unfeignedly believe all the Canonical Scriptures of the Old and New Testament ?.....

44. What are your personal habits in regard to devotional Bible study and prayer ?

.....
.....

45. Explain briefly, in your own words, and without aid from others,

(a) What sin is.....

.....
.....
.....

(b) The need and nature of the Atonement.....

.....
.....
.....

(c) The work of the Holy Spirit.....

.....
.....
.....

46. Describe briefly the characteristics of the Church of England.....

.....
.....
.....
.....

Note 1. In addition to answering the foregoing questions, please attach to this Form, a letter, giving in your own words the main facts outlining your education, your experience in Christian work, and your reasons for seeking missionary service. Write this letter as though this Form and your answers to its questions did not exist.

Note 2. These questions are not intended to be in any way unsympathetic, but they are an earnest attempt to enable you and the Society to reach right conclusions. The answers to the questions will be treated by the Candidates' Committee as confidential. Earnest and careful consideration will be given to your application.

Note 3. Please be definite in answering the foregoing questions, they all have an important bearing in determining the applicant's qualifications. Furnish all the information you can.

Note 4. Kindly forward a copy of your most recent photograph with your replies. This is important.

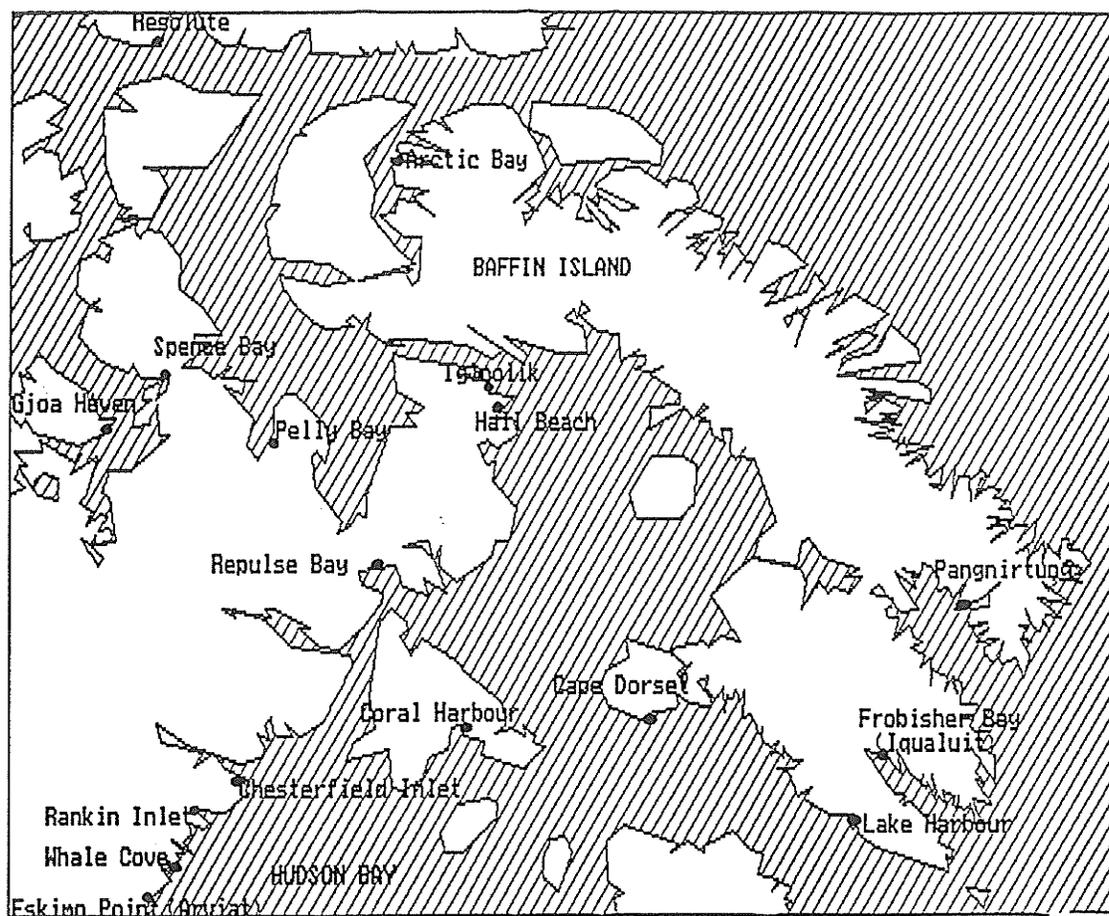
Signature of applicant.....

Address.....

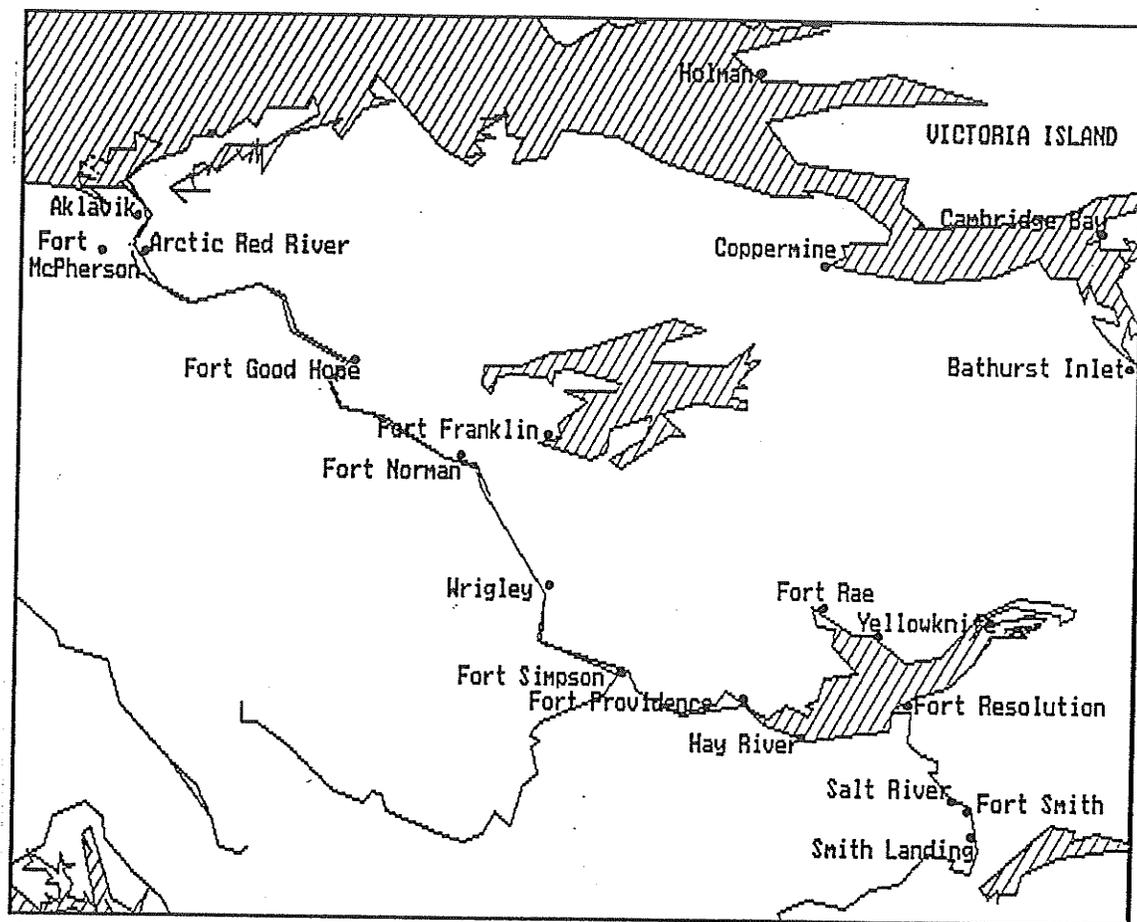
Date.....19.....

APPENDIX 3

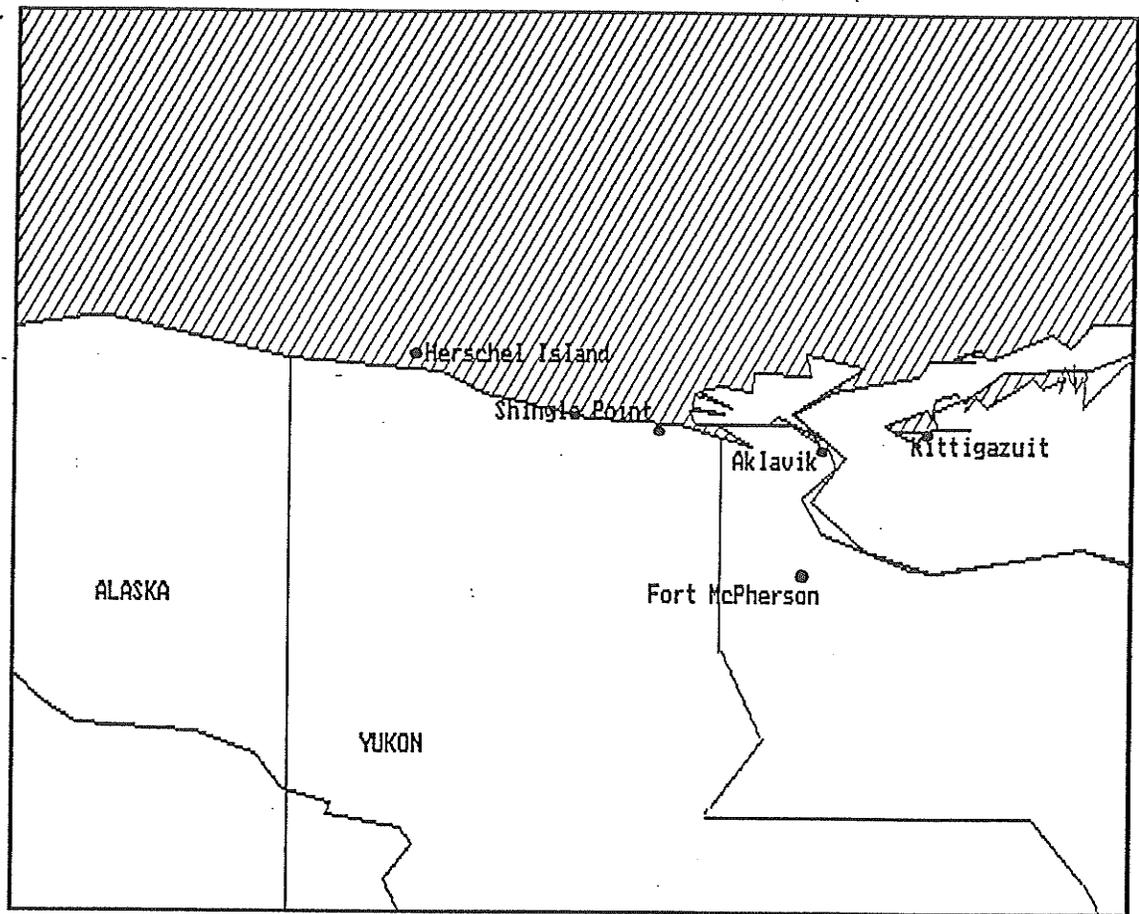
Maps



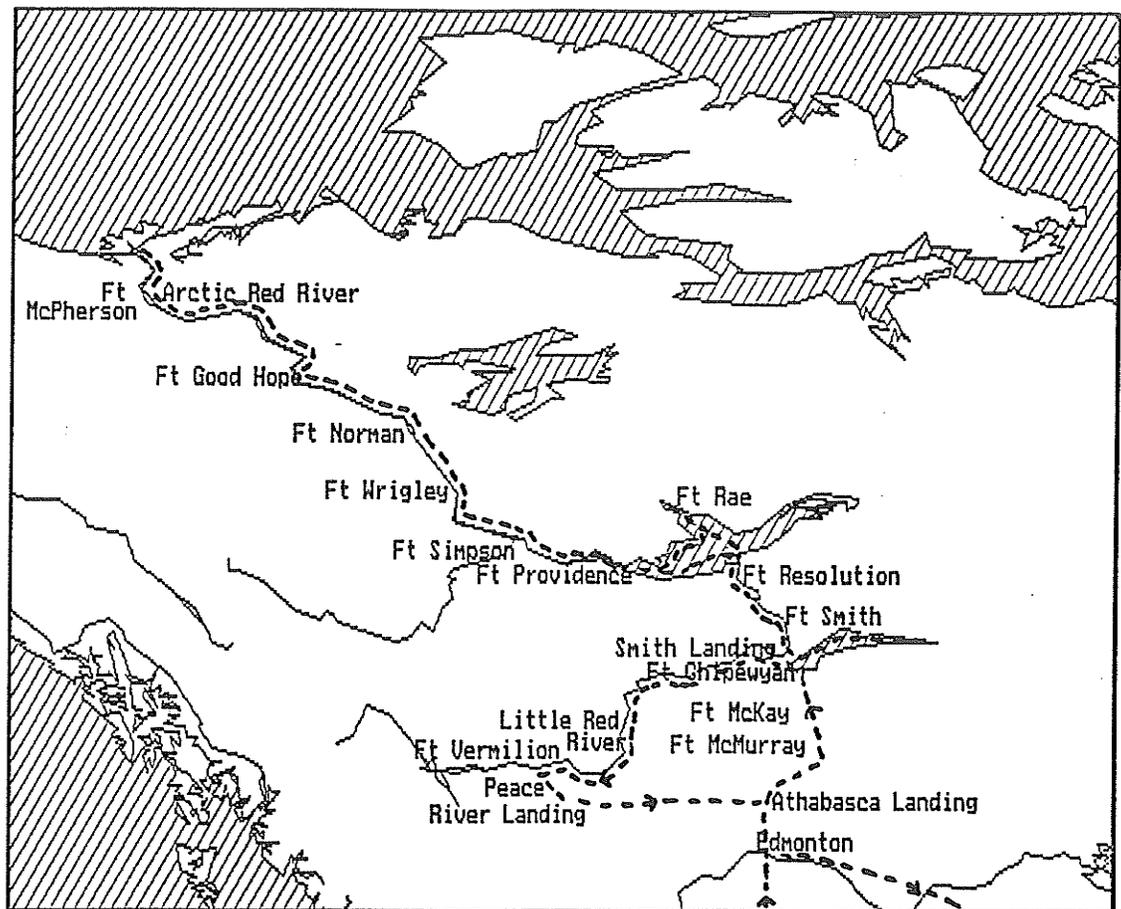
Map 1. Settlements in the Eastern Arctic



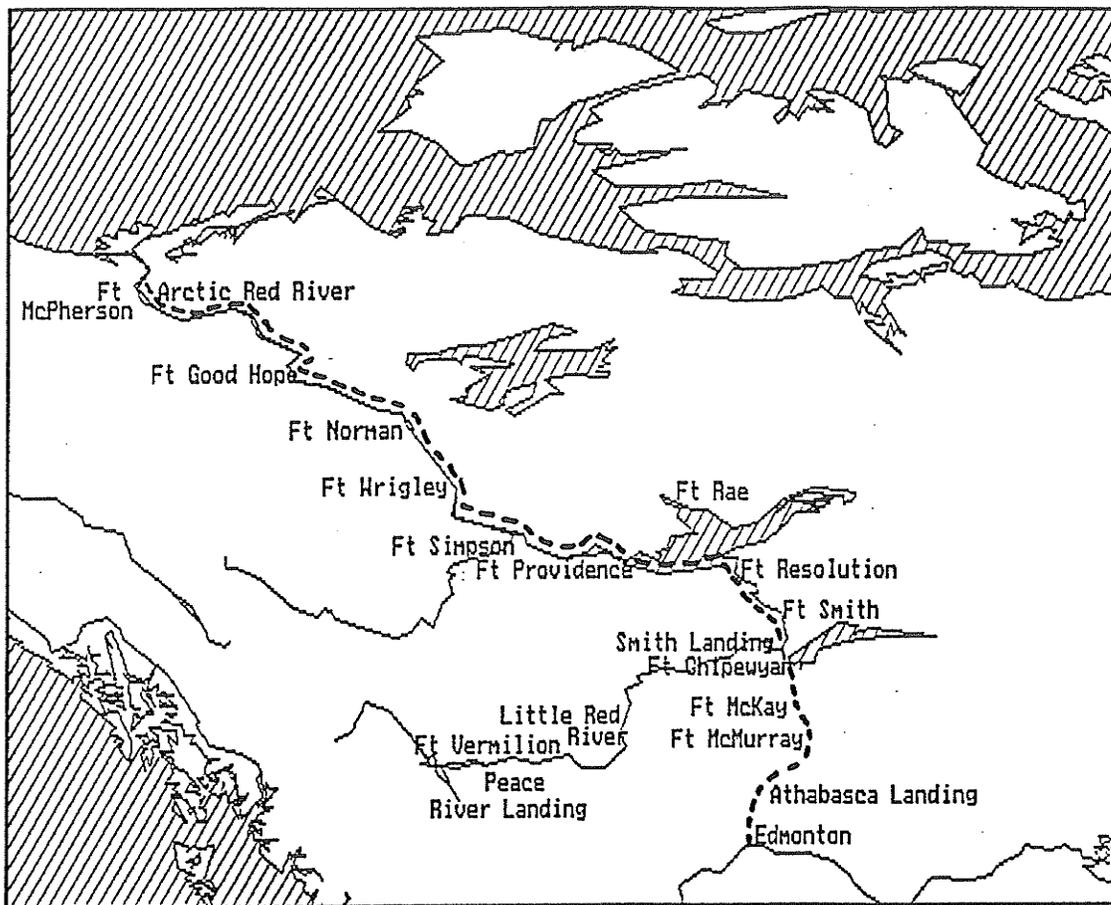
Map 2. Settlements in the Western Arctic



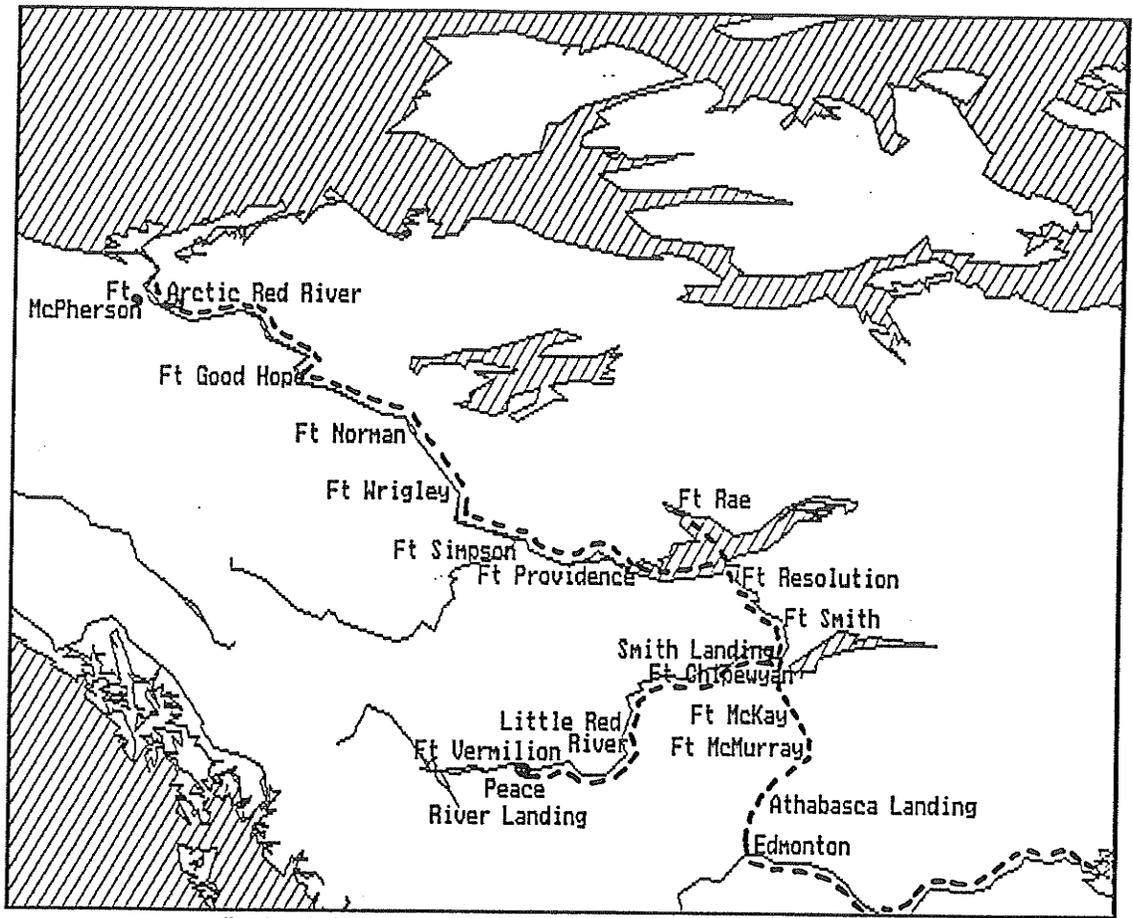
Map 3. Settlements along the Arctic Ocean Coast in Yukon and NWT



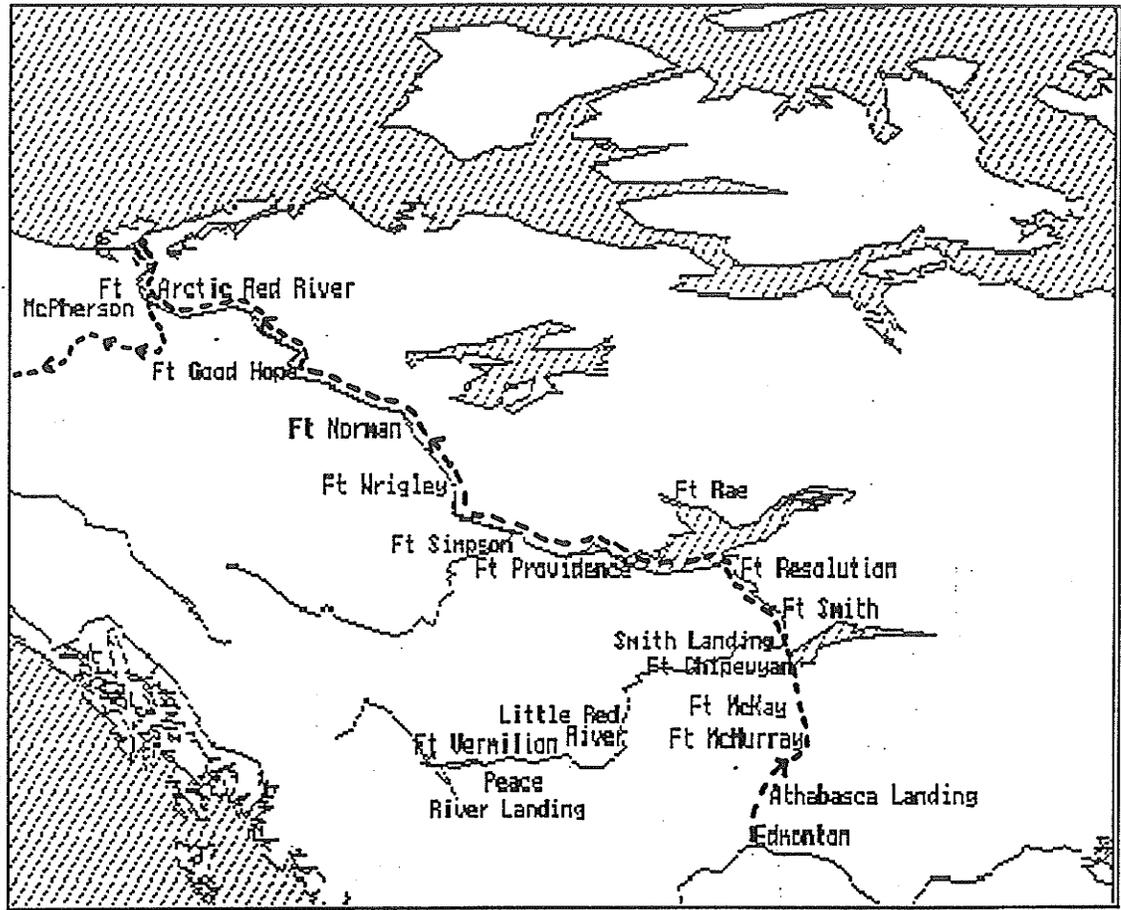
Map 4. The route taken by Agnes Deans Cameron
and Jessie Cameron Brown, 1908



Map 5. Route taken by Elizabeth Taylor in 1892



Map 6. Emma Shaw Colcleugh's journey North in 1894



Map 7. Journey taken by Clara Vyvyan and Gwen Smith in 1926

Bibliography

Primary Sources:

Private Collections

Butler, Addie. Letters.

General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, Toronto (GSA)

Anglican Women's Training College.

Diocese of the Arctic Collection:

Candidate's Committee, Missionary Society of the Church of England in
Canada.

Fleming, Archibald. Papers.

First Hay River Girl Guide Company, Log Book.

Hirst, Florence. Diaries.

Indian and Eskimo Residential School Commission, Correspondence.

Jones, Mrs Trevor. Typescript. *Journey to Aklavik*, 1938.

Marsh, Donald B. Papers (Includes Winifred Marsh).

Peck, Edmund James. Papers.

Quirt, Susan Elizabeth. Diaries.

St Peter's Mission, Hay River. Reports and Correspondence.

Stringer, Isaac O. (Includes Sarah Alexander Stringer).

Vale, AJ, Typescript. *The Story of the Hay River Woman's Auxiliary*.

Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary (GMA)

Dawson, Clair. Papers.

Godsell, Phillip. Papers. (Includes Jean Godsell)

Hockin, Prudence. Papers. (Frontier Nursing Project)

Melling, Thomas. Papers.

Ross, Gwen. Correspondence. (Frontier Nursing Project)

Whittaker, Charles Edward. Typescript. Autobiographical Account.

Hudson's Bay Company Archives, Winnipeg, (HBCA)

Morris, Augusta. Diary.
Records of the Fur Trade Commissioner
Correspondence
Shackleton, Kathleen.

Minnesota Historical Society, St Paul (MHS)

Colcleugh, Emma Shaw. Letters. James Taylor Dunn Collection
Dunn, James Taylor. (Includes Elizabeth Taylor)

National Archives of Canada, Ottawa (NAC)

Canada. Records of the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, Northern
Administration Branch, RG 85:

Cameron, Agnes Deans.
Ferguson, Mary.
Grange, Marion. Official Historian of the Eastern Arctic Patrol.
Greenwood, Tom. (Includes Isobel Greenwood.)
Hays, Martiana.
Hutchison, Dr Isobel.

Canada. Records of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. RG 18:

Oulton, Minnie.
Clay, Margaret.

Fenton, Mhairi Angela MacLeod (DiCastro). Papers.

Northwest Territories Archives, Yellowknife, (NwTA).

Buffum, Louise, and family. Papers.
Lyman, Mary.
Metis Association of the Northwest Territories.
Spry, Irene Biss. Diaries.

Old Dartmouth Historical Society, New Bedford, Massachusetts (ODHS)

Porter, Sophie. Log of the Steam Bark Jesse H Freeman.

Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. (PAA)

Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of Mackenzie River
Mills, Louisa Camsell. Typescript.

Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Victoria. (PABC)

O'Kelly, Gladys (Grace). Typescript.

Provincial Archives of Manitoba, Winnipeg. (PAM)

Taylor, James Wickes. Papers

Royal Canadian Mounted Police Centennial Museum, Regina. (RCMP)

Geraldine Moodie File.
Margaret Clay File.

Soeurs Grises de Montreal, Edmonton Regional Centre. (SGME)**Chronicles:**

Fort Providence
Fort Smith
Fort Resolution
Aklavik
Fort Simpson

Historical sketches from chronicles and lists of sisters attendant at convents in the North.
Typescript.

Soeurs Grises de Montreal, Montreal. (SGMM)

Soeurs Grises de Montreal, St Boniface Regional Centre. (SGMSB)

Chronicles:

Chesterfield Inlet 1931-1937

Codex Historicus, Chesterfield Inlet

Yukon Territories Archives, Whitehorse. (YTA)

Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of the Yukon, Corporate Records.

Foster, Frank. Papers.

Mason, Beatrice. Typescript.

Woodall, R. Papers.

Published Memoirs and Published Primary Sources

Bethune, WC. *Canada's Western Northland: Its History, Resources, Population, and Administration*. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1937.

Bompas, Charlotte Selina. "Our Women in the North," *Imperial Colonist*, October 1908, 7-9 and November 1908, 4-9.

Bonnycastle, RHG. Heather Robertson, Ed. *A Gentleman Adventurer: The Arctic Diaries of RHG Bonnycastle*. Toronto: Lester & Orpen Dennys, 1984.

Boswell, Hazel. "Voluntary Educational Work in the Canadian Labrador," *Echoes*, (The Official Organ of the IODE), March 1930, 15.

Cameron, Agnes Deans. "Arctic Host and Hostess," *Canadian Magazine*, 35, May 1910, 3-12.

----- . "Beyond the Athabasca," *Westward Ho Magazine*, 1909, 743-750.

----- . "Canada's Farthest North," *Geographic Journal*, XXXV (6), June 1910, 705-708.

----- . "From Winnipeg to the Arctic Ocean," *Manchester Geographical*

Society, Vol 26, 1910, 97-101.

----- "God Save the King, The Empire's Anthem," *Educational Journal of Western Canada*, III (4), June/July 1901. 106-109.

----- "The Idea of True Citizenship -- How Shall We Develop It?" *Educational Journal of Western Canada*, Brandon, Vol 1, No 8, December 1899, 229-235.

----- "Sentinels of the Silence: Canada's Royal Northwest Mounted Police," *Century*, 79, December 1909, 289-299.

----- "To Success -- Walk Your Own Road," *Educational Journal of Western Canada*, (4)1, March 1910, 10.

----- "Two Thousand Miles to Deliver a Letter," *Harper's Weekly*, Vol 52, January 4, 1908, 16.

Cameron, Agnes Deans. David Richeson, Ed. *The New North: An Account of a Woman's 1908 Journey Through Canada to the Arctic*. Saskatoon: Western Producer Books, 1986.

Canada. Northwest Territories Council. Department of the Interior. *An Ordinance Respecting Scientists and Explorers*. Ottawa: King's Printer, c. 1926.

Card, Annie (with Helen Rutherford). "An Indian Agent's Wife," *Beaver*, September, 1939, 21-24.

Colcleugh, Emma Shaw. "I Saw These Things," *Evening Bulletin*, Providence, Rhode Island, August 30 to September 21, 1932.

----- "Missions and Mission Workers in 'The Great Lone Land'," *Catholic World*, April, 1895, 108-120.

Copland, A Dudley. *Coplalook: Chief Trader, Hudson's Bay Company, 1923-39*. Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer, 1985

Craven, Edna and The Reverend J Harold Webster. *Arctic Adventure*, Ridgetown, Ontario: GC and HC Enterprises, 1987.

Cummings, Emily. *Our Story: The Women's Auxiliary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, 1885-1928*. Toronto: Glity Press, 1928.

- Decoursey, Duke. *The Yellowknife Years*. Squamish, BC: Parkview Publishing Ltd., n.d.
- DeStaffany, Lileotta. "A Woman Adventurer in the Arctic," *The Illustrated Canadian Forest and Outdoors*, December, 1930, 690-692.
- Ellis, Miriam Green. "A Business Woman in the Far North," *The Canadian Countryman*, December 12, 1925, 1669 and 1710.
- Enlisting for Service: Information for Prospective Candidates*. Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada. n.d., n.p.
- Ferguson, Chick. *Mink, Mary and Me: The Story of a Wilderness Trapline*. New York: MS Mill Company, 1946.
- Ferland, Leonie, SGM. *Une Voyage au Cercle Polaire*. Montreal: Les Soeurs Grises de Montreal, 1939.
- Fleming, Ven. A.L. *Baffin Land Revisited*. Reprint from *The Canadian Churchman*, NWT Library.
- . *Brief History of Missions to the Canadian Eskimo*. Toronto: Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, 1929.
- . *Flying Beyond the Arctic Circle*. London: Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, 1933.
- . "In Journeyings Oft," *Arctic News*, 1930.
- . "The Last Great North," *Arctic News*, 1934.
- . "Nearest The North Pole," *Arctic News*, 1931.
- Frost, Georgie. (As Told to Wilbur Granburg). "Home 12x14 Feet Lat 62'45'N," *Beaver*, September 1934, 23-26.
- Gilbert, Walter E (As Told to Kathleen Shackleton). *Arctic Pilot: Life and Work on Northern Canadian Air Routes*. Toronto: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1942.
- Godsell, Jean W. *I Was No Lady...I Followed the Call of the Wild*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1959.
- . "Radio's Bow to Silent Places," *Manitoba Calling*, July, 1940, 3.

- . "Those Good Old Days," *Liberty*, October 9, 1937.
- Godsell, Philip H. *Pilots of the Purple Twilight*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1955.
- Grange, Marion. "The Women of Pangnirtung," *Calgary Herald*, 12 November 1938.
- Griffis, EM. "Lady of the Bay," *Beaver*, Winter 1960, 46-50.
- "Historical Sketch of the Origin and Work of the Hay River Mission, Great Slave Lake," Np, Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, nd.
- Hoare, Catherine. "Edmonton to Aklavik, 1920," *Beaver*, June 1938, 40-43.
- . "Herschel Island to Aklavik, 1923," *Beaver*, December, 1938, 42-45.
- Hutchison, Dr Isobel W. *North to the Rime-Ringed Sun: Being the Record of an Alaska-Canadian Journey Made in 1933-34*. London: Blackie, 1934.
- "In the Far North," *Manitoba Free Press*, October 1, 1894.
- Kemp, Vernon, AM CBE. *Without Fear, Favour or Affection: Thirty Five Years With the Royal Canadian Mounted Police*. Toronto: Longmans, 1958.
- Kitto, FH. *The North West Territories, 1930*. Ottawa: King's Printer, 1930.
- "Life at a Trading Post: An English Woman's Experience," *Beaver*, March, 1924, 205.
- Lindbergh, Ann Morrow. *Hour of Gold, Hour of Lead: Diaries and Letters of Ann Morrow Lindbergh, 1929-1932*. New York: Harcourt Brace Javonivich, 1973.
- Reports of the First, Second, and Third Meetings of the Diocesan Board*. 1914, 1927 and 1928. Mackenzie River Diocesan Branch of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada and to the Diocesan Missions.
- Manning, E Wallace. "Chimo Days," *Beaver*, September 1939, 30-34.
- . *Igloo for the Night*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1943.
- . "The Long Trail," *Beaver*, (I) March 1943, 46-50; (II) June 1943, 16-19.
- . "Nascopie Honeymoon," *Beaver*, March 1938, 18-26.

- Marsh, Donald, Winifred Marsh, Ed. *Echoes from a Frozen Land*. Edmonton: Hurtig, 1987.
- Merrill, Anne. "Wings in the Wind," *Globe and Mail*, June 17, 1950, 8.
- "The Most Northerly Residential School in the British Empire," *Echoes: The Official Organ of the IODE*, October 1931, #124.
- Munday, Luta. "The Beauty of the Arctic," *National Review*, London, February 1934, 240-245.
- . "Children of the Igloos," *Echoes*, 38 (47) Autumn, 1945.
- . *A Mounty's Wife*. London: Sheldon Press, 1930.
- Murphy, Mrs A. "Northern Pioneers," *Canadian Magazine*, Vol 32, December 1913, 170-174.
- . "Northern Vistas," *Canadian Magazine*, Vol 32, April 1914, 615-620.
- O'Kelly, Grace. "A Woman's Arctic Log," *Beaver*, March, 1924, 210, April, 1924, 245, May, 1924, 295.
- Orford, Mena. *Journey North*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1957.
- Peary, Josephine. *My Arctic Journal (A Year Among the Ice Fields and Eskimos)*. New York: Contemporary Publishers, 1893.
- Peters, Mary Crocker. "Aklavik of the Arctic," *Beaver*, December, 1943, 28-31.
- Piche, Mere Marie-Anne. *De Montreal a Mackenzie: Notes de Voyage*. Montreal: Soeurs Grises de Montreal, 1912.
- Porter, Sophie. "An Arctic Winter: A Woman's Life in the Polar Seas," *Overland*, Vol 29, n.d., 353-359.
- Quirt, Susan Elizabeth. "On the Way to the Arctic," *Living Message*, XL, (10), October 1929, 336-337.
- "Remarkable Journey of Two Women to the Arctic," *Globe*, Toronto, February 6, 1909.
- Rivett-Carnac, Charles. *Pursuit in the Wilderness*. Toronto: Little Brown & Company, 1965.

- Rokeby-Thomas, Anna. "Anna's Diary: Arctic Honeymoon," *North*, 21(5), 1974, 26-31.
- . "Arctic Darkness," *North*, 22(1) 1975, 15-21.
- . "Christmas, 1938," *North* 22(6), 1976, 52-57.
- . "Christmas Living Under the Mid-Day Moon," *North* 21(6), 1974, 8-15.
- . "Farewell With Memories," *North*, 22(1), 1976, 52-57.
- . "Married Under the Midnight Sun," *North*, 21(4), 1974, 14-21.
- . "On An Arctic Trail," *North*, 22(4), 1975, 26-31.
- . "Sadness and Joy," *North*, 22(2), 1975, 16-23.
- . "Some Notable Inuit," *North*, 22(5), 1975, 16-21.
- Romig, Emily Craig. *The Life and Travels of a Pioneer Woman in Alaska*. Colorado Springs: Privately Printed, 1945.
- Ross, W Gillies, Ed. *An Arctic Whaling Diary: The Journal of Captain George Comer in Hudson Bay 1903-1905*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Rourke, Louise. *The Land of the Frozen Tide*. London: Hutchinson and Company, 1928.
- Soper, Carolyn. "A Nurse Goes to Baffin Island," *Beaver*, Winter, 1964, 30-38.
- Stafford, Marie Ahnighito Peary. "Child of the Arctic," *Beaver*, September, 1944, 8-13.
- Stanwell-Fletcher, Theodora. *Clear Lands and Icy Seas*. New York: Dodd Mead, 1958.
- Stringer, Sadie. "My Husband Ate His Boots," *Maclean's*, 68, 1955, 10-11, 44-49.
- Taylor, Elizabeth. "A Woman Explorer in the Mackenzie Delta," *Outing*, October, November, December, 1894-95.
- . "Up the Mackenzie to the Polar Sea," *Travel*, Vol 3, 1899, 559-564.
- Turner, Dick. *Nahanni*. Saanichton, BC: Hancock House, 1975.

Vyvyan, Lady Clara. *Arctic Adventure*. London: Peter Owen, 1961.

----- . "On The Rat River," *Canadian Geographical Journal*, January 1931, 48-57.

----- . *Roots and Stars: Reflections on the Past*. London: Peter Owen, 1962.

----- . "Sunset on the Yukon," *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol 153, 1936, 206-216.

----- . "The Unrelenting North," *Cornhill Magazine*, Vol 152, 1935, 176-183.

"Woman Gives Vivid Picture," *Quebec Chronicle*, 18 September 1934, 4.

The Yearbook and Clergy List of the Church of England in the Dominion of Canada 1920-1926. Toronto: The General Synod of the Church of England in Canada, 1920-1926.

Secondary Sources (North and Arctic)

Abel, Kerry. *Drum Songs: Glimpses of Dene History*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1993.

----- . "Of Two Minds: Dene Response to the Mackenzie Missions, 1858-1902," in Coates and Morrison, Eds, *Interpreting Canada's North*.

Archer, SA. *A Heroine in the North: Memoirs of Charlotte Selina Bompas (1830-1917) Wife of the First Bishop of Selkirk*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1929.

Bockstoce, John R. *Whales, Ice and Men: A History of Whaling in the Western Arctic*. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1986.

Boon, TCB. *The Anglican Church From the Bay to the Rockies*. Toronto: Ryerson, 1962.

Boyd, Josephine W. "On Some White Women in the Wilds of Northern North America," *Arctic*, 27(3), 1974, 168-174.

Clevette, Wilma and Freda Heacock, Great Routledge, Gwen Skelley. *Red Serge*

- Wives*. Edmonton: Lone Pine, 1974.
- Climate of the Northwest Territories*. Northern Information Series. Yellowknife: Government of the Northwest Territories, Culture and Communications, 1987.
- Coates, Kenneth. *Best Left as Indians: Native-White Relations in the Yukon Territory, 1840-1973*. Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1991.
- . *Canada's Colonies*. Toronto: Lorimar, 1988.
- . "Send Only Those Who Rise a Peg: Anglican Clergy in the Yukon, 1858-1932," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXVII (1), April, 1986.
- Coates, Kenneth and William R Morrison. *Interpreting Canada's North*. Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989.
- , Eds. *For Purposes of Dominion: Essays in Honour of Morris Zaslow*. New York: Captive Press, 1989.
- Coates, Kenneth and Judith Powell. *The Modern North: People, Politics, and the Rejection of Colonialism*. Toronto: James Lorimer, 1989.
- Cook, Terry. "Paper Trails: A Study in Northern Records and Northern Administration," in Coates and Morrison, Eds, *For Purposes of Dominion*.
- Dickerson, Mark O. *Whose North: Political Change, Political Development and Self Government in the NWT*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1992.
- Diubaldo, Richard J. *Stefansson and the Canadian Arctic*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978.
- Dobin, Michael. "Iron Will and Arctic Men: The Last of the Whaling Men," *Up Here*, August/September, 1992, 27-30.
- Duchaussois, Rev Father P, OMI. *The Grey Nuns in the Far North*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1919.
- Dunn, James Taylor. "Nipigon Fisherwoman," *Beaver*, September 1949, 20-24.
- . "To Edmonton in 1892," *Beaver*, June 1950, 3-5.
- Finnie, Richard. *Canada Moves North*. New York: Macmillan Company, 1944.

- . *Lure of the North*. Philadelphia: David McKay Company, 1940.
- Francis, Daniel. *Arctic Chase: A History of Whaling in Canada's North*. N.P.: Breakwater Books, 1984.
- "Grey Nuns of Fort Smith to Leave the North," *The Native Press*, June 8, 1979.
- Hail, Barbara and Kate C. Duncan. *Out of the North: The Sub-Arctic Collection of the Haffenriffer Museum of Anthropology, Brown University*. Brown University Press, 1989.
- Hamelin, L-E. "Images of the North," in Coates and Morrison, *Interpreting Canada's North*,
- Hodgins, Bruce W and Margaret Hobbs, Eds. *Nawstawgan: The Canadian North by Canoe and Horseshoe*. Toronto: Betelguese Books, 1985.
- Inglis, George. "The Grey Nuns in the North," *North*, 14(1), 1967, 12-15.
- Ingram, Rob and Helene Dobrowolsky. *Waves Upon the Shore: an Historical Profile of Herschel Island*. Whitehorse: Department of Tourism, Heritage Branch, 1989.
- Jenness, Diamond. *People of the Twilight*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1928.
- Krech, Shepard. *The Subarctic Fur Trade: Native Social and Economic Adaptations*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984.
- Lesage, Rev FS OMI. *Sacred Heart Mission, Fort Simpson: An Historical Sketch, 1858-1958*. N.p., n.p., 1958.
- Longstreth, T Morris. *The Silent Force*. New York and London: The Century Company, 1927.
- MacPherson, NJ, Roderick Duncan MacPherson, Ed. *Dreams and Visions: Education in the NWT From Early Days to 1984*. Yellowknife: Government of the Northwest Territories, Department of Education, 1992.
- McCann, Edward. "Geraldine Moodie," *Canadian Women's Studies*, 2(3), 1980, 12-14.
- Masik, August, with Isobel Wylie Hutchison. *Arctic Nights Entertainments*. Glasgow: Blackie & Son Ltd.

- Marriott, Richard. "Arctic Bay Baby," *Beaver*, December, 1939, 46-47.
- Middleton, Nancy. "Christmas at Fort Rae," *Citizen Magazine*, Ottawa, 24 December 1965, 8.
- Morrison, William R. *Showing the Flag: The Mounted Police and Canadian Sovereignty in the North, 1894-1925*. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1985.
- Morton, WL. "The North in Canadian Historiography," in AB McKillop, Ed, *Selected Essays of WL Morton*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1982.
- North, Dick. *Arctic Exodus: The Last Great Trail Drive*. Toronto: MacMillan, 1991.
- Northwest Territories Data Book*. Yellowknife: Outcrop, 1991.
- Nute, Grace Lee. "Down North in 1892," *Beaver*, June 1948, 42-46.
- . "Paris to Peel's River in 1892," *Beaver*, March, 1948, 19-23.
- Pazdro, Roberta J. "Agnes Deans Cameron: Against the Current," in *In Her Own Right*, Latham and Kess, Eds.
- Price, Ray. *Yellowknife*. Toronto: Peter Martin Associates, 1967
- Ray, Arthur J. "Periodic Shortages, Native Welfare, and the Hudson's Bay Company 1670-1930," in Krech, *The Subarctic Fur Trade*.
- Ross, W Gillies. *Whaling and Eskimos: Hudson Bay 1860-1915*. Ottawa: National Museum of Man, 1975.
- Thomas, Mrs PA. "Kindly Dispatch Miss Gadsby," *North*, 17(2), 1969, 6-19.
- "To Photograph the Frontier," *Archivist*, 5(1), January/February, 1978, 1-5.
- Yellowknife NWT: An Illustrated History*. Sechelt, BC: Nor'West Publishing, 1990.
- Zaslow, Morris. *The Northward Expansion of Canada 1914-1967*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1988.
- . *The Opening of the Canadian North 1870-1914*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1971.

Secondary Sources
(General)

- Arnup, Katherine, and Andree Levesque, Ruth Roach Pierson. *Delivering Motherhood: Maternal Ideologies and Practices in the 19th and 20th Centuries*. London: Routledge, 1990.
- Bailey, Susan F. *Women and the British Empire: An Annotated Guide to Sources*. New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1983.
- Ballhatchet, Kenneth. *Race, Sex and Class Under the Raj: Imperial Attitudes and Policies and Their Critics, 1793-1905*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1980.
- Birkett, Dea. *Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- . "The White Woman's Burden in the White Man's Grave: The Introduction of British Nurses in Colonial West Africa," in Chaudhuri and Strobel, *White Women and Imperialism*.
- Brouwer, Ruth Compton. *New Women For God: Canadian Presbyterian Women and India Missions*. Toronto: University of Toronto, 1990.
- Brownfoot, Janice M. "Memsahibs in Colonial Malaya: A Study of European Wives in a British Colony and Protectorate," in Callan and Ardener, *The Incorporated Wife*.
- Bullbeck, Chilla. *Australian Women in Papua New Guinea: Colonial Passages*. Sydney: Cambridge University Press, 1992.
- . "New Histories of the Memsahib and Missus: The Case of Papua New Guinea," *Journal of Women's History*, 3(2), Fall, 1991, 82-105.
- Burton, Antoinette. "The Feminist Quest for Identity: British Imperial Suffragism and Global Sisterhood," *Journal of Women's History*, 3(2), Fall, 1991, 46-81.
- Callan, Hilary, and Shirley Ardener, Eds. *The Incorporated Wife*. London: Croom Helm, 1984.
- Callaway, Helen. *Gender, Culture and Empire: European Women in Colonial Nigeria*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
- Chaudhuri, Nupur and Margaret Strobel. *Western Women and Imperialism:*

- Complicity and Resistance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992.
- Christensen, Toben and William R Hutchison. *Missionary Ideologies in the Imperialist Era*. Aarhus, Denmark: Forlaget Aros, 1982.
- Curtin, Philip D. "The Environment Beyond Europe and the European Theory of Empire," *Journal of World History*, 1(2), 1990, 131-150.
- Davin, Anna. "Imperialism and Motherhood," *History Workshop*, 5, Spring 1978, 9-61.
- Drouin, Clementine, SGM. (Translated by Antoinette Bezaire, SGM). *Love Spans the Centuries: Origin and Development of the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal, "Grey Nuns"*. Montreal: Meridian Press, 1990.
- Gartrell, Beverley. "Colonial Wives: Villains or Victims?" in Callan and Ardener, Eds, *The Incorporated Wife*.
- Gibbon, John Murray. *Three Centuries of Canadian Nursing*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1947.
- Goldman, Anne. "I Yam What I Yam: Cooking, Culture and Colonialism," in Smith and Watson, Eds, *Decolonizing the Subject*.
- Goldring, Philip. "Religion, Missions and Native Culture," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXVI (2), October, 1984.
- Gouda, Frances. "Nyonyas on the Colonial Divide: White Women in the Dutch East Indies, 1900-1942," *Gender and History*, 5(3), Autumn 1993, 318-342.
- Grant, John Webster. *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984.
- Haggis, Jane. "Gendering Colonialism or Colonizing Gender?: Recent Women's Studies Approaches to White Women and the History of British Colonialism," *Women's Studies International Forum*, 13(1-2), 105-115.
- Hallenby, Grace. *Anglican Women's Training College: A Background Document*. Toronto: Centre for Christian Studies, 1989.
- Havens, A Eugene and William L Flinn. *Internal Colonialism and Structural Change in Colombia*. New York: Praeger, 1970.
- Headon, Christopher. "Women and Organized Religion in Mid and Late Nineteenth

Century Canada," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XX (1-2), March-June, 1978.

Hechter, Michael. *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development 1536-1966*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1975.

Hill, Meredith. "The Women Workers of the Diocese of Athabasca," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXVIII (2), October, 1986.

Hoe, Susanna. *The Private Life of Old Hong Kong: Western Women in the British Colony 1841-1941*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991.

Hutchison, William R. "A Moral Equivalent for Imperialism: Americans and the Promotion of Christian Civilization," in Christensen and Hutchison, *Missionary Ideologies*.

Hyam, Ronald. *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990.

Inglis, Almirah. *The White Women's Protection Ordinance: Sexual Anxiety in Papua*. London: Sussex University Press, 1975.

Knapman, Claudia. *White Women in Fiji 1835-1930: The Ruin of Empire?* Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1986.

Latham, Barbara and Cathy Kess, Eds. *In Her Own Right*. Victoria, BC: Camosun College, 1983.

Lechat, R OMI. "Evangelization and Colonialism," *Eskimo*, Spring/Summer, 1976, 3-9.

Mackenzie, John. *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservationism and British Imperialism*. New York: St Martin's Press, 1988.

-----, Ed. *Imperialism and Popular Culture*. Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1987.

-----, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion*. Dover, NH: Manchester University Press, 1984.

McGrath, Ann. "The White Man's Looking Glass: Aboriginal Colonial Gender Relations at Port Jackson," *Australian Historical Studies*, 24(95), October 1990, 189-207.

- Middleton, Dorothy. *Victorian Lady Travellers*. London: Routledge, 1965.
- Miller, Luree. *On Top of the World: Five Women Explorers in Tibet*. London: Paddington, 1976.
- Mills, Sara. *Discourses and Differences: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Mohanty, Chandra. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review*, 30, Autumn 1988, 61-88.
- Moore, Barrington, Jr. *Privacy: Studies in Social and Cultural History*. Armonck, NY: ME Sharpe Inc, 1984.
- Moyles, Robert and Douglas Owram. *Imperial Dreams and Colonial Realities*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- Neill, Stephen. *Colonialism and Christian Missions*. London: Lutterworth Press, 1966.
- Newman, Louise M. "Critical Theory and the History of Women: What's At Stake in Deconstructing Women's History," *Journal of Women's History*, 2(3), Winter 1991.
- Peake, Frank A. "From the Red River to the Arctic," *Journal of the Canadian Church Historical Society*, XXXI (2), October 1989.
- Robinson, Jane. *Wayward Women: A Guide to Women Travellers*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Rowbotham, Judith. "Imperial Responsibilities and England's Daughters," Chapter 5 in *Good Girls Make Good Wives: Guidance for Girls in Victorian Fiction*. London: Basil Blackwell, 1989.
- Russell, Mary. *The Blessings of a Good Thick Shirt*. London: Collins, 1986.
- Smith, Sidonie and Julia Watson, Eds. *Decolonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women's Autobiography*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992.
- Stanley, Brian. *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions and British Imperialism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*. Leicester: Apollos, 1990.
- Strobel, Margaret. *European Women and the Second British Empire*. Bloomington:

Indiana University Press, 1991.

Strong-Boag, Veronica. *The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939*. Markham, Ontario: Penguin, 1988.

Wallis, Andrew F. "British Missions," in Christensen and Hutchison, *Missionary Ideologies*.

Ware, Vron. *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism and History*. London: Verso, 1992.

West, Elizabeth. "White Women in Colonial Australia," *Refractory Girl*, March 1977, 54-60.

West, Katherine. "Theorizing About Imperialism: A Methodological Note," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, January 1973, 1(2), 148-154.

Newspapers and Periodicals

Arctic Circle

Arctic News (ACC Diocese of the Arctic)

The Calgary Herald

Eskimo (OMI)

The Globe, Toronto

The Gazette,

The Letter Leaflet of the Woman's Auxiliary to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada replaced by the *Living Message*

The New York Times

North

Northern Lights(ACC Diocese of Yukon)

The Prospector, Yellowknife NWT. (1938-39)

Saskatoon Star-Phoenix

Star Weekly

The Winnipeg Tribune

The Yellowknife Blade (1940-42)

Photograph Collections*

Northwest Territories:

N79-050 Fleming, Archibald Lang
 N79-006 Yellowknife Museum Society
 N79-008 Cook, Henry G
 N79-053 Yellowknife Museum Society
 N79-054 Yellowknife Museum Society
 N79-057 Yellowknife Museum Society
 N79-033 Finnie, Richard Sterling
 N87-033 Learmonth, LA
 N88-008 Henderson, Helene and Mildred Hall
 N87-020 Anglican Church of Canada, Diocese of the Arctic
 FPGN Grey Nuns of Fort Providence
 N91-041 Cook, Dr AJ
 N86-006 Buffum Family
 N91-045 Day, Harry L

Yukon Territory:

PHO 379 Anglican Church of Canada
 PHO 29 Sharp, Bob

National Archives of Canada
 Hudson's Bay Company

*While no photographs appear in this thesis, the collections were a rich source for identification. Many of the women in the compiled list are recorded only in photographs.